Tips for Visiting Scholar Requests

*Make sure you and the scholar are filling out the most recent form listed on OIS’s website*

Common Issues with DS-2019 Request Part A

- Incomplete fields
- Scholar did not sign/submit Rights and Responsibilities page
- No email address listed for spouse
- Copies of previous immigration documents are not included according to page 2

Common Issues with DS-2019 Request Part B

- Incomplete fields
- The answer to the question “Is this a temporary position?” is marked “no.”
- Site of Activity does not include street name and number
- Description of Primary Activity is too vague
- Funding is listed with no documentation
- English certification page is not signed
- English certification interview date is not within last 6 months
- Not all required signatures are present

Start Date Tips

- J-1s are allowed a limited arrival window called a “grace period” during which they may arrive in the US & check-in.
- The grace period is 30 days before & after DS-2019 start date. E.g. Start date of July 1 has an arrival window of June 1 – July 31.
- If the J-1 cannot arrive within the grace period surrounding their DS-2019 start date, NCSU must change the start date, issue an updated DS-2019, and mail it to the J-1.
- Always advocate for a reasonable start date!
- A “reasonable” start date:
  - Allows all processes to take place in their normal timeframe
  - Includes a small buffer in the event of unforeseen delays
  - Designed for J-1 to arrive during the grace period prior to start date.
- OIS estimates a reasonable start date is ~2-3 months from the date you submit the request to OIS. It’s definitely not in the past or within next several weeks. We will not process a DS-2019 request that has a start date within the next 30 days of when we receive a complete request.
- The benefits of a reasonable start date are many!
  - Can generally avoid need to change the start date and the issues associated with having to change the start date such as:
    - OIS reissuing/Dept. remailing DS-2019 (costing money, effort, and time)
    - HR Rep/Supervisor must rearrange their schedule to accommodate change
    - Stressful and more difficult to manage a moving target
  - Longer lead time facilitates J-1 travel and arrival due to cheaper flights, better housing options, time to “set up” before starting work
    - Cell phone, driver’s license, utilities, kids in school/day care, get over jet lag, etc.
• If a reasonable start date is so great, why does OIS see so many unreasonable start dates?
  o Poor planning
  o Unreasonable expectations
  o Lack of knowledge and misconceptions
  o Mostly avoidable reasons!

**Category Tips**

• Can’t change category after entering the US.
• For stays of exactly or close to 6 months, consider category carefully.
  o Consult with potential J-1 and Faculty Supervisor to ensure everyone’s on the same page re: restrictions the chosen category will subject the J-1 to (max length of stay and 12/24 month repeat bars).
• Not possible to do back to back Short Term Scholar programs on same research as a way to avoid the 24 month bar associated with the Research Scholar/Professor categories.
• When multiple categories are possible, department and visitor may choose which category to use.
• Research Scholars are permitted to teach, and Professors are permitted to do research. Choose the category based on what the y will spend the majority of their time doing.

**Submitting Support Documents Tips**

• Make sure that all required documents are included for each scholar’s individual case
• Passport
  o Is it legible - not too dark, light, small, etc.?
  o Is it valid at least 6 months into the future?
  o Are dependent passports included if J-1 listed dependents on Part A?
• CV/Resume
  o Does it include current position and educational history?
• Funding documents
  o Can be scans/copies; originals not necessary
  o Must not be older than 6 months
  o Must be on official letterhead
  o Must specify the J-1 on the document
  o Must be in English (if not in English provide a translation with the document)
  o Must indicate specific amount of funding
    ▪ Cannot say “XYZ University will cover all expenses.”
  o If a range is expressed, OIS must use the lower amount:
    ▪ E.g. China Scholarship Funding
    ▪ J-1 must demonstrate additional funds if lower amount of range based funding doesn’t meet minimum funding requirements.
  o Must specify the J-1 will actually receive the funding
    ▪ Bad Example: “X is an employee of PDQ with annual salary of X. He will visit NCSU for 1 year and then return to resume his position at PDQ.”
    ▪ Good Example: “X is an employee of PDQ with annual salary of X. He will visit NCSU for 1 year, during which time we will continue to pay his salary, and then return to resume his position at PDQ.”
- Bank statements must be in J-1’s name, unless accompanied by sponsor affidavit. J-2s are not eligible to be sponsors.
- All funding sources must be disclosed and documented
- Multiple sources OK as long as total meets minimum requirement
- NCSU funding may be subject to university guidelines (HR/OPA/etc.)
- Required support document is be different based on funding source:
  - Personal funds: bank statement in J-1’s name
  - Family funds: bank statement plus sponsor affidavit
  - Home institution, government, employer: Letter on institutional letterhead
  - NC State – offer letter and proof of HR action such as completed JAR request
- Invitation/Offer Letter
  - Has the offer letter been vetted/cleared by HR
  - Does it include important info such as supervisor, dates or program, expectations, etc.?
- Documents for those receiving payment from NC State
  - Post-Docs must include an approval email from the Office of Post-Doctoral Affairs
  - All other positions must include HR approval such as a completed JAR or people admin job action
- Past immigration documents
  - Copies of any DS-2019s issued in the past 3 years
  - If the scholar is in the U.S. in any other visa status at the time of application, include copies of visa, I-94, and any other current immigration documents.
- Sponsored Programs and Regulatory Compliance Services questionnaire confirmation email
  - *New Requirement*
  - Must complete the Visiting Scholar Questionnaire and submit the confirmation email along with request.

**Dependents Tips**

- If J-1 completed dependent info on Part A page 3, make sure they also submitted sufficient funding and passport bio pages.
- Dependents may be legal spouse and unmarried children under 21... no aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, multiple spouses, etc.
- Dependents may accompany the J-1 when the J-1 arrives or arrive later after the J-1 has arrived and gotten settled.
- Dependents are required to have health insurance for the entire length of their active J-2 record, whether or not they are presently in the United States.
- J-1 must request the J-2 DS-2019 directly from OIS if they want their dependents to join them once OIS has already processed the initial DS-2019 without the dependents
- OIS has a separate dependent check-in required for J-2 spouses. J-1, J-2, or department can email ois@ncsu.edu to request the J-2 be added to the next dependent check-in.
- J-2s are eligible to apply to US Citizenship and Immigration Services for a work permit (Employment Authorization Document, “EAD”) if they want to work or volunteer anywhere.
  - USCIS takes 90 days to issue EAD; filing fee is $410.
  - J-2s cannot volunteer at NC State unless they obtain the EAD.
- Sometimes it is beneficial for both spouses to come as J-1 instead of J-1 and J-2 if they both want to conduct research and can each find a host department and funding.