

B Visitor Visa and Visa Waiver Program

Entering the U.S. as a Visitor

The B1/B2 visitor visa is most often used for individuals who come to campus to give a lecture or participate in a seminar or colloquium. And while most short-term academic appointments use the Yale sponsored J-1 Exchange Visitor visa, which is relatively quick and easy to obtain, on rare occasions it may be possible for an individual to use the visitor visa. The visitor visas are not “Yale sponsored” and their success and ease of use are less predictable. An individual's B status is verified through the [I-94 record](#) [1] issued by DHS Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). The I-94 must be presented to Yale in the case of payment of honorarium or reimbursement of expenses. NOTE: If the visitor does not qualify for the Visa Waiver and does not already have a B visa stamp from a U.S. consulate in their passport, then [the J visa](#) [2] is often the better choice (e.g. if they have to apply to the embassy anyway, better they apply with the full backing of a sponsored visa and OISS support).

If the proposed activity meets the basic regulatory criteria (listed below), a visitor to Yale may choose to use the B-1 visa or Visa Waiver for Business.

- The activity is temporary in nature, and the visitor has a profession or studies outside the U.S. to which they will return.
- They will not be paid a salary from a U.S. source.
- Any monies paid the visitor must meet [Policy 3415](#) [3].
- They will not be in a job that would normally be filled by a U.S. worker.
- The activity at Yale will primarily benefit the visitor, not Yale.
- The visitor meets all Yale institutional requirements to have access to the activity /work site.
- There must be evidence that the visitor has finances to fund the visit, including transportation and health insurance.

How Does a Visitor Acquire B Status?

If the visitor does not already have a B visa stamp in their passport, they must apply for one at a [U.S. embassy or consulate](#) [4], unless eligible for the visa waiver program. In addition to the visa application form, the visitor should present to the consulate a letter of invitation outlining the terms of the proposed visit to Yale.

VWP Visa Waiver Program

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables nationals of certain countries to travel to the United States for tourism (WT) or business (WB) for stays of 90 days or less (extension or change of status are not permitted) without obtaining a visa. See the U.S. Department of State website for more [information](#) [5]. VWP eligible travelers may apply for a visa, if they prefer to do so. Not all countries participate in the VWP, and not all travelers from VWP countries are eligible to use the program. VWP travelers are screened prior to admission into the United States using a system called ESTA. You must complete your [ESTA application](#) [6] before departing for the U.S.

Paying Honorarium and/or Reimbursing Expenses to Persons in B-1, B-2 WB or WT Status

There are very specific and limited options about paying honorarium to persons in B status which are covered in Yale Policy [3415](#) [3]. Before committing to paying the visitor an honorarium, check Policy 3415 to see if it is permissible.

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Published on Office of International Students & Scholars (<https://oiss.yale.edu>)

- **B-1, B-2, WB or WT: Honorarium and Reimbursement**

You may receive an honorarium, or an honorarium plus expenses for an academic activity at Yale that does not extend beyond nine days as long as you have not accepted payment of expenses and/or honorarium from more than five U.S. institutions or organizations in the previous six months.

- **Business Visitor B-1 or WB: Only Reimbursement**

Substantiated reasonable expenses, paid in accordance with University policy, can be reimbursed up to the expiration of your B-1 or WB status as stated on your I-94 record.

- **Tourist Visitor B-2 or WT: Only Reimbursement**

You may be reimbursed for expenses, but only for a maximum of nine days as long as you have not accepted payment of expenses and/or honorarium from more than five U.S. institutions or organizations in the previous six months.

- **No payment from Yale**

If you enter the U.S. in B-1, WB, B-2 or WT status and will not receive any honorarium, payment for services or reimbursement for expenses then you may remain at Yale for the duration of your I-94 card validity

Options for Short-Term Visits of More than Nine Days

- If the visitor is only being reimbursed for substantiated reasonable expenses and are NOT RECEIVING AN HONORARIA OR PAYMENT FOR INDEPENDENT PERSONAL SERVICES, this visitor may enter the U.S. in B-1 or WB status and can be reimbursed for substantiated reasonable expenses, paid in accordance with University policy, up to the expiration of their B-1 status as stated on the I-94 record.
- If the visitor will be here for more than nine days and will receive an honorarium or other payment for services, the only option is the [J-1 short-term scholar status](#). [2] This status can be authorized up to a maximum of six months.

Source URL: <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/other-visa-options/b-visitor-visa-and-visa-waiver-program>

Links

[1] <http://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html> [2] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/j-1-scholars/understanding-j-1-status>
[3] <https://your.yale.edu/policies-procedures/policies/3415-payments-individuals-who-are-neither-citizens-nor-permanent> [4] <https://www.usembassy.gov/> [5] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html> [6] <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>