

New Mexico Highlands University



International Education Center

## **Student, Post-Secondary (College and University)**

This category provides foreign students the opportunity to study at a degree-granting post-secondary accredited educational institution. Students may participate in degree and non-degree programs. Foreign students are eligible to participate in this category if at any time during their college studies in the United States they or their program are financed directly or indirectly by the United States Government, the government of their home country, or an international organization of which the United States is a member by treaty or statute, or if they are supported substantially by funding from any source other than personal or family funds. Students are also eligible if their program is carried out pursuant to an agreement between the United States Government and a foreign government, or pursuant to written agreement between American and foreign educational institutions, an American educational institution and a foreign government, or a state or local government in the United States and a foreign government.

## **Welcome, Bienvenidos, Tervetuola**

On behalf of the International Education Center, the staff would like to welcome you to New Mexico Highlands University! We are very excited that you have chosen this university to be your place of employment. We are here to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have regarding international students, hosting visiting professors, research scholars, short-term scholars and exchange students from abroad.

### **International Education Center Mission Statement**

The IEC at New Mexico Highlands University serves to promote international awareness, knowledge, and experiences, which will enable students, faculty, staff and the Las Vegas Community to participate actively and thrive in the global community.

The IEC recruits, advises and assists International Students, and advocates for the recruitment of International Faculty. The IEC encourages International and U.S. Students and faculty to learn from each other individually and through programming that fosters appreciation of cultural diversity. The IEC advances study abroad for Highlands' students and serves as a proponent for the internationalization of the curricula throughout the University.

### **Brief History**

The International Education Center was established in 1998 for the purpose of providing immigration and educational advising for enrolled International Students of NMHU, to recruit International Students, and to maintain documentation as the F-1 and J-1 Federal regulations stipulate. In 2001, the then Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) dramatically changed as a result of the events of 9/11. The Student and Exchange Visitor System (SEVIS) was implemented and from then on all immigration documentation for F-1 and J-1 visas is created and maintained electronically. On March 1, 2003, INS's name was changed to Department of Homeland Security and it oversees three entities: USCIS = United States Customs and Immigration Service, CBP = Customs and Border Patrol, and ICE = Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The International Education Center primarily falls under ICE through the Student and Exchange program for reporting and tracking purposes. USCIS is used when advising students and foreign faculty or employees for immigration benefits and CBP is used when there are port of entry issues for our students and foreign faculty.

Since 1999, the enrollment of International Students has increased significantly, from 28 students to approximately 145 in 2007, with a recent decline to approximately 100 students per semester

*For more information about the J-1 Visa program  
Contact a staff member at the International  
Education Center*

**Functions of the International Education Center include, but are not limited to:**

- Recruitment of International Students
- Processing of Undergraduate and Graduate International applications
- Processing International Student Arrivals
- Conducting Mandatory International Student Orientation at the beginning of every semester
- Processing and enrolling International Students with mandatory health insurance coverage
- Ensure that International Students are enrolled for courses and that enrollment meets Federal Regulations as it pertains to their visa classification
- Ensure that International Students do not violate the Federal Regulations as it pertains to employment on or off campus
- Assist International students and J-1 visa holders with personal needs that are required in order to function as a student or employee at the university (Social Security, Driving License, Bank accounts...)
- Maintain the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System Database for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

**Suggestions**

The International Education Center encourages students, faculty or staff to bring forward suggestions and ideas about improving the IEC.

**We can be reached at 505-454-3372**

**Or**

**by email at [international\\_ed@nmhu.edu](mailto:international_ed@nmhu.edu)**

**Closing Statement**

Successful working conditions and relationships depend upon successful communication. It is important that students and the IEC Staff stay informed of changes in procedures, policies, and general information. It is also important to communicate ideas, suggestions, goals, or problems as they affect students and staff so that more efficient and better service can be provided to stakeholders.

**Short-Term Scholar**

permitted A short-term scholar is a professor, research scholar, or person with similar education or accomplishments who visits the United States to lecture, observe, consult, train, or demonstrate special skills at research institutions, museums, libraries, post-secondary accredited educational institutions, or similar types of institutions. The duration of the program is the time needed to complete the objective, up to a maximum of six months. The minimum program duration of 3 weeks for any Exchange Visitor Program category is waived for participants in this category. Extensions are not. Short-term scholars may participate in the Exchange Visitor Program at conferences, workshops, seminars, or other events listed their Forms DS-2019.

**Specialist**

Specialists are experts in a field of specialized knowledge or skill, who come to the United States to observe, consult, or demonstrate special skills. (Professors, research scholars, short term scholars, and alien physicians are excluded from this category.) Some examples of fields represented include mass media communication, environmental science, youth leadership, international educational exchange, museum exhibitions, labor law, public administration, and library science. The purpose of the specialist category is to facilitate exchange among experts at scientific institutions, government agencies, museums, corporations, libraries, and similar types of institutions. The maximum duration of this category is one year. Please refer to the regulations for details

## Approved J-1 Visa Categories

### Professor and Research Scholar

As participants in these program categories, foreign professors and research scholars engage in research, teaching, and lecturing with their American colleagues. The eligible participant shall not be a candidate for a tenure track position. Also, professor and research scholar participants may not be in the United States in J-visa status for any part of the 12-month period preceding the start date of their programs, indicated on their Form DS-2019. The 12-month bar is waived if the participant is 1) present in the United States no more than six months; or 2) participating in the Short-Term Scholar category.

At the discretion of the responsible officer, professors may freely engage in research and research scholars may freely engage in teaching and lecturing; this will not be considered a change of category. Incidental lectures or short-term consultations are permitted with the approval of the responsible officer so long as they are directly related to the objectives of the participant's program, and do not delay its completion date. Please consult the regulations for details.

The maximum duration for both categories is three years. The responsible officer may extend a participant's program for up to six months to allow the research scholar or professor to complete a specific project or research activity. Extensions for a period longer than six months must be approved in writing by the Department of State. The responsible officer should submit a written request to the Department on behalf of the participant.

## Information for NMHU Faculty about International Students

### International Students MUST ALWAYS:

1. Be enrolled for courses at the NMHU main campus only;

Undergraduate students: Must be enrolled for minimum of 12 credit hours. Of the 12 hours, only one can be an online course.

Once this requirement has been met, the student can enroll in as many online courses as he/she wishes.

Graduate Students: Must be enrolled for a minimum of 9 credit hours. Of the 9 hours, only one course can be online.

Once this requirement has been met, the student can enroll in as many online courses as he/she wishes.

2. Provide proof of an updated local address, phone number and personal email address and must report any changes within 10 days.
3. Maintain a valid passport throughout their stay in the US.

### International Students can, but not required:

1. Work on campus for 20 hours during the regular school session
2. Work on campus 40 hours/week during official school breaks or summer session

*All international students are hired as departmental students*

## Interested in hosting a visiting professor, Short-term scholar, research scholar or exchange student from abroad?

### International Students MUST NEVER:

1. Make changes to their class schedule without the approval of an International Student Advisor

*NO STUDENT may drop below the required number of credits in Fall and Spring except under extremely limited circumstances that are allowed by the U.S. Government. Any such schedule changes must be authorized in advance by an international student advisor!!! Getting a grade of W, is considered a drop (i.e., does not count toward the full-time minimum) even if the student completed all course requirements! Classes which are taken as "Audit" also do NOT count toward the full-time credit requirement.*

2. WORK OFF CAMPUS unless they have written authorization from the international advisor in advance (consult the international advisor for details).

3. WORK ON CAMPUS more than 20 hours per week while school is in session.

New Mexico Highlands University is approved by the U.S. Department of State, through its Student Exchange Visitor Program to do just that through the J-1 Visa Program.

### **General Information**

The J visa is a nonimmigrant visa, and participants in the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program are expected to return to their home countries when they complete their programs. Entry into the United States as a participant in the Exchange Visitor Program is granted with the understanding that participants will complete the objectives of a single program category.

The minimum duration of any exchange program is three weeks, except for participants in the Short Term Scholar category or those sponsored by the Federal Government. The maximum duration varies by category and can last up to five years. Program regulations of some categories permit the entry of the participant's dependents under the J-2 visa at the sponsor's discretion. Dependents are defined as the participant's spouse and minor unmarried children -- unmarried children under the age 21. Participants should contact their sponsors for additional information and to determine if their dependents may accompany them to the United States for the duration of their programs.