

## **J-1 Exchange Visitors -Regulatory Update**

Date: December 6, 2016

To: Binghamton University Exchange Partners

From: The Office of International Education and Global Initiatives

Re: Memorandum on New English Language Proficiency Requirement for J-1 Exchange Visitors

Effective January 5, 2015, the U.S. Department of State issued a new rule concerning the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program, which brings hundreds of visiting international professors, researchers, and other types of short term scholars to Binghamton University every year.

U.S. Institutions must now determine that prospective exchange visitors possess "sufficient proficiency in the English language, as determined by an objective measurement of English language proficiency, successfully to participate in his or her program and to function on a day-to-day basis." [22 CFR 62.11(a)(2)]

The new rule requires the sponsoring department to use **one** of the following objective measures of language proficiency:

- A recognized English language test (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS)
- Signed documentation from an Academic Institution or English Language school; or
- A documented interview conducted by the sponsor either in-person or by video conferencing, or by telephone if video conferencing is not a viable option.

The rule applies to **all** J-1 Exchange Visitors, including those from English-speaking countries and those attending English-taught universities in countries where English is not the official language.

Finally, sponsors are required to retain evidence of how they measured the applicant's English language proficiency so that it may be made available to the U.S. Department of State upon request.

A template for the English Proficiency Letter is attached.

Please contact the Office of International Education and Global Initiatives (intlexch@binghamton.edu or 1 607 777-2336) with any questions.