



# STUDENTS TO INVITE SPOUSE AND/OR CHILDREN

Updated March 2008

**Definition of “Dependents”** – Please note that federal immigration law currently views dependents (those eligible for F-2 or J-2 status) as spouses and children only. “Spouse” is currently considered to be only those who can document a legal marriage between members of the opposite sex. Unfortunately girlfriends/boyfriends, fiancées, same-sex partners (even if in a marriage legally recognized in other countries), or common-law (i.e. unmarried) living arrangements are currently not recognized by U.S. government agencies as being eligible for F-2 or J-2 dependent status. If you fall into one of these situations, please consult an OISS adviser.

This packet contains everything you need to have us prepare a new I-20 or DS-2019 to allow your dependents to come in F-2 or J-2 status. **Please read all of this information very carefully, then see an OISS adviser during regular walk-in hours to request a new I-20 or DS-2019.**

- **Request for Certificate of Eligibility Form** - Fill out the form included in this packet. Provide all required information about your dependents, including dates of birth.
- **Evidence of Financial Support** – You must provide evidence of your financial support, as requested on the form. A new document will not be issued until you can provide the necessary proof.

Many international students and scholars want their families to join them in the U.S. Before they arrive, we encourage you to think about their adjustment to living here and how your life will change after they join you. Listed below are some issues for you to think about, do some research on, and talk with your spouse and children about before they arrive. Planning for their arrival will make things easier for everyone.

## BUDGET

In order for OISS to issue an immigration document for your dependent(s), you will need to provide documentation to the OISS that you can pay at least **\$3,200** to cover minimal living costs for your spouse and at least **\$2,500** for each child. You will also have to demonstrate that you can pay between **\$3,504 (for spouse only) and \$9,408 (for spouse + children)** for health insurance for your dependent(s). In addition, you need to plan for these other expenses:

- medical costs and medication not covered by health insurance
- car expenses
- class/activity fees for your spouse
- daycare/baby-sitting or extra-curricular activities for your child(ren)
- winter clothing for your family members

It is essential to have adequate funds for your family. Dependents in F-2 status are not allowed to work and financial difficulties can lead to great stress in a marriage. Be sure your financial support is adequate before your family comes. Otherwise, you may be in the same situation as the student who wrote, "My wife joined me in December. I did not realize until then that living with a spouse can cause real financial trouble. I moved into family housing from a place where I was paying just \$164 in rent. In addition to the \$272 rent at family housing, I am paying \$80-90 in utilities every month. On top of everything else, my wife is pregnant. Each visit to the doctor costs over \$100. I am caught between a rock and hard place." (Rent, medical services, and other rates have gone up considerably since this was written!)

## VISA ISSUANCE

The OISS will issue a form I-20 (F-1 students) or a form DS-2019 (J-1 students) for you to send to your family member in your home country. Your family member will use that form to apply for a dependent visa (either F-2 or J-2, depending on your immigration status). It is important that you include additional documents with the I-20 or DS-2019 that the OISS gives you. These additional documents include:

- financial support information – send one or both as appropriate:
  - ⇒ a bank statement, issued within the last month, verifying the amount of money you have in your account(s).
  - ⇒ if you have a graduate assistantship, a letter from your academic department, verifying the amount of your income. Make sure the letter specifically mentions how much you are receiving for the Tuition Scholarship, otherwise the visa officer will not include it.
- a certified English translation of an official marriage certificate (for spouses) or evidence of family relationship (for children) such as birth certificates or adoption papers.
- forms from the Registrar's Office, 17 Calvin Hall:
  - ⇒ a copy of your most recent UI transcript
  - ⇒ a Verification Letter stating you are currently enrolled full-time or the equivalent of full-time for the current fall or spring semester
- photocopies of your own I-94, passport, and visa pages

The two most common reasons visas are denied are (1) lack of adequate financial support – the consul does not believe the required funds are really available and (2) “immigrant intent”--failure by family members to convince the consul that they and the family member who is already in the U.S. will really return home after their stay in the U.S. Please see an adviser if you have any questions or concerns about these obstacles to getting a visa.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

It is essential to have health insurance for your family. In fact, for persons in J-2 status, it is legally required. Only one accident, serious illness, or pregnancy can cause financial devastation. Dependents can be added to your University policy within 30 days of arrival in the United States. After that date, you can add them only at the beginning of each semester.

## CHILDCARE

Children under the age of 10 or 11 should not be left alone. In the system here, leaving small children unattended can be considered child neglect/abuse and is a crime. Information about daycare and pre-schools is available from the Community Coordinated Child Care Agency (4C's) at 338-7684 or <http://www.iowa4cs.com/4Cs/>. Friends or the Student Employment Office can help identify possible babysitters.

## SCHOOLING

Children who are five years old by September 15 will need to be enrolled in school. It is important to find out which school your child will attend (this usually depends on the location of the place where you live), whether that school offers English-as-a-second-language instruction, and what educational documents are required for enrollment. Call the Iowa City Community School District at 688-1000 for this information.

## ATTENDING THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

New regulations passed in December 2002 prohibit persons in F-2 status from enrolling in classes full-time or pursuing a degree at an institution of higher education. F-2's are only allowed to take classes on what is called a “recreational or avocational” basis, such as taking an art class for fun. A person in F-2 status who wishes to study full-time or obtain a degree, **MUST** first change to F-1 status to do so. Currently the regulations do not have similar restrictions for persons in J-2 status; however, the USCIS and Department of State have indicated this was an error and that the regulations will be updated in the near future to similarly restrict persons in J-2 status. If there is any chance your dependent wishes to become a student at the University of Iowa, or any other college or university, please discuss this with an OISS adviser to see what the best course of action may be. **Note of caution:** *If your spouse has already sent in applications to be admitted to any school in the U.S. and/or hopes to change to an F-1 student soon after entering the U.S. in F-2 status, we strongly discourage him/her from obtaining an F-2 visa and entering in F-2 status. You should discuss your situation*

*with an OISS adviser immediately.*

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Iowa law requires certain immunizations as a condition of enrollment in any licensed daycare center, pre-school, or school. If possible, provide a Certificate of Immunizations card (available from Student Health) for your family members to complete and bring with them.

## **CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT**

Many spouses experience difficulty adjusting to life in the United States, especially if they do not speak English well. It is stressful for them to carry out daily activities, assist their children with schoolwork, and make friends. You may need to spend a lot of time at the beginning helping your spouse do things she normally did at home. Your children will also need your assistance with their schoolwork. Remember that you yourself needed some time to adjust after you first arrived here.

During this time, your spouse may become depressed and isolated if you are frequently away from home studying and working. In order to assist in her adjustment, you need to help her learn English and meet other people. There are opportunities for formal and informal English instruction in Iowa City. Some activities your spouse can consider include joining the International Women's Club (<http://international.uiowa.edu/oiss/resources/community/international-womens-club.asp>), helping at your children's daycare or school, participating in sports, and volunteering with local organizations.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR SPOUSE FROM OTHER FOREIGN SPOUSES**

- Practice English every day, beginning while in your home country if possible
- Learn to drive a car, preferably in your home country first, if feasible
- Bring some household and children's items with you
- Join the International Women's Club <http://international.uiowa.edu/oiss/resources/community/international-womens-club.asp>

**REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY  
TO BRING SPOUSE/CHILDREN  
(I-20 OR DS-2019)  
Updated March 2008**

---

**Family Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **First Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student ID #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Document Needed:**       I-20 (for F-2 status)       DS-2019 (for J-2 status)

**Are you currently late in paying your University of Iowa U-Bill?**     Yes     No

**Financial Support:** *Check all that apply. A new document will not be issued without current financial evidence.*

- Graduate Assistantship      Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *(Must provide copy of offer letter from department stating salary.)*  
 Personal Funds                      Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *(Must provide copy of most recent bank statement.)*  
 Family Funds                      Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *(Must provide documentation of family funding no more than 6 months old.)*  
 Other Sources of Funding      Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *(Must provide documentation no more than 6 months old.)*  
**TOTAL AMOUNT:**                      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ***Note that the total amount MUST match the total anticipated tuition/expenses as listed on the back of this document.***

**Marital Status:**       Single       Married, family **not** in U.S.       Married, family in U.S.

Complete this section if you either (1) already have family members here in the U.S., or (2) wish to bring family members here to join you. Please note that if you wish to have family members join you in the U.S., you must prove that you have sufficient funds to cover the additional expenses involved in supporting dependents (see chart on reverse side).

**Spouse:**       Already in U.S., status: \_\_\_\_\_       Intends to come to U.S.

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Country of Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_  
City of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Country of Legal Permanent Residence \_\_\_\_\_

**Child:**       Son or  Daughter       Already in U.S., status: \_\_\_\_\_       Intends to come to U.S.

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Country of Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_  
City of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Country of Legal Permanent Residence \_\_\_\_\_

**Child:**       Son or  Daughter       Already in U.S., status: \_\_\_\_\_       Intends to come to U.S.

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Country of Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_  
City of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Country of Legal Permanent Residence \_\_\_\_\_

## **Fall 2008-Spring 2009**

The following chart indicates how much financial support must be documented for I-20's or DS-2019's for various situations. The listed amount is a combination of tuition, student activity fee, student service fee, student health fee, computer lab fee, living expenses, books, international student fee, and health insurance.

### **Funding Amount to Show for Student Alone -**

	<b>Resident Rate</b>	<b>Non-Resident Rate</b>
Grad – College of Liberal Arts	\$16,655	\$30,743
Grad – PhD Continuous Reg, Liberal Arts	\$10,328	\$11,134
Grad – College of Engineering	\$16,655	\$30,929
Grad – MBA	\$27,421	\$39,794
Grad – MAC	\$20,661	\$34,044
Grad – MPH	\$20,099	\$33,520
Undergrad – College of Liberal Arts	\$16,784	\$30,898
Undergrad – College of Business	\$16,902	\$31,016
Undergrad – College of Engineering	\$16,950	\$31,064
Undergrad – PharmD	\$28,290	\$42,926

**F-2 and J-2 Dependents** – Dependents require adding additional expenses to the amount listed above. These include additional living expenses (\$3200/spouse and \$2500/each child) + increased rates of health insurance.

	<b>Graduate Assistants on UI GradCare</b>	<b>Undergrads and Grads on SHIP</b>
Student + Spouse	\$3344	\$4584
Student + Children	\$547 + \$2500/each child	\$4706 + \$2500/each child
Student + Spouse + Children	\$752 + \$2500/each child	\$10,488 + \$2500/each child

**For tuition/expenses for programs not listed, contact an OISS adviser.**