



## Center for Latin American and Latinx Studies

### CLALS Visiting Scholar Overview

The CLALS Visiting Scholar position offers faculty, experts, and researchers (including advanced graduate students) in the field of Latin America and Latinx Studies an opportunity to advance their research through interactions with faculty and students at the University of Pennsylvania and by having access to the university's libraries and various resources. Visiting Scholars are invited to participate in various programming, including our colloquium series and events sponsored by the university-wide Penn in Latin America and Caribbean (PLAC) committee and other organizations on campus. They will have an opportunity to present their research at one of our internal speaker seminar series ([LALSIS](#)). If available, Visiting Scholars may be offered a space to work.

All domestic and international scholars are required to have external funding.

The position requires that international scholars apply for a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa through the [University of Pennsylvania International Student and Scholar Services](#) (ISSS) and have the minimum amount of funding required by the U.S. Government (\$27,180 annually or \$2,265 (2018-2019; subject to change) monthly, with an additional \$6,000 for a dependent spouse and \$4,000 for each dependent child) as well as demonstrate proficiency in the English Language. The Visiting Scholar is also required to have health insurance.

The Center for Latin American and Latinx Studies program and staff will assist and offer guidance with your J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa. LALS will cover the initial cost of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa processing fee (\$165), but the Visiting Scholars will be responsible for additional costs such as the international postage fee to mail the DS-2019 forms which must be presented at the U.S. embassy in the country of origin.

If you are interested in applying, please contact the Center at [lals@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:lals@sas.upenn.edu).

Information about the J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa from [can be found here](#) and a checklist, including information about healthcare requirements is as follows:

- Complete the CLALS Visitor Scholar Application. In this application, you will be asked to explain why you would like to be a Visitor Scholar, how it will benefit your career, and

how you can contribute to the Penn Community and participate in events and activities. Some other items that will be asked and are part of this checklist include:

- Upload a copy of your current, up-to-date C.V.
  - Determine the length of time you would like to be a visiting scholar at
  - Do you have the appropriate funding? As aforementioned, Visiting Scholars are required to have a minimum of \$28,810 annually or \$2,360 monthly, with an additional \$6,000 for a dependent spouse and \$4,000 for each dependent child. You will need supporting documentation.
- Once accepted, CLALS will provide a letter of invitation confirming your activities at Penn, length of stay, your personal financial support. This letter will be uploaded with the J-1 Visitor Exchange Application.
- You will need a passport bio page scanned to upload.
- The complete J-1 Visitor Exchange Application must be submitted at least 6 weeks before the anticipated start date.
- Once it is submitted, a DS-2019 will be generated within 6 weeks. LALS staff will physically pick-up the form and mail to your address. Please be prepared to pay expenses associated with this mailing.
- You will then take the DS-2019 to the local U.S. embassy in your country to apply for the visa.
- You must arrive within 14 days (before or after) of the start date on the DS-2019 form. If you cannot, you must notify Penn ISSS as additional documentation may be required. Failure to arrive in the timeline may result in termination of the appointment.
- All J Visa Visiting Exchange Scholars are required by U.S. law to have health insurance meeting certain requirements. You can purchase health insurance provided through Penn, or you can purchase insurance in your home country and provide proof to Penn that it meets the requirements. Insurance provided by Penn has three levels (Basic, Standard, Platinum) and three levels of rates listed [here](#). You will also need to submit an online request to waive Penn health insurance at a later date, with documents preferably in English.
- Helpful notes on Penn benefit plans:
  - All plans are Preferred Provider Organization (PPO), meaning that doctors and hospitals within a given network will charge lower rates than other doctors and hospitals. This may limit your choice in doctors and hospitals, but your in-network charges will be lower than out-of-network.
  - All plans have a deductible, meaning that you must pay a certain amount out-of-pocket before your benefits are paid.
  - Only the Platinum plan provides maternity coverage, and you/your spouse are covered under the Platinum plan only if conception occurred during the period of coverage. (For example, if you/your spouse are pregnant before purchasing the plan, your maternity costs will not be covered by Penn insurance.)
- More information and answers to frequently asked questions can be found [here](#). A glossary of healthcare vocabulary can be found [here](#).
- **Please read all documents carefully and feel free to ask us any questions in advance.** Insurance plans in the US are very complicated, particularly in comparison to universal single-payer systems in other countries.

