



University at Buffalo
The State University of New York
Vice Provost for International Education

MEMORANDUM

To : Vice Provosts, Deans, Department Chairs, Directors of Graduate Study
From : Stephen C. Dunnett, Vice Provost for International Education
Date : 27 February 2008
Subject : Visa and Admission Policies for Students and Scholars on F and J Visas

As UB's international population continues to expand and diversify, academic units across the university are increasingly receiving inquiries from international students and scholars about specialized programs of study, research and teaching at the university. Some of these international students and scholars are degree-seeking while others wish to come and conduct research, audit classes or work with a mentor for a limited period of time.

In order to guide consideration of these requests from international students and scholars, who are now more frequently seeking opportunities to pursue specialized study or research at UB, the Office of International Education has developed the following guidelines for evaluating such requests. These guidelines specify the criteria for each student and scholar visa category, and the typical arrangements for receiving such students and scholars at UB. The first four categories listed below pertain to international students (on F and J visas); the last two categories pertain to international scholars (on J visas). Each category is distinct and has a unique set of provisions. This policy and relevant updates are posted on the website of the Office of International Student and Scholar Services: http://www.buffalo.edu/intlservices/immigration_overview.html

These guidelines are being issued to inform academic units about the relevant terms and conditions specified for each visa category by the U.S. Department of State. Failure to adhere to these terms and conditions could put at risk the university's ability to host international students and scholars in the future. For each category, a responsible office has been identified in case there are questions or additional information is needed. Your cooperation in adhering to the following policies is greatly appreciated.

Standard Student Status (F-1 Student Visa)

- Includes the vast majority of degree-seeking (matriculating) international students at UB.
- Must meet all regular admission requirements (GPA, degree and academic documentation requirements; TOEFL and other standardized tests, etc.).
- Must be enrolled full-time for a minimum of 12 credits (9 credits for students holding assistantships).

- Documented funding can come from any source (personal/family sources or other acceptable sources).
- Required by SUNY to carry health insurance that meets SUNY requirements.
- Initial I-20 visa document issued through the Office of International Admissions.
- Questions regarding standard admission and the initial I-20 should be directed to International Admissions (411 Capen Hall, 645-2368).

Special Student Status (F-1 Student Visa)

- Rarely used; primarily for international students who are not coming to UB as regular F-1 students (the above category); these students must be non-degree (non-matriculating) who are also not coming to UB under the auspices of a formal institutional agreement and who are not sponsored by a government or international organization, but who have their own funding and who have been invited to UB by a host UB faculty member with the approval of the cognizant department chair.
- Prior to the issuance of an I-20, an [F-1 Special Student Approval Form](#) (attached) signed by the cognizant department chair and the Vice Provost for International Education must be submitted to the Office of International Admissions for each F-1 Special Student to be hosted at UB.
- Host departments are responsible for assigning a specific faculty member to supervise and advise the F-1 Special Students that they invite to UB, assisting them in arranging housing, and ensuring that they have adequate health insurance.
- Individual students desiring to come on their own without a formal invitation from UB and departmental approval (sometimes referred to as “free floaters” in the European student exchange system), are not permitted to come to UB as F-1 Special Students.
- Must meet all regular admission requirements (GPA, degree and academic documentation requirements, TOEFL and other standardized tests, etc.).
- Must be enrolled full-time for a minimum of 12 credits.
- Documented funding may come from any source (personal/family sources or other acceptable sources).
- Required by SUNY to carry health insurance that meets SUNY requirements.
- Questions regarding the admission of F-1 Special Students and the initial I-20 should be directed to International Admissions (411 Capen Hall, 645-2368).

Degree-Seeking Sponsored Students (J-1 Student Visa)

- Typically used for students who are coming to UB under the auspices of a sponsoring agency such as a foreign government or funded by a program such as Fulbright.
- Must meet all regular admission requirements (GPA, degree and academic documentation requirements, TOEFL and other standardized tests, etc.).
- Must be enrolled full-time for a minimum of 12 credits (9 credits for those holding assistantships).
- Funding must come from a source that is substantially other than personal (this is generally understood to mean that at least half of the required funds come from sources other than self or family).
- Required by SUNY and the Department of State (DOS) to carry health insurance that meets SUNY and DOS requirements.

- May be subject to the two-year home residency requirement (meaning they may not be eligible to come back to the U.S. on another J-1 visa or change their status in the U.S. to another visa category until they have resided in their home country or last country of permanent residence for two years).
- J-1 Degree-Seeking Students funded by a program such as Fulbright are processed initially by the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (210 Talbert Hall, 645-2258).
- J-1 Degree-Seeking Students sponsored by their foreign government or their own university are processed by the Office of International Admissions (411 Capen Hall, 645-2368).

Non-Degree Exchange Students (J-1 Non-Degree Student Visa)

- Typically used for students who come to UB under the auspices of a formal institutional exchange program. Additionally, program sponsors such as Fulbright have begun to sponsor students who are not degree-seeking.
- May not matriculate at UB; therefore, they will not earn a degree from UB.
- Must meet all regular admission requirements or have approved waivers (GPA, degree and academic documentation requirements, TOEFL and other standardized tests, etc.).
- May be enrolled full-time or enrolled in an approved prescribed course of study, defined as a non-degree academic program with a specific educational objective (e.g. intensive English language training, classroom instruction, research projects).
- Program length cannot exceed 24 months.
- If the student is not participating in a formal exchange program, funding must come from a source that is substantially other than personal; this is generally understood to mean that at least half of the required funds must come from sources other than self or family.
- Required by SUNY and the Department of State (DOS) to carry health insurance that meets SUNY and DOS requirements.
- J-1 Non-Degree Students may be subject to the two-year home residency requirement, which means they may not be eligible to come back to the U.S. on another J-1 visa or change their status in the U.S. to another visa category until they have resided in their home country or last country of permanent residence for two years.
- J-1 Non-Degree Exchange Students are processed initially through the Study Abroad Programs office (210 Talbert Hall, 645-3912).
- J-1 Non-Degree Sponsored Students are processed initially through the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (210 Talbert Hall; 645-2258).

Short-Term Scholars (J-1 Short-Term Scholar Visa)

- Typically used to host professors, researchers and those with similar qualifications who intend to come to UB for a short-term visit for the purpose of lecturing, observing, consulting, training or engaging in research. Ph.D. students who are seeking collaborative research as part of their studies may also come as J-1 Short-Term Scholars.
- Must hold a Ph.D. (or the equivalent, including the terminal degree in the field) or be a Ph.D. Candidate and possess sufficient proficiency in the English language to participate in the program, whether it is study, research, observation, etc.
- Usually initiated through collaboration between a UB faculty member and the prospective J-1 Short-Term Scholar. The UB department will serve as the official host and provide any support that may be necessary (e.g. office and/or lab space).

- May be employed by UB or appointed as “unpaid volunteers”. Their documented funding can come from any source (personal / family sources or other acceptable sources).
- Required by SUNY and the Department of State (DOS) to carry health insurance that meets SUNY and DOS requirements.
- Limited to a maximum stay of 6 months.
- J-1 Short-Term Scholars are processed through the Office of Immigration Services (210 Talbert Hall, 645-2355). Departments interested in requesting permission to host a J-1 Short-Term Scholar should contact Immigration Services.

Research Scholars (J-1 Research Scholar Visa)

- Typically used to host professors, researchers and those with similar qualifications who intend to come to UB for the purpose of lecturing, observing, consulting, training or engaging in research.
- Must hold a Ph.D. (or the equivalent, including the terminal degree in the field) or be a Ph.D. Candidate and possess sufficient proficiency in the English language to participate in the program (whether it is study, research, observation, etc.).
- Usually initiated through collaboration between a UB faculty member and the prospective J-1 Research Scholar. The UB department will serve as the official host and provide any support that may be necessary (e.g. office and/or lab space).
- Must be in residence at UB for a minimum of three weeks and a maximum of five years. If a prospective J-1 Research Scholar has been in the U.S. in J status in the previous twelve months, s/he may not be eligible for J-1 Research Scholar status.
- After their stay in the U.S. as a J-1 Research Scholar, they may not be present in the U.S. as a J-1 Research Scholar for 24 months.
- May also be subject to the two-year home residency requirement (meaning they may not be eligible to come back to the U.S. on another J-1 visa until they have been in residence in their home country or last country of permanent residence for two years).
- J-1 Research Scholars may be employed by UB or appointed as “unpaid volunteers”. Their documented funding can come from any source (personal / family sources or other acceptable sources).
- Required by SUNY and the Department of State (DOS) to carry health insurance that meets SUNY and DOS requirements.
- Processed initially through the Office of Immigration Services (210 Talbert Hall; 645-2355). However, J-1 Research Scholars wishing to enroll in UB classes after arrival on campus must also be processed through the Office of International Admissions and meet all standard requirements.
- Any study must be incidental to the intended purpose of the J-1 Research Scholar visa, which is research; UB defines “incidental” as part-time enrollment not to exceed 11 credits at any time and that will not interfere with the primary purpose of research.

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Att.