Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program

Pre-Program Considerations

The Fulbright team at IIE strongly encourages scholars to communicate regularly with their faculty associate and associated administrators prior to arrival to plan for their exchange at their U.S. Institution. The following topics are provided to guide Fulbrighters through these important conversations and should assist them in being better prepared to undertake their proposed program.

Access to Professional/Institutional/University Services

- ✓ Work with your faculty associate to connect with the institution's Office for International Students and Scholars. They will have many useful resources to pass along and may have listservs they recommend you join to keep informed about campus resources and activities.
- ✓ What type of workspace will you be able to utilize/have access to? Is it private or shared?
- ✓ What kind of technological support will you be able to count on? Will you have access to a university computer, or must you have your own laptop?
- ✓ Will you be able to obtain a university ID card or similar to access the spaces where you will be carrying out your project? Assuming yes, are there steps you can take in advance to ensure you receive your card/access promptly? What steps will you need to take upon arrival?
- ✓ Ask if a Social Security Number is required for any access and note that unless you already have a Social Security Number (they never expire), it will take several weeks after your arrival to receive your SSN.
- ✓ If your project is in a laboratory, what steps will you need to be taken to ensure access?
- ✓ Discuss any samples you might need to bring and/or ship and explore the regulations and costs pertaining to these research costs.
- ✓ Will you have full borrowing privileges at the university's library(ies)? Are there administrative steps required to ensure access if available?

Healthcare

Healthcare and health insurance in the United States is expensive and often involves complex navigation of provider networks. Planning in advance for your care and coverage is important.

- ✓ Fulbright provides J-1 compliant health benefits to the Fulbrighter (ASPE), but not to any associated dependents. Supplemental coverage is always encouraged for the Fulbrighter and is **required** for any accompanying J-2 dependents. Universities may have insurance options you can opt into or purchase.
- ✓ Note that some institutions will require you to purchase their insurance; some will allow you to opt in, and others may not permit Visiting Faculty to enroll. It is important to have this conversation before you start your exchange so you understand your options and sign up ahead of time to ensure coverage for the duration of the program period.

- ✓ Your university may have generalized health services (confidential counseling, for example) that might be accessible to you.
- ✓ To reduce the chances of needing urgent care, make sure to do any preventative healthcare visits, including dentistry and eye exams, before you depart for the United States.
- ✓ Plan for securing any required medications by bringing it with you (checking if customs will allow it in) or by planning to fill prescriptions locally in your community in the United States. Familiarize yourself ahead of time or upon arrival with in-network physicians and pharmacies near your campus, so you are prepared in the event you need care during your program. You should identify a primary doctor for non-urgent issues, an urgent care center for emergent issues, and the closest hospital emergency room for true medical emergencies.

Housing and Transportation

Securing housing for the duration of your exchange is usually cited as the most challenging aspect of undertaking a Fulbright Visiting Scholar exchange. It is your individual responsibility to arrange the housing that suits your needs, but your U.S. campus may have resources that can help.

- ✓ Ask your faculty associate if they have general guidance or advice on securing local rental housing convenient to campus.
- ✓ Find out if there is an on-campus housing office where you can inquire whether there are housing options for visiting faculty members.
- ✓ Ask also about off-campus housing assistance or resources that may be available through the university.
- ✓ Some universities with faculty housing may have a list of temporary housing (referred to as "sublet") for faculty homes vacant during a sabbatical, for example. This can be a good source of furnished housing during the academic calendar year.
- ✓ Consider proximity to campus/daily activities and understand the available transportation if you are securing off-campus housing. Remember you are required to live within reasonable commuting distance from your primary site of activity.
- ✓ While planning ahead is important, always proceed with caution, especially with sources outside the university, and be aware that housing scams can occur. If possible, avoid signing a lease until you have inspected the rental unit yourself.
- ✓ Many scholars come during the 30-day pre-program period to secure their longer-term housing, starting with a short-term rental first.
- ✓ Most rental housing will require at least one month's rent deposit and may also require 1-2 months' rent at lease signing. Please plan ahead to ensure you have access to personal funds to cover these costs given your stipend may not be sufficient or won't be disbursed to you until your program start date.

Institutional Fees, Research Costs, and General Financial Considerations

While the majority of U.S. institutions are able to waive affiliation fees for Fulbright Visiting Scholars, that will not always be the case depending on your university's policies. Ultimately, it will be the Fulbrighter's responsibility to ensure the required costs are met, even if it must come from personal funding. Make sure you have discussed with your faculty associate and have a financial plan in place regarding the following topics:

- ✓ Required Affiliation or Departmental Fees
- ✓ Laboratory Fees
- ✓ Bench Fees (more common in law or business schools)
- ✓ Research Supplies or shipping costs
- ✓ University cost of living minimums (Does your Fulbright award amount meet any monthly financial minimums required by your U.S. institution?)

Stay in Touch

Thank you for considering these points ahead of your exchange in conversation with your U.S. institution to ensure the smoothest arrival possible! Should any problems emerge during your planning that could affect your program, make sure to reach out to your Fulbright Program contact so we can work together to resolve any issues.