

Brown Scholar Process Guidelines

1. Nominations

- a. Nominations of Brown Scholars are solicited from VSU academic units, as well as from partner institutions. In selected cases of national importance where collaboration of VSU and federal agencies, NGOs and other organizations are involved, the Director of CIP may propose a nomination to the Brown Scholar Committee, after discussion with the respective academic unit willing to become a host (cases like candidates from the Scholar Rescue Fund).
- b. The Nomination process requires a discussion with the Director of CIP about the potential institutional benefits of hosting a particular scholar, including but not limited to research, teaching, performances, exhibits and publications.
- c. The nominating unit/faculty needs to propose a specific host-stay plan approved by the department and the College that will include period of stay, duties, social and cultural activities and logistical support for the visitor.
- d. The academic host unit works on an intra-campus collaborative plan for the visitor with other academic units and community programs. Community engagement, i.e. lectures, round tables, local media interviews, community events support and participation are highly recommended part of the Brown Scholar program.
- e. The documentation for all nominated candidates for the given fiscal year (July 1 – June 30th of the next academic year) needs to be submitted to the Brown Scholar Committee (also acts as Faculty Internationalization Fund Committee) at least six months prior to the proposed date of the visitor's arrival.
- f. The Brown Scholar Committee endorses/ranks the candidates for the Brown Scholar Award. The final decision of awarding a Brown Scholarship belongs to the VPAA/Provost.

2. Documentation

The director of CIP submits to the VPAA/Provost the necessary documents for a potential Letter of Invitation (hiring process) of a Brown Scholar, including:

- a. Letter of nomination;
- b. Plan for support of the Brown Scholar from the host department
- c. Draft of award letter stipulating VSU financial commitments and logistical arrangements; the draft requires specific research into the transportation and logistical solutions for the specific geographical region. Some of the specific research includes
 - i. (i.e. airline tickets for a r/trip to Africa and many developing countries are much more expensive than similar arrangements for most developed countries);
 - ii. Inquiries are made as to the applicability of the nominee health insurance policy in the U.S., thus planning for related expenses and risk management here at VSU;

- iii. Nominee plans to bring dependents and information about related cost distribution;
- d. Candidates qualifications: scan/copy of terminal degree appropriate for the hiring, CV and other related documents of support
- e. The Brown Scholar Award is effective from the moment the VPAA/Provost signs the Letter of Invitation.
- f. The process of visa-related formalities starts after the letter of acceptance (e-mail suffice) from the nominee is received.
- g.

3. Visa and Other Pre-Arrival Process

- a. The authorized for J-1 visa VSU DSO sends to the candidate the DS2019 form (State Department Bio-Data). *Note:* Only J1 visa will allow payments to the Brown Scholar with the exception when the individual has a green card or is a U.S. citizen living and working at a partner institution abroad.
- b. The bio-data is entered into the SEVIS system this allowing for further visa processing.
- c. The DSO informs the nominee about the need to pay the SEVIS fee and schedule her/his eventual interview visit to the U.S. Consulate with the applicable documentation.
- d. Often multiple e-mail communication messages are needed to guide the nominee through the process. Specific attention is paid to the health insurance arrangements, especially in case of dependents on J-2 visa.
- e. Logistics of arrival/departure schedules is discussed and arrangements made at VSU to address potential issues. Both host unit representative(s) and CIP officers work as a task force to address multiple scenarios and changes in the plan.
- f. The apartment for the nominee is inspected at least a week prior to the scheduled arrival by the host and a CIP representative and work-orders are placed in case of needed repairs.
- g. A 870 number for the visitor is arranged with the Registrar in order to address IT account and other related issues
- h. The academic department host discusses with the nominee the assignments and other related program questions (Skype is a good option for a small committee to participate, especially if more than one unit is involved). If needed, changes are made to reflect eventual special topics/courses/modules in the academic schedules. In case of team-teaching specific teaching arrangements and other curricular adjustments should be discussed and made for effective participation by the nominee. Similar steps are suggested for joint research/publishing efforts.
- i. At a departmental meeting the leading departmental partner/host presents updated plan for professional, social and cultural integration of the Brown Scholar; Specific tasks are assigned to individual participating in the project, both staff and faculty.

4. Arrival and Post-Arrival Logistics

- a. CIP assist the Brown Scholar with visa and logistical formalities and issues and maintains visitor's immigration file for SEVIS.

- b. One of the most critical issues is both at pre-arrival and after arrival to verify the visitor (and dependents) health insurance status and limitations.
- c. Documentation of all related expenses is required for travel reimbursement.
- d. Schedules may need to be changed. Both host department and CIP will work on adjustments.
- e. The host needs to check the living conditions at the apartment a week prior to Brown Scholar's arrival. Beware that some of the appliances will be new to the guest.
- f. Meeting of the guest is usually a responsibility of the host unit. If needed, CIP will help with transportation (make sure to reserve the van ahead of time).
- g. A hiring package from the VPAA office needs to be filled with the guest's data and signature, however, the hiring will not be effective until a Social Security number is secured. Consult with CIO about the process.
- h. 10 days after Brown Scholar's arrival s/he is eligible to apply for SS#. CIP will assist in the process. The usual waiting time for a SS# is 2-3 weeks. Technically, until a SS# is secured the Brown Scholar cannot teach.
- i. To speed up the SS# information, the host may take the visitor after 48 hours from the first interview in the Social Security Office back to this office for a printout of the SS# from internal correspondence between SSO and Immigration.
- j. Once a SS# is secured and documentation for hiring completed at the VPAA office, the Brown Scholar may start teaching and lab work.
- k. With the exception of those visitors who have their terminal degrees from a U.S. university, the majority will not be familiar with specific VSU grading practices and many rules and policies on interaction with students. Please make sure that you provide an introduction to the expected behavioral norms here at VSU. It is suggested that a VSU faculty should be the faculty on record for final grading.
- l. The host department needs to make all efforts to coordinate the professional and social inclusion of the Brown Scholar in the life of the department, the college, the university and the community.
- m. Most administrative and logistical issues that the visitor will deal with, like travel and visa reimbursement for the international trip, insurance, apartment maintenance and many unsuspected other little problems will arise. Please consult with CIP. In most cases we will be the place to address and help with the problems.
- n. A weekly evaluation of the Brown Scholar's activities by the host and the head of the host department is suggested. Monthly evaluations with CIP are strongly recommended. A final report will be required after the completion of the program.
- o. In case of a Brown Scholar visitor not performing agreed duties or displaying behavior that is not acceptable by the U.S. legal framework, the host will need to file a complaint via CIP to the Brown Scholar Committee for termination of the contract. Such termination will be effective upon approval by the VPAA/Provost.