

## **International Students & Scholars Office**

# **Prepare for New International Visiting Scholars**

Although the International Students & Scholars Office (ISSO) helps arriving international scholars, we are not adequately staffed to personally accompany each new international visitor to look for housing, or to assist them with shopping for furniture, groceries, etc., upon their arrival.

The International Visiting Scholar should be encouraged to meet with our office during their first week on campus. The International Students & Scholars Office provides assistance with the visa issuance process and continues to ensure that the scholar and their dependents maintain legal status while at UMass Lowell. We include the scholar on all social activities offered by the office.

We also provide a personalized arrival orientation which includes the following:

- Information on Housing (but we do not personally assist in taking scholars to look for housing)
- Information on how to Set up Utilities (electricity, phone, gas, cable service, etc.), who to call/what to present
- Provide letters/call Landlords whenever necessary to verify their legal status
  - Provide the same for cell phone companies, and other vendors as needed
- How to obtain a Social Security Number
- How to apply for a UMass Lowell ID or Driver's License
- Immigration Status, Travel, Work Authorization information

### **UMass Lowell Host Department Responsibilities**

**LETTER OF INVITATION:** All Visiting Scholars require an invitation letter from their UMass Lowell supervisor to present with the visa document at the U.S. Embassy when applying for the visa. The letter should state: dates of appointment; description of anticipated responsibilities (research, teaching, etc.); UMass Lowell financial support, if any. The letter should also identify whether or not the following apply or not apply (library privileges, office space, telephone and computer services, salary, and health insurance.) This is very important as it alleviates any possibility of misunderstanding upon arrival.

**Financial Documentation** - The U.S. Embassy expects the International Students & Scholars Office will review financial documentation as proof of the Visiting Scholar's financial solvency prior to issuing the visa document. At UMass Lowell, we follow the following "Estimate of Expenses"

\$ 1,200/month (\$14,400/year)

\$ 400/month for spouse

\$ 100/month per child

Health Insurance Costs are not included in the above-mentioned figures. Please expect an approximate additional cost of \$250 per month per person for health insurance related costs.

Our office will provide information to the incoming scholar on housing, transportation and other arrival logistics with the issuance of their visa document. However, your invitation to sponsor an international scholar goes beyond the invitation letter.

## Please read below to help you prepare for a successful partnership:

- 1) **Verify that the Visiting Scholar has adequate English language proficiency to successfully interact with all** at the University and not only with those at the university from their own country. We strongly encourage you to do a skype interview to verify English proficiency.
- 2) Verify that the Visiting Scholar has the necessary academic credentials and awareness of appropriate laboratory guidelines and export control policies to execute research in a safe and professional manner
- 3) **Prepare to assist the Visiting Scholar to find appropriate housing upon arrival.** Please note that the university does not provide on-campus housing to visiting scholars. We recommend you identify someone in your department that will assist the visiting scholar to locate the appropriate housing upon their arrival as well as assist them with shopping for initial groceries, taking public transportation and getting acquainted with the campus and surrounding community.
- 4) **Airport Transportation from Logan to Lowell**

We will also provide this transportation information to the incoming scholar

- **FLIGHT LINE**:- (Provides 24 hour service/7 days per week  
Phone: 1-800-245-2525 - URL: <http://www.flightlineinc.com>  
Scholar can contact Flightline, with their credit card information, to make the appropriate reservations and obtain the UML discounted price - The UMass Lowell Corporate Account Number is UML23000.
- You can also pay for their transportation costs – The International Students & Scholars Office can provide an additional Transportation vendor, upon your request, that will charge your UMass Lowell account for airport transportation service.

### Other Local Transportation Services:

#### **JT'S AIRPORT SHUTTLE SERVICE**

John Warren - Owner  
27 Royalston Avenue  
Lowell, MA. 01851  
**Phone:** 978-256-1307

#### **TWC AIRPORT LIMO**

John DaSilva - President  
33 Nabnasset Street  
Westford, MA. 01886  
**Phone:** 978-692-8880  
**Fax:** 978-251-0353

## Quick Reference of most common visa types sponsored at UMass Lowell

### **J-1 Exchange Visitor Category – the most common for visiting scholars**

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1267.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1267.html)

- This visa category is NOT intended for permanent positions such as tenure-track. Scholar must have intent to return home.
- J-1 Visiting Scholars can be self-funded (making it feasible for visiting unpaid scholars).
- All J-1 & their J-2 dependents must maintain health insurance, in particular, repatriation of remains and medical evacuation benefits.

- J-2 Dependents are able to apply for work authorization.
- J-1 or J-2 Scholars are not able to change to H-1B work status if they're subject to the two-year foreign residence requirement. (Please refer below for more detailed information on the two-year foreign residence requirement.)\*

The J-1 Visa Document (Form DS-2019) is issued directly by the UMass Lowell International Students & Scholars Office, making it a very convenient process.

#### **H-1B- Specialty Occupation Category**

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1271.html#1](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1271.html#1)

- **The H-1B Specialty Category** is only intended for paid positions of a specialty nature (individual must have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in the field the job is in).
- UMass Lowell must pay prevailing wage for the position as determined by the Department of Labor.
- This is the visa category most used for long-term faculty positions or tenure-track positions.
- The maximum amount of time on H-1B status is six years (with a maximum initial period of three).
- Concurrent employment is permitted; each employer must apply for an H-1B petition.
- Dual intent is allowed (i.e., person can intend to immigrate to US).
- H-4 Dependents are not permitted to apply for work authorization.
- There are significant fees associated with the H-1B Application Process (including the attorney fees – approximately up to \$3,500).
- All fees associated with the H-1B process, including attorney fees, must be paid by UMass Lowell
- Processing can take from 6-10 weeks

#### **O-1 Category – Scholars of Extraordinary Ability or Achievement**

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1271.html#1](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1271.html#1)

- **The O-1 category** requires considerable documentation and is best reserved for the most highly qualified professors, researchers, and artists with a high level of expertise (i.e., top in their field).
- The level of paperwork required for this category is similar to the permanent residency application.
- O-1 permits concurrent employment, but each employer must apply for a separate petition.
- O-1 can be granted for a maximum initial period of three years, with one-year extensions possible indefinitely.
- Dependents (O-3 visa holders) are not permitted to apply for work authorization.
- The filing fees for an O-1 are typically similar to those for an H-1B, as mentioned above.
- All fees associated with the O-1 process, including attorney fees, must be paid by UMass Lowell.
- Processing can take from 6-10 weeks.

#### **TN - Professionals from Canada or Mexico**

part of The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1274.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1274.html)

- The TN is only to be used for temporary employment (not appropriate for tenure-track or permanent positions)
- It can be issued indefinitely in a maximum of three-year increments.
- Dependents (TD visa holders) are not permitted to apply for work authorization.
- There is minimal paperwork. A letter from UMass Lowell's sponsoring department will usually suffice. The letter must be reviewed and approved by the International Students & Scholars Office.
- There are some differences in the TN process for Canadian and Mexican citizens.