



Dear BSU colleague and prospective visiting scholar,

Thank you for your interest in the exchange visitor program. Bridgewater State University places great value on international partnerships and we are honored that you have selected us to be your program sponsor. In order to begin the process, we request that you take a few moments to read this application packet in its entirety. This packet includes information about requirements for participation, a checklist of required documents, an application form, and a sample letter for the English proficiency requirement to be completed by the host faculty. We have also included helpful websites where applicable.

Please note the academic department is responsible for initiating the offer to the visiting scholar, providing clarity and information on the participation agreement (teaching/research), creating and communicating the offer letter to the visitor and to BSU parties (ISSS, Human Resources), and for supporting the sign-in process for visiting faculty. ISSS will issue the form DS-2019 and assist with support services for the visitor.

English proficiency:

Under the regulations which went into effect on January 5, 2015, the U.S. Department of State requires that J-1 sponsors verify that J-1 exchange visitors have sufficient English fluency to:

- ✓ Perform their J-1 activities or complete their academic program;
- ✓ Navigate daily life in the US;
- ✓ Read and comprehend program materials;
- ✓ Understand fully their responsibilities, rights, and protections; and
- ✓ Know how to get help if needed.

The Department of State allows 3 options to verify English language proficiency:

- 1.) A documented interview by BSU’s hosting department with the J-1 exchange visitor, either in person or by videoconference; (sample letter provided)
- 2.) A recognized English language test (TOEFL or IELTS);

If a new scholar chooses to take an English language test, these are the minimum scores:

TOEFL (paper)	TOEFL (internet)	TOEFL (computer)	IELTS
550	79	213	6

- 3.) Signed documentation from an academic institution or English language school.

Health Insurance:

U.S. Department of State regulations require **all J-1 Exchange Visitors and their accompanying J-2 dependents** to have health insurance coverage throughout the period of participation in the exchange visitor program.

Minimum acceptable coverage should provide:

- Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness,
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000,
- Expenses associated with medical evacuation in the amount of \$50,000,
- Deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.
- A policy underwritten by an insurance carrier with:
 - an A.M. Best rating of “A-” or above;
 - a McGraw Hill Financial/Standard & Poor’s Claims paying Ability rating of “A-” or above;
 - a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of “B+” or above;
 - a Fitch Ratings, Inc. rating of “A-” or above;
 - a Moody’s Investor Services rating of “A3” or above;

Please note that insurance should be purchased from a U.S. provider and coverage should be in English and USD. Insurance coverage should begin from the date of arrival in the U.S. and may be purchased within three days of arrival.

Immunizations:

Effective June 2, 2015 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires the immunizations of students before admission to school ([105 CMR 220.000](#): IMMUNIZATION OF STUDENTS BEFORE ADMISSION TO SCHOOL). These regulations (see below) include **“any individual from another country attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of a formal academic visitation or exchange program.”**

Student shall mean any individual attending, or enrolled or registered to attend, a pre-school program as defined in 105 CMR 220.400, kindergarten through 12th grade in a public or private school, or a postsecondary institution, as defined in 105 CMR 220.600, provided the educational program is offered either on or off-site in Massachusetts. The term student shall also include any individual from another country attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of a formal academic visitation or exchange program.

Prospective exchange visitors must maintain completed copies of their immunization records. Immunization guidelines and school requirements can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/immunization-requirements-for-school-entry-0/download>

Housing:

The International Scholar House is a small fully furnished, four bedroom, self-service accommodations on the BSU campus. Located at 25 Plymouth St, Bridgewater, MA 02324. Space is limited, and requests are taken on a first come, first served basis. There is no charge for the use of this facility.

BSU Faculty or staff who wish to invite visitors for short term stays are required to submit an application to International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), Minnock Institute for Global Engagement. More information

regarding the international scholar house is available at: <https://www.bridgew.edu/office/international-student-scholar-services/international-scholar-house>

If the International Scholar House is unavailable the host department and the international visitor will be responsible for identifying alternative housing. To assist you in the search please visit the off-campus housing database at: <https://www.places4students.com/Places/School?SchoolID=XlqYAjftgVE%3d>

This database is not operated by ISSS and is provided for information purposes only. International visitors are responsible for making their own arrangements with property owners and ISSS does not endorse any specific property owner or resource.

Additional Information:

Please be sure to read the Exchange Visitor Program Brochure at <http://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Brochure-The-Exchange-Visitor-Program.pdf>

Information on the J-1 exchange visa program is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov/>

Please feel free to reach International Student and Scholar Services if you have questions or we can be of any assistance. We recognize that this process is long and can sometimes be complicated. We can be reached at iss@bridgew.edu

We are committed to making the exchange experience at Bridgewater State University positive and productive. Once again, thank you for choosing Bridgewater State University for your exchange experience.

Sincerely,

International Student and Scholar Services



International Scholar Information: Initial Request for Visiting Scholars (J-1 Visa)

Information for BSU host department and Exchange Visitor: Please complete the application form with appropriate signatures and forward to International Student & Scholar Services, 25 Park Terrace. All supporting documents are required when submitting an application. ISSS will then prepare the appropriate form DS-2019. This document cannot be completed without the information requested on this form and the necessary support documents. Note: The minimum duration of participation is three weeks and maximum participation is one year.

Supporting Documents Checklist:

- Exchange Visitor Passport Information Page. Passports must be valid for a minimum of six months at all times. Please submit copies of the passport(s) which will be utilized for the J-1 visa.
 - Copies of any previous US visas held by the exchange visitor
 - Dependents' Passport Information Pages (if applicable)

- BSU Employment Offer Letter (for visiting professor) or Invitation Letter (for research scholar). Please specify the activity to be performed, program start and end dates, salary, or any applicable details. Please note that the J-1 visa cannot be utilized for tenure track positions ([22 CFR 62.20\(d\)](#)). Please also send this letter to the visitor.

- Home Country Employment Letter
 - Position title, employment type, employer's name and supervisor contact information, and specify whether funding is from government or private sector. Please include details of financial support from institution if applicable.

- Proof of English Proficiency
 - Under the new regulations which went into effect on January 5, 2015, the Department of State requires that J-1 sponsors verify that J-1 exchange visitors have sufficient English fluency to:
 - Perform their J-1 activities or complete their academic program;
 - Navigate daily life in the US;
 - Read and comprehend program materials;
 - Understand fully their responsibilities, rights, and protections; and
 - Know how to get help if needed.

- Financial Documentation (personal bank statement, award letter, etc. with amounts in USD) to show that the scholar has funds to cover the following:
 - Anticipated total annual expenses: \$16,752 not including health insurance:
 - Rent, Utilities, Food \$12,362
 - Household needs \$590

- Clothing, Laundry \$600
- Summer Living Expenses \$2,500
- Miscellaneous \$700

Note: Financial documentation will need to be shown for each J-2 dependent the scholar wishes to bring. J-2 dependent financial information will need cover and additional \$7,500 for each dependent.

Exchange visitor financial information may be prorated for a shorter program. Rent and utilities are excluded if space is reserved in the International Scholar House. Financial documentation will need to be shown for each.

Please note: The program start date will coincide with the appropriate BSU semester or session start date. Arrival and departure dates may be different from program start and end dates.

Visitors on the J-1 visa are permitted to enter the U.S. no more than 30 days prior to the program start date. If the exchange visitor will be teaching and will require a Social Security Number, please plan on arriving at least 14 days prior to the program start date. The Social Security Administration asks that applicants wait at least 10 calendar days from the date of arrival before applying for a Social Security Number. This allows the program sponsor (BSU) to verify documents and “validate” the SEVIS record as well as for other government agencies to update their information on the exchange visitor.

Exchange visitors are permitted a 30 day grace period after the program end date. You may utilize this time to travel within the U.S.

Please note that all documents are required in order to issue a form DS-2019. Please email, iss@bridgew.edu with any questions.

Note: Health insurance is not required for the completion of the BSU exchange visitor application or entry to the U.S. However, health insurance coverage is required for the full duration of your program/stay in the U.S. and therefore included in this checklist.

- Health insurance plans should be purchased from a U.S. provider. International visitors are required to provide evidence of health insurance coverage that meets the minimum coverage listed above within 3 days of your arrival in the U.S.

Health insurance costs will vary depending on the provider. It is the exchange visitor’s responsibility to budget accordingly and select a policy that complies with the following U.S. Department of State requirements

- Medical Benefits \$100,000
- Repatriation of Remains \$25,000
- Medical Evacuation \$50,000
- Deductible per accident or illness \$500 or less
- A policy underwritten by an insurance carrier with:
 - an A.M. Best rating of “A-” or above;
 - a McGraw Hill Financial/Standard & Poor’s Claims paying Ability rating of “A-” or above;
 - a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of “B+” or above;
 - a Fitch Ratings, Inc. rating of “A-” or above;
 - a Moody’s Investor Services rating of “A3” or above;

Exchange Visitor Information and BSU Approvals
To be completed by exchange visitor and BSU faculty host

Date: _____

BSU Host Department Information

Department: _____

BSU Faculty Host: _____

Faculty Host Phone: _____

Faculty Host Email _____@bridgew.edu

Applicant Information

Name as it appears in passport: Last/Family: _____ First/Given: _____

Gender as it appears in passport: Male ___ Female ___

Date of Birth: MM___DD___YYYY_____

Current Home Country Residential Address (P.O. Boxes cannot be used):

Mailing Address (if different from above) (Please avoid a P.O. Box if possible):

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Place of Birth: _____
City Country

Country of Citizenship: _____

Country of Permanent Residence: _____

(i.e. student, professor, researcher, etc. – specify Government or Private Sector) (Please include letter of Employment)

Passport number: _____ Expiration date: _____

Has appointee been in J-1 or J-2 status during the last twenty-four (24) months? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please supply all copies of Form DS-2019 issued from previous programs.

If currently in the U.S., please verify current visa status: _____

If yes, please supply all copies of Form DS-2019 issued from previous programs.

Exchange Visitor Information and BSU Approvals

Title of BSU Appointment: _____

Exact nature of activity to be engaged in (please attach appointment letter from BSU hosting department):

Period of Appointment: Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Please utilize semester start and end dates which can be found at: <http://www.bridgew.edu/admissions/registration-information/academic-calendar>

Financial Support: Exchange visitors whose support comes from a BSU professor’s grant are considered to have BSU funding. Government agency support is used only for exchange visitors receiving grants specifically granted to the exchange visitor from their home country government. Exchange visitors who have non-salaried appointments must demonstrate proof of financial support through their own funds or a sponsor's funds. Per federal requirements all funding for the duration of the program must be reported on the DS-2019 documents used to apply for the J-1 visa. Any salary funding offered by the host academic department will need to be approved by the Department Chair or Dean and Human Resources before the DS-2019 can be issued. The DS-2019 will include the estimated cost of rent and utilities as part of BSU funding.

For items (b) through (d), please attach appropriate certification from funding source (i.e. award letter, salary, bank statement).

(a) BSU: Salary offered by academic department \$ _____ per _____ Source: _____

If living in International Scholar House, estimated cost of rent and utilities: \$ _____

Please email ISSS for your housing confirmation and request that the estimated cost of rent and utilities be provided to you. This amount will vary depending upon the length of stay in the International Scholar House.

(b) U.S. Government Agency: \$ _____ per _____ Specify: _____

(c) Home Government: \$ _____ per _____ Specify: _____

(d) Other: \$ _____ per _____ Specify: _____

Dependent Information: If you intend on applying for a J-2 visa for any dependents (spouse or children), please complete the following section. Please note additional financial documentation covering \$7,500 will be required for each dependent.

Name of Dependent	Relationship	Date of Birth	Place of Birth	Country of Citizenship	(Family name, Given name)
1. _____	(Spouse, son, daughter)	(Month/day/year)	(City and country)	(City and country)	
2. _____					
3. _____					

Housing:

Does the exchange visitor need accommodation in the International Scholar House?

Yes: _____ No: _____

If yes, please submit the Scholar House reservation request form along with this request.

Exchange Visitor Information and BSU Approvals – to be completed by BSU faculty host

Submitted By:

By signing below I, the Visiting Scholar / Exchange Visitor confirm that the information included in this application to be true. I am responsible for clarifying my funding information. I am also aware that my DS-2019 will be issued once this application and all supplementary items have been submitted to ISSS and all of the necessary signatures have been obtained.

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Supported By:

By signing below I, the Faculty Host / Sponsor confirm that funding information provided above to be accurate and approved by my Department Chair or Dean.

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Approved By: (when exchange visitor is to receive BSU funding/employment)

By signing below I, the College Dean / Department Chair confirm that funding information provided above to be accurate and has been approved by me.

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Approved By: (when exchange visitor is to receive BSU funding/employment)

By signing below I, the Human Resources Representative confirm that funding/employment information provided above to have been shared with Human Resources.

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Approved By:

By signing below I, the Assistant Provost for Global Engagement and Senior International Office confirm that funding information provided above to have been shared with the MIGE.

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Reviewed By:

By signing below I, the RO/ARO confirm that funding information provided above to have been shared with ISSS and all other required signatures have been obtained.

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Sample letter

(Please place on official Bridgewater State University department letterhead and return to ISSS along with all supporting documentation for all new J-1 Exchange Visitor applications).

J-1 Exchange Visitor – English Proficiency Verification

I have interviewed _____ and can verify that s/he possesses
J-1 Exchange Visitor’s Name
sufficient proficiency in the English language to do the following:

___ Yes ___ No Perform his/her daily J-1 activities or complete their academic programs;

___ Yes ___ No Navigate daily life in the United States;

___ Yes ___ No Read and comprehend program materials;

___ Yes ___ No Understand fully his/her rights, responsibilities and protections;

and,

___ Yes ___ No Know how to get help if necessary.

Please select your interview method:

___ In person on _____
month/day/year

___ Via videoconference (e.g. Face Time, Skype) on _____
month/day/year

___ By telephone (only if videoconferencing is not possible) on _____
month/day/year

Name of evaluator: _____

Title: _____

BSU department: _____

E-mail address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

International Scholar House:
BSU Housing for Visiting Scholars and Guests

The International Scholar House is a small fully furnished, four bedroom, self-service accommodations on the BSU campus. Located at 25 Plymouth St, Bridgewater, MA 02324. It is shared by guests of all genders and nationalities. Guests include adult visiting scholars, faculty, staff and invited guests who are visiting the campus for a few days or a few months. Space is limited, and requests are taken on a first come, first served basis. There is no charge for the use of this facility.

BSU Faculty or staff who wish to invite visitors for short term stays are required to submit an application to the Director, International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), Minnock Institute for Global Engagement. Upon approval of the short term stay, you will receive a confirmation as well as information about key pick-up and other logistics from ISSS. More information regarding the International Scholar House is available at: <https://www.bridgew.edu/office/international-student-scholar-services/international-scholar-house>

Please note that prior approval must be obtained from ISSS to invite and host an international scholar/professor/researcher. Please contact ISSS for inquiries.

Instructions to Inviting Department: Visit the following link and complete the online application, <https://bsuform2.wufoo.com/forms/zsnda20scis6y/>

Your response will be forwarded to ISSS, Minnock Institute for Global Engagement, 25 Park Terrace at iss@bridgew.edu

Once received and reviewed, you will receive an e-mail notification from the ISSS staff with further details. For questions please contact ISSS at 508-531-2730 or iss@bridgew.edu