January 5, 2015

The US State Department recently announced regulatory changes to its J-1 Exchange Visitor Program that becomes effective now (with the exception of the new health insurance requirements which will be implemented in May 2015). The changes that most directly affect departmental requests to sponsor J-1 Exchange Visitors include documentation of English Language Proficiency. Changes to the regulations are detailed below. Please forward this information to all department administrators in your school that are responsible for completing and submitting the J-1 applications.

**English Language Proficiency**

The new regulations add a requirement to document sufficient English language proficiency in order to:

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

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

1. A recognized English language test (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS or other recognized language proficiency exam);
2. Signed documentation from an academic institution or English language school) or
3. A documented interview by the hosting department with the J-1 exchange visitor, either in person or by videoconference

**Health Insurance Requirement**

The level of mandated insurance coverage will increase for all J-1 and J-2 participants. This requirement will be effective as of May 2015. All current J-1 scholars will need to verify that their insurance meets
the new required levels of coverage. If the J-1 exchange visitor is employed by the University of Virginia and is eligible for health insurance coverage as part of the benefits package the insurance program at UVa will meet the new requirements. The new level of coverage required can be found on our website here:

http://www.virginia.edu/iso/issp/NewWindows/HealthInsScholarExchange.html

**Reporting and Other Requirements**

New reporting requirements include:

- e-mail addresses for both J-1 and J-2 Exchange Visitors
- arrival and departure dates for J-2 dependents if they are different then the J-1 Exchange Visitor
- DS-2019 forms cannot be emailed or faxed to any party other than the Department of State or the Department of Homeland Security

In order to comply with these new regulations we have revised the J-1 Exchange Visitor application form. A copy of the new forms for J-1 and J-2 can be found on our website here:

http://www.virginia.edu/iso/issp/department.html

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns as we implement new procedures to comply with these new regulations.

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