



INVITATION LETTER REQUEST FOR PARENTS

(and other Non-Dependent Relatives and Friends)

Note: Not all of the information requested here will be used in your relative or friend's invitation letter, but the HUIO advisers have learned over time that ALL of it is important for us to know if we are to ensure that your relative or friend has the best possible chance of obtaining a U.S. visa.

Your Name _____ Today's Date _____
(Family/Last) (Given/First)

Student number _____ Your immigration status: F-1 J-1

Home phone _____

Do you use your Hampton University student email account? Yes No

HU email address _____

If no, what email address? _____

Degree Level: Bachelor's Master's Doctoral Field of study _____

Expected Graduation Semester: Fall Spring Year _____

Source of Financial Support: Family Self-Graduate Assistantship Campus Employment

Name
of Invitee: 1. _____ 2. _____
(Family/Last) (Given/First) (Family/Last) (Given/First)

Relationship
to You: 1. _____ 2. _____

Birthdate: 1. _____ 2. _____

Occupation: 1. _____ 2. _____

Citizenship: 1. _____ 2. _____

Reason(s)
for Visit: 1. _____ 2. _____

Signature _____ Date _____

FAQ on the Tourist Visa Application for Parents/Other Visitors

The Hampton University International Office (HUIO) frequently writes letters of invitation for students at the university who wish to invite their parents (as well as friends and non-dependent family members) to visit them in Hampton. Below are some things you and your visitors should know about the visa application process and the visa interview. *Note: U.S. law and regulations do not require these “invitation letters” from applicants for visitor visas. However, some consular officers in some countries seem to expect or require them. Having a letter does not guarantee that a visa will be issued.*

Q: What **kind of visa** will my parents apply for?

A: A “**B-2 tourist visa**.” However, if your parents are citizen of a country who participates in the Visa Waiver Program (ESTA), they do not need to apply for a visa if they intend to stay no longer than 90 days in the U.S. They must apply for the ESTA online before their intended travel. See [list of ESTA participating countries](#).

Q: Why can’t my parents apply for an **F-2 (or J-2) dependent visa**?

A: Your parents are not eligible for **F-2 (or J-2)** visa. **Only spouses and children** under age 21 are eligible for those classifications.

Q: What documents do **I need to send** to my parents?

A: Send your parents the following items:

- An **invitation letter** from the HUIO
- **Financial verification** (bank statement, letter from your department if you have a graduate assistantship, or another document that reflects your financial situation) showing you can support your parents during their visit, unless your parents have documentation showing they can meet their own expenses
- An **official transcript** (available from the Registrar’s Office); please be sure to request ahead of time

Q: Should I **send my parents my I-20 form** (or DS-2019)?

A: **No.** See the question above. However, you may want to send them a *copy* of your I-20 form – but your parents should *not* submit it unless consular officers ask for it.

Q: What **other documents** should my parents take with them when they apply for their visas?

A: They should also bring the following documents:

- A **return flight ticket**, in order to show nonimmigrant intent
- A **declaration of nonimmigrant intent** (see template in handbook)
- Supporting documents for nonimmigrant intent, can include a **letter from their employer**, if applicable, **bank account statements**, **lease agreement or deed** from home country residence, and any other documents relating to the concerns of intent to immigrate in the U.S. (see below).

Q: What are the **main reasons that visas are denied**?

A: The two main reasons visas are denied are (1) failure to prove “**nonimmigrant intent**,” and (2) **inadequate financial support**.

Proving “**nonimmigrant intent**” means that your parents need to be prepared to convince the consul that they **intend to return home** after they have visited you in the U.S. There is a

presumption of immigrant intent, and the burden is on the applicant to prove that he or she does not have any intent to immigrate in the U.S. The law **requires** the consul to deny a nonimmigrant visa to anyone the consul believes intends to remain in the U.S. permanently. Your parents should be able to prove “**nonimmigrant intent**” if they have a job which they are expected to return to after their visit, if they are retired and living on a pension through your government, if they own property or rent an apartment, if they have bank accounts and other investments, if they have close family members there (parents, children or grandchildren), etc.

If the consul believes you or your parents **do not have enough money** to support their visit, the consul will not issue the visa. The consul will suspect that your parents will need to work illegally to support themselves. That is why it is important to show your ability to support your parents, unless they can show that they have their own support. Usually bank statements, indicating an average monthly balance, or a letter from your department, if you have a graduate assistantship, will be sufficient. Also, they should purchase health insurance coverage for their visit in the U.S. (See below).

Q: What is the **visa interview** going to be like?

A: Keep in mind that all consular officers are under considerable time constraints to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the **first minute or two** of the interview. Consequently, what your parents say in the **initial impression** is critical to their success. They should **keep their answers to the consul’s questions short, to the point and truthful**.

Q: What happens if the consul **denies** visas to my parents?

A: Your parents should maintain a positive attitude. They should **not engage the consular officer in an argument**. If the consular officer denies your parents a tourist visa, they should **ask the officer for a written explanation** for the denial, and for a **list of documents** that the officer suggests they bring, in order to overcome the denial.

The law concerning temporary visas gives consular officers a great deal of authority, and their decisions may seem arbitrary. In most cases, HUIO is unable to help your parents overcome a visa denial. This does not prohibit your parents to reapply for the same visa with a different consulate officer.

A Word about Health Insurance for Visitors

Because the cost of medical care in the United States is so high, we strongly advise that your guests have health insurance for the duration of their visit. The U.S. government will not pay for your guests’ treatment if they become ill or injured during their visit.

Your guests can purchase insurance either in their home country or after arrival in the U.S. Inform them to contact their current health insurance, car insurance, airline provider, or any institution that offers international health insurance coverage in the U.S. They may also contact U.S. health insurance providers directly to see if they offer short-term health insurance policies, but the price may be more expensive than other available options in your home country. Most guests will require “major medical coverage,” if your guest is unexpectedly hospitalized because of an accident or an illness. **Without such coverage, your guest may experience financial devastation if hospitalization becomes necessary.**

Please contact the Hampton University International Office if you have questions or concerns. Location: Armstrong-Slater Building, First Floor, 200 William R. Harvey Way, Hampton, VA 23668. Email: internationaloffice@hamptonu.edu; Tel: (+1) 757-728-6914