

Guidelines for Letters regarding potentially sensitive research

Consular officers must determine whether an applicant for a visa is someone who seeks entry to the US to engage in activities that violate or evade laws prohibiting the export of goods, technology or sensitive information. Such activities include graduate-level studies, teaching, conducting research, training or employment.

If the consular officer believes there is a possibility of illegal technology transfer, he/she will request a security check that must be approved by various government agencies in Washington, DC prior to the issuance of a visa. Delays due to security checks can last weeks and even months.

If you have invited a J-1 Scholar to conduct research in a potentially sensitive area (see below), you can help avoid the possibility of such delays by writing a letter for the prospective J-1 scholar describing, in layman's terms, the nature of the research and its applications. The scholar can submit the letter with his/her application for a US entry visa.

Here are some suggestions for the letter:

- Full name of prospective J-1 scholar;
- Date of place of birth of prospective J-1 scholar;
- Gender of prospective J-1 scholar;
- Prospective J-1 Scholar's occupation in home country;
- Proposed length of stay;
- Description of the field of study and research activity in layman's terms. In particular explain the prospective J-1 scholar's contribution and how it will benefit US interests;
- If the research is funded by the US government, indicate which agency. This establishes US government interest;
- Your contact address and phone number.

Technology Alert List

The primary security objectives are

- To assist in the stemming of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile delivery systems;
- To assist in the restraint of the development of destabilizing conventional military capabilities in certain regions of the world;
- To assist in the prevention of the transfer of arms and sensitive dual-use items to terrorist states; and
- To assist in the maintenance of U.S. advantages in certain military critical technologies.

Please see <http://www.foia.state.gov/masterdocs/09fam/0940031X1.pdf> (page 2) to review the complete Technology Alert List.