To: Vice Presidents, Chancellors, and Deans  
From: David Zaret, Vice President for International Affairs  
Date: November 21, 2014  
Re: New English Proficiency Requirement for J-1 Scholars

On October 6, 2014 the U.S. Department of State issued a new rule concerning the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program, which brings approximately 1,000 visiting international professors, researchers, scientists, and other scholars to IU each year.

Effective January 5, 2015, IU departments must determine that prospective exchange visitors possess “sufficient proficiency in the English language, as determined by an objective measurement of English language proficiency, successfully to participate in his or her program and to function on a day-to-day basis.” [22 CFR 62.11(a)(2)]

The new rule requires the sponsoring IU unit to use one of the following objective measurements of English language proficiency:

- A recognized English language test (e.g., TOEFL; IELTS);
- Signed documentation from an academic institution or English language school; or
- A documented interview conducted by the sponsor either in-person or by videoconferencing, or by telephone if videoconferencing is not a viable option.

Finally, sponsors are required to retain evidence of how they measured the applicants’ English language proficiency so that it may be made available to the Department of State upon request.

To facilitate compliance and ensure that evidence of English proficiency is centrally retained, the Office of International Services (for the Bloomington and regional campuses) and the Office of International Affairs (for the Indianapolis campus) have modified the e-form used to request Form DS-2019 which is used by the scholar to apply for a J-1 visa. Department administrators who submit e-form requests in iStart will see an additional question regarding how English proficiency was determined. Applicable documentation can be uploaded directly to the e-form.

Please contact a member of the OIS scholar services team (812-855-9086 or ois@iu.edu), or the OIA scholar services team (317-274-7000 or ischolar@iupui.edu) for assistance with these matters and with any questions you may have concerning issues affecting foreign national faculty and staff.