Inviting Family Members and/or Friends to Visit the U.S. in Tourist Visa Status

Family members and friends who are planning to visit you in the U.S. for a period of less than 6 months need to apply for a tourist visa (B1/B2 visa).

Depending on the length of stay, spouses and dependent children of F-1 and J-1 visa holders may be eligible to apply for F-2 or J-2 dependent visas or for B-1/B-2 tourist visas. Consulting with the ISSO on options for spouses/children will be important to confirm the best visa option.

While visa documents, such as Form I-20 (F visa) or DS-2019 (J visa), are not issued in order to apply for a B-1/B-2 tourist visa, officials at U.S. Consulates or Embassies expect that applicants will be able to provide specific documents:

1. Applicant needs to have an Invitation Letter from YOU, along with an Enrollment Letter that you can request from Brandeis University Registrar’s Office to confirm your student status (you may send a copy of your transcript as well). Your invitation letter MUST list the purpose of the visit (for example, if the visa application is traveling to the U.S. to attend your Commencement Ceremonies). Also, the visit to the United States must be temporary (less than 6 months). Thus, you may specify on your Invitation Letter the duration of the visitor’s planned stay in the United States.

   Please note that United States Consulates or Embassies Officials will only acknowledge invitation letters from YOU. Therefore, invitation letters from the ISSO are not required.

2. Applicant needs to provide a bank statement or other documentation as proof of sufficient funds to support themselves while visiting the U.S. You may also provide your current bank statement in order to show that you can cover their living expenses during their temporary stay in the United States.

3. Applicant needs to prove their intent to return home -- such as evidence of a job, property, business ownership, immediate family members who remain back home, or any strong ties to their home country. Copies of the return airline ticket or reservation will also be helpful. For more information, please visit the U.S. Department of State website (http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/frequently-asked-questions.html).

How to apply for a B1/B2?

Applicants must apply for a B-1/B-2 visa from a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad. For more information on how to apply for a visa, please visit the U.S. Department of State (http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/visit/visitor.html).

NOTE: If your spouse and/or children plan to visit for less than 6 months, they may be eligible for the B-1/B-2 visa status rather than a dependent F-2 or J-2. Please contact ISSO if you have any questions.

Visa Waiver Program

Citizens of Visa Waiver Program participating countries, and Canadian Citizens, may stay in the U.S. for up to 90 days without a visa. For more information on the Visa Waiver Program, please view this link (http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/visit/visa-waiver-program.html).

Please note that before traveling to the U.S., Visa Waiver applicants must have the ESTA pre-clearance authorization (http://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/esta). Applicants are required to show evidence of ESTA approval at the U.S. port of entry.

United States Port-of-Entry

At the United States port of entry, a CBP officer may grant entry to the U.S. for an authorized period of stay noted on a paper or electronic Form I-94.