

English Department Faculty: Do You Want to Sponsor an International Visiting Scholar?

Visiting Scholar Solicitations

Professors and Lecturers (and occasionally graduate students) from abroad contact our faculty requesting the opportunity to research at our institution for a semester or year while sponsored by one of our faculty members. Feel free to forward any such solicitations to Marylou Gramm, mag20@pitt.edu, letting her know whether you are interested in sponsoring this individual or not, and she will reply accordingly.

If you wish to sponsor a visiting scholar because their research plans interest you and/or overlap with your own current research endeavors, then read on about the responsibilities and labor you will assume.

- **Strongly Recommended:** Before offering an official invitation to the scholar, obtain a substantial research prospectus so that you can determine whether their research plans are of interest to you.

Sponsors of prospective visiting scholars **MUST** do the following:

1. Gain approval of their prospective visitor from the Chair of English.
2. Obtain from the scholar their signature on the official [visitor participation agreement form](#).
3. Complete a [customs export form](#).
4. Send to Jennifer Ridge in payroll: the visiting scholar's CV, the signed participation agreement, and the customs export form: jmr248@pitt.edu. Once you receive Jennifer Ridge's approval, move to step 5.
5. Supply our department administrator with the following documents:
 - I. Scholar's signed letter of invitation (letter template available from Marylou; note: this differs from the participation agreement form)
 - II. Scholar's completed [collaborative agreement form](#) (differs from participation agreement form)
 - III. Scholar's CV
 - IV. Scholar's photo of passport
 - V. Scholar's **documented** proof of sufficient funding for their stay (many visiting international scholars are funded by their academic institution and/or government)
 - VI. Scholar's completed customs export form (see #3 above)
 - VII. Completed [Skype Language Proficiency Interview form](#). This entails holding a 15-minute Skype interview with your scholar—a conversation to verify their adequate fluency in English.

Be sure to acquire and complete the above 7 required items at least 6 months *before* the visiting scholar expects to travel to our country so that administrators in English and in the Office of International Students and Scholars at Pitt have time to process these materials for the visa application.

Please note: as the sponsor, you are responsible for advancing the paperwork and remaining in contact with the visitor during their stay. Most visiting scholars have faculty appointments and are taking research leaves; PhD visitors may require more elaborate forms of documentation and support from sponsors.

What are your responsibilities as a sponsor?

Questions? Contact Marylou Gramm, Coordinator of Visiting Scholars mag20@pitt.edu

You should plan to be on campus during the term of your sponsorship so that you are available for questions or complications that might arise for the scholar and to discuss their research during their stay.

Do not agree to sponsor a scholar for a period including May through July if you cannot be present.

Sponsoring faculty members have offered support to visiting scholars in the following forms:

- hold regular meetings with the visiting scholar to discuss their research questions and progress;
- permit them to be a silent (or participating) auditor in your class;
- assist them in becoming a silent auditor in undergraduate or graduate classes of interest (assisting, for example, by locating classes of interest to your visiting scholar and emailing the faculty member teaching that class to ask for permission, etc.);
- orient them to library resources—stacks, data bases, special collections, interlibrary loans, etc.;
- inform them of departmental and university calendars of events and conferences of interest;
- create the opportunity for them to present research to our faculty in a brown bag or other forum.

Sponsors do not do the following (so inform your visitor should they make such requests):

- We do not provide for or assist scholars with locating housing, office space, or financial support. (This is stated in the letter of invitation but might bear repeating to your scholar.)
- We do not assist scholars with travel arrangements or transport to or within the United States.
- We do not provide computers, photocopying, books, or other amenities.
- We are not expected to supervise or read drafts of the visiting scholar's research project.
- We are not expected to edit visiting scholars' writing or provide them publishing possibilities.
- We are not obligated to help visiting scholars network with other professionals.

What happens when your visiting scholar arrives?

- It is expected that you will set up a meeting fairly soon after your visiting scholar arrives in Pittsburgh. (Some sponsors choose to pick up their scholars at the airport.)
- Upon arrival, visiting scholars report to our department administrators in order to acquire a Pitt identification number for access to the University Library System and course web (should they audit a class). Processing this university ID number can take as many as 4 weeks.
- Upon arrival, visiting scholars also report to the Office of International Students and Scholars for an orientation and to revalidate their documentation.