

OVERVIEW OF EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

Definition. “The purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program (the Program) is to provide foreign nationals with opportunities to participate in educational and cultural programs in the United States and return home to share their experiences and to encourage Americans to participate in educational and cultural programs in other countries” (22 CFR 62.1).

Individuals who have been invited to participate in UL Lafayette’s Exchange Visitor Program are issued form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility, which is used to apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. Embassy or consulate. Upon entering the United States, the inspecting immigration officer will place such individuals in J-1 status which is their immigration classification (status).

Specific Program Categories. UL Lafayette has been authorized to invite individuals to participate in specific Program categories: university students, short term scholars, professors, research scholars, and specialists.

University Students: Individuals who are pursuing a full time course of study culminating in the award of a U.S. degree or engaged full-time in a prescribed course of study of up to 24 months duration. Students must satisfy UL Lafayette admission requirements. International application packets are available from the Office of Admissions.

Duration of Participation: Degree seeking students may remain as long as is needed to complete the degree; non-degree students may remain up to 24 months for completion of a specified course of study. Students are also eligible for up to 18 months of academic training (employment permission). Up to 36 months of academic training may be devoted to post-doctoral research.

Short-Term Scholars: Professors, research scholars or persons with similar education or accomplishments who may come to the U.S. on a short term collaborative visit for the purpose of lecturing, observing, consulting, training, or demonstrating special skills.

Duration of Participation: Short term scholars may remain for the length of time needed to complete a particular program objective, not to exceed 6 months. No extensions are possible.

Professors: Individuals primarily teaching, lecturing, observing or consulting. A professor may also conduct research but, the primary function should be teaching.

Duration of Participation: Professors may remain for the length of time necessary to complete a specified teaching objective, not to exceed five years. No further extensions are possible.

Research Scholars: Individuals primarily conducting research, observing or consulting in connection with a research project. A research scholar may also teach, but the primary function should be conducting research.

Duration of Participation: Research Scholars may remain for the length of time necessary to complete a specified research project, not to exceed five years. No further extensions are possible.

Specialists: Individuals who are experts in a field of specialized knowledge or skill and who come to the U.S. for the purpose to observing, consulting, or demonstrating special skills. This category is intended for individuals who do not fit into the professor, research scholar or short term scholar categories.

Duration of Participation: Specialists may remain for the length of time needed complete a particular program objective, not exceed one year.

ELIGIBILITY:

A. Students are eligible for the Exchange Visitor Program if at any time during their studies:

- 1) they or their program are financed directly or indirectly by the U.S. government, the government of the students' home country, or an international organization of which the U.S. is a member by treaty or statute;
- 2) the program is carried out pursuant to an agreement between the U.S. government and a foreign government;
- 3) the program is carried out pursuant to a written agreement between UL Lafayette and a foreign educational institution or foreign government (i.e. friendship treaty);
- 4) they are supported substantially by funding from any other source other than personal or family funds.

B. Professors, Research Scholars and Short-term Scholars are eligible for the Exchange Visitor Program if:

- 1) the exchange visitor's appointment to the position is temporary, even if the position itself is permanent;
- 2) the exchange visitor will not be a candidate for tenure-track position.

C. Specialists are eligible for the Exchange Visitor Program if they are:

- 1) experts in a field of specialized knowledge or skill;
- 2) seek to visit UL Lafayette for the purpose of observing, consulting, or demonstrating their special knowledge or skills; and will not fill permanent or long-term employment while at UL Lafayette.

Note: Not all exchange visitors are funded by UL Lafayette. Some may be funded and/or sponsored by other agencies or their government.

Limitations of the Exchange Visitor Program

Two year home residency requirement: Some exchange visitors are required to return home for two years before being eligible to change to another non-immigrant status or return to the U.S. in another classification.

Temporary nature of the exchange: The Program emphasis is on temporary exchanges. Therefore, it is inappropriate to use J-1 status to facilitate permanent employment of a foreign national.

Changes in program category. The Department of State rarely, if ever, permits changes among program categories. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that a visitor will be allowed to change from the research scholar to the student category.

Challenges for repeat visitors. Regulations prohibit participation of persons who have been in J status for a 12 month period immediately preceding their request to participate as a research scholar or professor. Exchange visitors who have participated in an exchange program for 6 months or less are exempt from this prohibition. Additionally, an exchange visitor is not eligible for participation as a Professor or Research Scholar for a period of two years following the program end date identified in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) if he or she meets the following two criteria: 1) previously entered the United States under the Exchange Visitor Program as a Professor or Research Scholar, or acquired such status while in the United States, and 2) completed his or her program.

Eligibility and Application Requirements: Departments wishing to invite or sponsor exchange visitors must contact the Division of Global Engagement at exchange@louisiana.edu or (337) 482-6819.