



INSTRUCTIONS TO INVITE PARENTS OR RELATIVES

Q: What can I do to invite my parents / relatives / friends to visit me in the United States?

A: Nothing specific is required to come from you or from West Chester University. Your visitors should apply for a tourist visa (B1/B2) if they wish to visit the United States. Information about the tourist visa can be found on the U.S. Department of State website <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html>

Q: What do my parents / relatives / friends have to do to get the B1/B2 visa stamp?

A: Your visitors should go to the website of the nearest U.S. Embassy/Consulate in their home country to schedule an appointment. They will complete the visa application and be prepared to provide documents that prove the following important points:

- Each visitor intends to return to their home country, i.e. they have sufficient economic and social ties to motivate them to return home.

Examples:

Proof of continuing employment
Proof of property ownership (house, land, etc.)
Proof that close family members remain in the home country

- Each visitor has a short-term specific plan/reason for visiting the U.S.
- Each visitor has sufficient financial resources to cover the expenses of their visit to the U.S. and their return to the home country. While no specific figure is required to show proof, our recommendation is to show at least \$1,000 USD available for each month of the intended visit in addition to airfare and other travel costs. (Bank statements are generally sufficient.)

Q: What can I do to help my parents / relatives / friends with their B1/B2 visa application?

A: If you wish to provide additional documentation, we suggest the following documents:

- An invitation letter from **you** detailing the dates of the intended visit and a summary of the activities to take place during the visit. We have attached an invitation letter template to this instruction sheet for your convenience. You can either choose to fill in the blanks on the template or create your own letter using the template as a guide. You should fill out a separate invitation letter for each person you are inviting.
- A photocopy of your I-94 and Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 as proof that you are legally in the U.S.
- If your visitors intend to attend your commencement ceremony:

Information about the date, time, and location of the commencement ceremony available on the WCU website.

Q: How long can people with a tourist visa status stay in the United States?

A: The U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer that allows your visitors to enter the U.S. has the authority to decide how long your visitors may stay. Any visitor who is found otherwise admissible and is issued a Form I-94, will be admitted for a minimum period of six months, regardless of whether less time is requested, provided, that any required passport is valid as specified in section 212(a)(26) of the Act.

We recommend that your visitors carry an invitation letter from you in order to clarify their intentions in the U.S. (i.e. business visitor or tourist).

NOTE: The final decision for length of entry is at the discretion of the Port of Entry officer.

NOTE: Visa Waiver Program visitors are handled differently – see below.

Health Insurance for Visitors

We strongly recommend visitors purchase travel and health insurance when visiting the United States. All visitors should obtain suitable travel and health insurance for the duration of the stay. Health insurance policies should provide at least \$100,000 in major medical coverage. Insurance policies can be purchased here in the U.S. or in your home country.

VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP), administered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in consultation with the State Department, permits citizens of 40 countries to travel to the United States for business or tourism for stays of up to 90 days without a visa. In return, those 40 countries must permit U.S. citizens and nationals to travel to their countries for a similar length of time without a visa for business or tourism purposes. Since its inception in 1986, the VWP has evolved into a comprehensive security partnership with many of America's closest allies. The VWP utilizes a risk-based, multi-layered approach to detect and prevent terrorists, serious criminals, and other *mala fide* actors from traveling to the United States. This approach incorporates regular, national-level risk assessments concerning the impact of each program country's participation in the VWP on U.S. national security and law enforcement interests. It also includes comprehensive vetting of individual VWP travelers prior to their departure for the United States, upon arrival at U.S. ports of entry, and during any subsequent air travel within the United States.

Please visit the [Department of Homeland Security](#) website for more information about the VWP.

LETTER OF INVITATION (TEMPLATE)

[student or scholar's name]
[address]
[phone number]

[date]
U.S. [Consulate or Embassy]
[city, country location of U.S. Consulate or Embassy]

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is [student or scholar's name]. I am a [your position: graduate or undergraduate student, researcher, professor, etc.] at the West Chester University of Pennsylvania in [F-1 or J-1...] status. [If you are a student on post-completion OPT or Academic Training you should say this here.]

I am writing this letter to confirm that I have invited my [relationship to student/scholar], [name of person(s) being invited], citizen[s] of [country], to visit me for a period of [number of weeks or months]. I would like to visit with my [relationship to student/scholar] in Pennsylvania. [state purpose of visit here].

[name of person(s) being invited] will be presenting this letter to you, along with evidence to establish their close ties to [country], and to assure you that they will return prior to the expiration of their stay in the United States. During their time in the US, I certify that I will be fully responsible for the cost of room, board and travel within the US [state this only if it is true].

Your consideration of this request is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

[student or scholar's name]