



FOREIGN VISITORS PROGRAM GENERAL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

The University of Puerto Rico- Rio Piedras Campus has been authorized to use the following categories, as defined by the Department of State (DOS) for sponsored Exchange Visitors. A summary follows of the definitions and regulations found in the Code of Federal Regulations at 22CFR. 62.

Professor and Research Scholar

In this category, international professors and research scholars engage in research, teaching, and lecturing with their American colleagues. Alien physicians in graduate medical education or training and short-term scholars are not included in this category.

The eligible participant may not be a candidate for a tenure track position. Furthermore, professor and research scholar participants may not be in the United States or PR in J-visa status for any part of the 12-month period preceding the beginning date of their programs as indicated in their Form DS-2019. The 12-month bar is waived if the participant is 1) present in the United States or PR no more than six months; or 2) participating in the short-term Scholar category.

Incidental lectures or short-term consultations are permitted with the previous approval of the Responsible Officer, as long as they are directly related to the objectives of the participant's program, and do not delay its completion date. The maximum duration for both categories is three years. Under limited circumstances, the Foreign Visitor Program (FVP) may extend a participant's program for up to five years beyond the three-year maximum to allow the research scholar or professor to complete a specific project or research activity. The extension beyond the three years person first to the FVP must be submitted and to the U. S. Department of the States.

Please visit our web page for more information concerning extensions, whether for a routine, three years and six-month or five-year extension.

Short Term Scholar

A short-term scholar is a professor, research scholar, or person with similar education or accomplishments who visits the United States to lecture, observe, consult, train, or demonstrate special skills at research institutions (as well as museums, libraries, post-secondary accredited educational institutions) or similar types of institutions.

The duration of the program is the time needed to complete the objective, up to a maximum of six months. The minimum program duration of 3 weeks for any Exchange Visitor Program category is waived for participants in this category. Extensions of stay beyond six months are not permitted.

Short-term scholars may participate in the Exchange Visitor Program at conferences, workshops, seminars, or other events listed in their Forms DS-2019 and SEVIS records. Participants may also lecture or consult at institutions not listed in the Form DS-2019 if the FVP responsible officer issues **prior written** authorization for the activity (some additional requirements apply). The authorization must be attached to the participant's Form DS-2019. See our webpage for more information on the requirements and procedure to apply for an occasional activity.

Funding

The prospective J-1 Exchange Visitor must demonstrate sufficient financial support for the duration of the academic appointment or activity. If the scholar will be funded by University of Puerto Rico (UPR), the specific funding amounts must be included in the letter of application. The J scholar program allows funding by university's departments, the exchange visitor's home institution or government, the exchange visitor's personal resources, or any combination of these three options. All financial support must be documented.

Minimum financial support for research is set annually by the FVP. The DOS requires that the FVP establishes this figure, taking into account the cost of living, and being sure that the scholar has adequate funds to support himself and his family members during his visit. Confirmation of financial support helps and ensures that a visitor will not risk engaging in unauthorized employment nor become a public burden. University's departments may elect to fund the

scholar, but the FVP require that the scholar provide personal funds to support family members if the minimum required by the FVP is not met. Written documentation or evidence confirming total funding is required.

Insurance

All exchange visitors in J-1 and J-2 status are required to have accident & illness medical insurance in effect for the duration of the program. Here are the minimum requirements specified by the Department of States DOS.

- a. **Minimum Coverage** — Insurance shall cover: (1) medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per person per accident or illness; (2) repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500; and (3) expenses associated with medical evacuation in the amount of \$10,000.
- b. **Additional Terms** — the policy selected to fulfill the insurance requirements shall not have a deductible that exceeds \$500 per accident or illness, and must meet other standards specified in the regulations.
- c. **Maintenance of Insurance** — Willful failure to maintain the required insurance will result in the termination of the exchange program.

The UPR, as a J-1 sponsor, extends the coverage of the accident & illness policy, as is established in the regulations. The J visitor is responsible for providing the policy coverage for the dependents. For the health coverage there are options:

- A. As part of the sponsorship, the department may arrange and pay for the mandatory insurance coverage through the University Health Plan. In other instances, the department may require the exchange visitor to select the coverage selected and will be deducted from his salary. Documentation of these arrangements is required on the applications forms for J visitors. The FVP requires maintaining confirmation of insurance enrollment for each scholar.
- B. The department may require the exchange visitor to purchase insurance from a private carrier before arriving in the U.S. or to register 30 days after the arrival in the University Health Plan or in any private plan in PR. Documentation of this arrangement is required on the FVP J Application Forms. The FVP required maintaining written confirmation of

insurance enrollment for each scholar choosing this option.

- C. The exchange visitor's home institution or home government or the exchange visitor himself/herself may provide health insurance coverage for his/her family. Documentation of this arrangement is required in the FVP J Application Form. The FVP is required to maintain written confirmation of insurance enrollment for scholars covered by their home institution.

J-1 Visa Application Procedure

Departments wishing to invite an Exchange Visitor to the UPR are requested to read the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program Overview in our webpage, which provides an outline of exchange visitor regulations and policies. After reading this information, departments wishing to bring an international visitor as a professor, research scholar or short-term scholar must take the following steps:

- A. SIXTY DAYS prior to arrival, the host department must:

1. Complete and submit an application form to the Foreign Visitor Program at the Academic Affairs Office.
2. Include the following information with the application form:
 - A request letter addressed to Dr. Aida Castañer Martínez, Director of Foreign Visitors Program which, as minimum must contain: purpose of the visit, requested dates of stay, duties and title of the position (if apply); amount of salary, honoraria or stipend and source of funding, and accident and health coverage arrangement. The letter must have the approval signature of the department chair and the dean of the faculty.
 - A copy of the Visitor's C.V.;
 - A copy of the formal letter of invitation;
 - A copy of the formal letter of invitation.
 - Two letters of recommendation on behalf of the Foreign Visitors Program for a researcher position or a professor.
 - Diplomas or certificates verifying the educational level foreign national.

- Copy of passport.
- Financial statement or affidavit if the foreign national is self-supporting or if stipend does not meet minimum requirements of FVP (see our WebPages for the guidelines).
- Attachment showing any additional stipulations agreed to and signed by the foreign national.
- Copy of the letter requesting the accident & illness coverage.
- Signed certification of health coverage.

B. Send the Exchange Visitor a formal letter of invitation, with the following information:

1. Instructions on how to find the necessary information and the visitor's application form on the FVP web-site; she must complete and sign the **Certification of Health Insurance Coverage** (see <http://daarrp.uprrp.edu/pve/Formularios.htm>) and return it directly to the faculty who nominated him or her as quickly as possible (fax is acceptable, if it is followed up by the original hard copy) to be included with the petition;
2. Provide the name, phone number, and e-mail address of the Faculty contact or supervisor and our office;
3. The nature of the appointment, including the exchange visitor's duties and responsibilities;
4. The nature of the funding, support, or compensation the visitor can expect to receive from the University; or financial evidence to comply with the requested funding;
5. Any arrangements which will be made by the department on behalf of the Exchange Visitor (housing, insurance, etc.)
6. A reminder of the necessity for health insurance.

Issuing the Immigration Documents

Once the petition is received in our Office, it will be examined to ensure that the petition is appropriate for the Exchange Visitors Program. The department will be contacted if additional information is needed.

Upon receipt of the completed departmental application form and documentation from the visitor, if approved, the FVP will prepare Form DS-2019, with detailed instructions about applying for a J-1 visa. The department will be notified and is responsible for mailing the documents to the Exchange Visitor.

Upon receipt of the documents, the Exchange Visitor will apply for a J-1 visa at a US Embassy or Consulate and enter the United States.

C. AT LEAST THIRTY DAYS prior to arrival, the department should:

- Make housing arrangement for the visitor.
- If University will pay the Exchange Visitor, contact Human Resources (HR) about necessary paperwork.
- Make any necessary arrangement for the foreign national to have ID card, apply for SS, and any other administrative paperwork that is needed, if applicable.
- Keep the FVP informed of any changes in the visitor's anticipated date of arrival or of his/her withdrawal from the program. It is especially necessary to coordinate with FVP if the Exchange Visitor's arrival is delayed more than twenty days past the date originally anticipated and shown on Form DS-2019.

Arrival at University or Department

Immediately after the Exchange Visitor arrives on campus, the department should:

- Make arrangements to notify our Staff of his/her arrival
- Notify the FVP to make arrangements for an interview orientation. The visitor should be instructed to bring:

- his/her passport and all immigration documents;
 - US addresses and phone numbers for residence and office;
 - Proof of adequate health insurance.
- It is the department's responsibility to assist the Exchange Visitor in completing all necessary HR-related forms including Form I-9,

Employment Eligibility Verification, and Form W-4 and applying for a Social Security Number.

- Arrange for e-mail and telephone services for the Exchange Visitor.
- Ensure that the Visitor's housing arrangements are complete and satisfactory.
- Provide a welcome and introduce him/her to the Department.

Please remember to keep the FVP informed of any change in the status of the Exchange Visitor including:

- notification of **early departure** from the program;
- anticipated date of departure from the US following program completion;
- The possible need for an extension of the program (at least 30 days prior to the expiration date on the current DS-2019); and any change in the activity program and work related issues.

Your cooperation and assistance in these matters are greatly appreciated and will enhance the University's Exchange Visitor Program. We advise you to consult our Program before any activity in regard to what was authorized in our SEVIS record for the J-1 scholars. If you have any questions, please call Dr. Aida Castañer ext. 2928 or Adria Bermudez, ext. 4931.