

**University of Pittsburgh
School of Pharmacy**

**English Language Proficiency Requirements for
J-1 Scholars/Postdocs and B-1 Temporary Business Visitors**

Background

On January 5, 2015, the Department of State updated their J-1 program requirements to include the following eligibility criteria:

In order to ensure their success (both in their program and living in the United States), J-1 exchange visitors are now subject to English language proficiency requirements. Program sponsors (hosting departments) are required to determine if the incoming J-1 exchange visitor possesses "sufficient proficiency in the English language to participate in his or her program" **AND** "function on a day-to-day basis." The government also states that an objective measurement be used to determine the J-1 exchange visitor's English proficiency.

Please note that these requirements do not replace [University Policy 02-02-16: Certification of English Language Proficiency for Teaching](#) or [University Policy 09-02-01: Assessment of English Language Proficiency for Admission](#). Scholars who will teach or be enrolled in coursework as part of their J program must continue to satisfy the applicable University policy in addition to meeting the new J requirements.

In light of expanding international collaborations in the School of Pharmacy, the above requirements are being extended to include BOTH J-1 Scholars/Postdocs and B-1 Temporary Business Visitors.

Section 1: J-1 VISA versus B-1 VISA

The most common VISA's obtained by incoming internationals are J-1 Visiting Scholar/Research Scholar and B-1 Temporary Business Visitor. However, within the J-1 VISA category there are three (3) different types of J-1 VISAs. There are different requirements and restrictions for each VISA type. They are outlined in the table below:

	J-1 Short-Term Scholar	J-1 Student Intern	J-1 Visiting Scholar/Postdoc	B-1 Temporary Business Visitor
Duration of Stay	1 day to 6 months maximum	1 day to 1 year maximum	3 weeks up to 5 years maximum	Up to 6 months (initial stay)
Proof of English Proficiency	YES	YES	YES	YES-required by SOP not DOS
Can Receive payment from Pitt	YES	YES	YES	NO

Can be self-funded	YES	YES	YES	YES
Proof of Health Insurance required	YES	YES	YES	NO
Proof of financial support (\$17,112 per year-more if there are dependents accompanying the international)	YES-to be submitted to Pitt	YES-to be submitted to Pitt	YES-to be submitted to Pitt	YES-to be submitted to the Consulate
Formal Offer letter required	YES	YES	YES	NO-but a letter of invitation is required
Cost to PI/Department/School	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$0
Degree Required	Yes	NO	YES	NO
Child Clearances Required	YES	YES	YES	YES
Subject to 2 year home country rule (212e) and/or 12 and 24 month bar	NO	YES	YES	NO

Anyone entering the United States on any type of J-1 VISA is sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh Office of International Services and will have a DS2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status) issued to them for their travel to the United States. B-1 Visitors are responsible for obtaining their VISA stamps on their own and do not receive DS2019's.

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of all visitors within the School of Pharmacy, the following guidelines are to be followed when inviting an international visitor to the School of Pharmacy:

1. International visitors that will be in **ANY** University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy laboratory to participate in scientific experiments will be required to apply for a J-1 VISA no matter the duration of stay or preference of the visitor.
2. International visitors whose primary purpose at the University of Pittsburgh is to observe can apply for a B-1 VISA provided that their stay is less than six (6) months in length. Dates must be confirmed in advance with the host faculty member at the School of Pharmacy. They can also choose to apply for a J-1 Short-term Scholar VISA.
3. Any international visitor requesting to stay longer than six (6) months will be required to apply for a J-1 VISA.
4. Any international visitor requesting to come to the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy that has no degree must apply for either a J-1 Student Intern VISA or a B-1 VISA. They are not eligible for a J-1 Short-Term Scholar or a J-1 Research Scholar VISA.

Section 2: English Language Proficiency Requirements

ALL international visitors in the School of Pharmacy regardless of VISA type will be required to provide acceptable proof of English Language Proficiency. The School of Pharmacy will accept **ANY ONE** of the following as that proof.

Accepted objective measurements

1. **Native English Speaker** - If the J-1 exchange visitor is from a [country whose official language is English](#).
2. **Recognized English Test** - Test results should be less than two years old. The Office of International Services recommends a [minimum TOEFL score of 75](#) with all subscores in at least the intermediate or fair range or an [IELTS score of at least 6.5](#).
3. **Signed Documentation from an Academic Institution or English Language School** - Acceptable documentation includes a transcript or diploma certifying completion of a degree at an institution where the sole language of instruction is English **OR** official certification of completion of an English language program within the previous two years where proficiency attained is clearly indicated (OIS will evaluate these certificates on a case by case basis). If the prospective scholar has earned a degree in the US or other country whose official language/language of instruction is English, transcripts and/or a diploma from the academic institution will be accepted.
4. **Documented Interview Conducted by the Program Sponsor (host department)** - An interview must be conducted when none of the above documentation is available or where documentation does not clearly indicate current, adequate English proficiency for the proposed J program. The interview must be held in-person, through a video-conference, or telephone (if video-conferencing is not an option). The interview may be recorded.
 - o The interviewer must use the [J-1 English Proficiency: Interview Assessment Report](#)

Section 3: Conclusions

In order to make the process as easy as possible, the incoming international visitor can choose which option they would like to fulfill as specified by the standards listed above

In the case of **B-1 VISA applicants only** the School of Pharmacy will accept scores that are older than two (2) years if the applicant chooses to fulfill the requirement using option 2 or 3.

If **ANY** applicant chooses option four (4), the host faculty member **MUST** complete an interview in English using the questions on the English Proficiency: Interview Assessment Report (attached). The reports will be kept in the international visitor's file in the case of J-1 applicants and their Employee File for B-1 Visitors. All recordings will be kept in the office of the Pharmaceutical Sciences Department Administrator (currently Michele Chamberlain) so that they will be readily available in case the Office of International Services requests to view the files.

The Office of International Services will make all final determinations as to the acceptability of all submitted documentation. Updates to this policy will be made as regulations change.

Approved: April 2015