

## **OTHER IMPORTANT RESTRICTIONS**

J-1 AND J-2 exchange visitors may be subject to the following regulatory restrictions which can affect your future U.S. immigration options:

### **12-month Bar on Repeat Participation in the J-1 Research Scholar or Professor**

**categories:** Any person who participates in an exchange visitor program in the U.S. lasting more than 6 months cannot begin a new program in the Research Scholar or Professor categories for a period of 12 months from their program completion date.

### **24-month Bar on Repeat Participation in the J-1 Research Scholar or Professor**

**categories:** Any person who participates in an exchange visitor program in the U.S. in the Research Scholar category cannot begin a new program in the Research Scholar or Professor categories for a period of 24 months from their program completion date.

**212(e) / Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement:** Some exchange visitors will be subject to this requirement. If subject, you will be ineligible to adjust non-immigrant status in the United States, receive a U.S. employment visa (H or L), receive a fiancé visa (K), or receive U.S. permanent residency until you have obtained a waiver of 212(e) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, OR returned to your home country and reside there for two years.

*Exchange visitors will be subject to 212(e) if they meet ONE of the following criteria:*

- Exchange program funded by agency or organization of U.S. or home country government; OR
- Exchange visitor entered U.S. to receive graduate medical education or training; OR
- Exchange visitor is a national or permanent resident of a country which has deemed the field of specialized knowledge or skill necessary to the development of the country, as shown on the [Exchange Visitor Skills List](#).



## **EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM**

Learn more and get started at:

[www.vai.org/careers/visas](http://www.vai.org/careers/visas)

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

VAI's Exchange Visitor Program provides opportunities to study, conduct collaborative research, and participate in scientific training opportunities at Van Andel Research Institute (VARI) and VAI Graduate School (VAIGS).

## **PURPOSE**

To promote the general interest of international educational and cultural exchange by offering educational, training, and research opportunities in the various fields of research conducted at VARI and VAIGS.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Invitation: Offer of invitation from a VARI lab or VAIGS.

English Proficiency: Sufficient proficiency in the English language to participate in our program AND to function on a day-to-day basis in Grand Rapids (determined by official TOEFL/IELTS result or Skype/telephone interview).

Evidence of Funding: Evidence of program funding in the amount of our estimated minimum Cost of Living for Grand Rapids (may include VAI salary or stipend, non-VAI salary, scholarships, or other sponsored funding). Personal funds will NOT be accepted.

Educational Exchange or Research Collaboration Agreement (for Visiting Students and Researchers only): Visiting students and researchers must be affiliated with an overseas (non-U.S.) institution, and VAI must enter into an educational exchange agreement or research collaboration agreement with that institution before we will issue Form DS-2019. Please speak to your sponsoring VARI lab to determine if an agreement already exists or will need to be created.

U.S. Immigration History: You must not be otherwise barred from issuance of a Form DS-2019 (ex: repeat participation bars)

## **J-1 AND J-2 HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENT**

Per U.S. law, all J-1 and J-2 exchange visitors must maintain health insurance coverage for the duration of their program, which meets the following minimum requirements:

- Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000
- Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his/her country in the amount of \$50,000
- Deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness
- Coinsurance not to exceed 25%
- Backed by full faith and credit of a home country government or must meet minimum rating requirements established by the US government (A.M Best rating of "A-" or above; Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of "A-" or above; Standard and Poor's Claims-paying ability rating of "A-" or above; OR Weiss Research, Inc. rating of "B+" or above).

Postdoctoral Fellows, VAIGS Students, and their J-2 dependents may receive qualifying insurance through VAI. All other exchange visitors must purchase third-party insurance and provide proof of coverage on their first day at VAI.

## **PROGRAM FEES AND COSTS**

VAI charges no fees to program participants; however, you will be responsible for your own visa application and transportation costs. Estimated minimum costs of living in Grand Rapids are (per month): \$2,000 for the primary exchange visitor, \$650 for a spouse, and \$450 per child (*VAIGS students may subtract \$150/person/month, because health insurance premium is covered by VAIGS*).

These are minimal estimates for essential living expenses and include only: food, health insurance, transportation, rent for a 1 or 2 bedroom apartment (as applicable), and minor incidental expenses. Additional personal funds may be required and are strongly recommended.