

## Inviting Friends and Relatives to Vassar

Use this information to advise friends and family who you invite to visit you at Vassar. There are some actions you and your visitor(s) will need to take, and there is some documentation that you and/or they will need to assemble prior to their visa interview.

### ***What letters can you provide you provide your friends and family to aid their visa process?***

Plan on providing each visitor with two letters, well in advance of the trip, to bring to their visa interview(s):

1. One letter is an invitation from **you**, and should:
  1. be addressed individually to each visitor, including their full address and relation to you
  2. mention the length of the visit
  3. state who will provide financial support to cover the visit
  4. cite the purpose of the visit (e.g. to attend your commencement)
2. The second letter is an invitation from OIS, for which you will provide us:
  1. the purpose of the visit
  2. the name
  3. the relationship
  4. and the address, for each individual you are inviting

### ***What other documentation can you provide that will help in the visa process?***

You can provide an official transcript and/or a copy of your I-20 to help prove that you are a student at Vassar.

### ***What about financial verification?***

The answer depends upon who is providing financial support for the trip. If you are providing financial support, then you **must** provide your visitor with a bank statement or other verification of sufficient funds to support them during their stay in the US. Visitors providing their own financial support must bring copies of their own bank statements and/or other verification of funds to their visa interview.

### ***What kind of visa will my friends or relatives apply for?***

The most likely form of visa is the B-2 tourist visa. Advise your visitors to view the non-immigrant visa page of the US consulate or embassy closest to them in their home country, as specific requirements may vary from nation to nation. Some general information about visitor visas can be found on the US State Department visitor visa page:

[http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1262.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1262.html)

***What are “proof of ties” and how do I advise my friends and family accordingly?***

Proof of ties are essential to prove that your guests are just planning a visit and are not intending to emigrate to the US. Acceptable “proof of ties” to bring to the visa interview are:

- copies of titles or deeds to property owned (land, house, apartment) in their home country
- a letter from their employer
- any other evidence such as close family members (parents, children, grandchildren), bank statements from their home country, or proof that they are retired and living on a government pension

***What is the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and how does it affect the visa process?***

- The VWP permits citizens of participating countries to apply for admission to the US for 90 days or less, as nonimmigrant visitors for business (B1) or pleasure (B2)
- For details about the VWP, including a list of participating countries and instructions, please visit the US State Department web page: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without\\_1990.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html)

***What if the visa is denied?***

First, do not engage the consular officer in an argument. Do ask the officer for a written explanation for the denial AND a list of documents she or he would recommend they provide to overcome the refusal. Thus, do advise your friends and relatives to apply for a visa as early as possible!