

## Tourist Status (B-1, B-2, VWP (ESTA))

Individuals in the U.S. in a tourist status may generally engage in temporary business, pleasure, tourism and vacation activities. While they may engage in business activities, they may not work. The following activities are permitted in an academic setting

- Observing and consulting
- Independent research that does not benefit the University
- Negotiations, conferences and seminars
- Medical clerkships for medical school students

Individuals in the U.S. as a tourist may not be employed and may not receive a salary. Under the following circumstances, they may receive an honorarium and associated incidental expenses for eligible academic activities (which can include lecturing, guest teaching or performing in an academic sponsored festival):

- The activities last no longer than 9 days (inclusive of weekends and holidays)
- The honorarium is for services conducted for the benefit of the University
- The alien has not accepted such payments or expenses from more than five institutions over the last six months.

FSIS generally is not involved with the tourist visa application process for foreign nationals. Foreign nationals may request an invitation letter. The purpose of the letter is to assist the applicant in substantiating his or her invitation to a consular officer. This letter is prepared by the inviting department and should:

- Be written on U-M department letterhead
- Address only the event and/or compensation for the event. Immigration regulations etc should not be addressed.

Citizens of countries that participate in the [Visa Waiver Program](#) [1] do not need to apply for a visa to enter the U.S. as a tourist. Instead, they should obtain an [online travel authorization through the ESTA system](#) [2] prior to traveling to the U.S. This authorization is normally accepted for a period of two years. Individuals entering the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program through a land border do not need this authorization.

Visa application timelines depend on a variety of factors, including time of year, nationality or background of the applicant and they also vary from consulate to consulate. Therefore, visa applicants

should apply for their visas as early as possible.

Individuals who enter the U.S. on the basis of a B-visa are normally admitted for a period of six months. People who enter under the Visa Waiver Program are normally admitted for a period of 90 days.

There is no dependent immigration status for individuals coming to the U.S. in a tourist status. Dependents may enter the U.S. on the basis of their own tourist visa or ESTA clearance.

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**Source URL:** <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/fsis/tourist-status-b1-b2>

**Links**

[1] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html>

[2] <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>