

VIPP-GPEP program application FAQs

1. What Visa do I need to go to MSU VIPP as a visiting scholar?

A: J1-Student Visa. We will provide the DS2019 as well as visa application assistance.

2. I plan to be a visiting scholar for 6 months, what program best suits me?

A: For 6 months or more we recommend the GPEP program.

3. What can I do as a participant of the GPEP program?

A: Visiting scholars participating in GPEP will obtain 18 hours of weekly class instruction and research. This includes time in class, sitting in on specialized classes, utilizing the library, reading documents and literature, thesis writing, interacting with school faculty and specialists, as well as participating in various on campus, foreign academic and cultural activities.

4. Can I first take a look at course offerings?

A: VIPP course offerings are published on our website vipp.isp.msu.edu/resources/life-vipp/.

VIPP puts forth a number of language and culture courses, some examples include: Pronunciation and Public Speaking, Academic Reading and Writing, Dialogue, Slang, American Culture, American-Asian Relations, Career and Personal Development, Exploring Michigan and many others. We also provide more specialized courses of study, including: Foreign Language Acquisition, Pedagogical Methods, Research Methods, Educational Psychology and the Multicultural Classroom, Leadership and Innovation, Macroeconomics, International Finance, Critical Thinking and Innovative Thought, etc.

5. Can I apply with vocational training?

A: We welcome all with vocational training or higher academic backgrounds to apply to the office of the Visiting International Professionals Program (VIPP) to become a visiting scholar at Michigan State University.

6. Can I apply with a self-taught undergraduate degree?

A: As long as you have passed your country's Ministry of Education's verification and examination process, those with self-taught undergraduate degrees and certificates may apply.

7. Can I apply even if I am not a college professor?

A: In addition to college professors, other professionals are welcome to apply. Primary and secondary school teachers, doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, government workers are all welcome to apply. However, every applicant must obtain a sponsor letter from their work unit.

8. What materials do I need to apply?

A: You must provide a photo copy of your passport, resume, academic degree, plan of study, verification of work sponsorship as well as bank verification of your financial resources. You must still go to our website <http://vipp.isp.msu.edu/opensis/> to complete and submit the online application and upload the aforementioned materials. You will also need to submit your \$125 USD application fee.

9. If my significant other accompanies me, do I need to submit the same materials for them?

A: Only a photocopy of their passport is required.

10. Is there a concrete template for my plan of study, verification of work sponsorship and bank verification of financial resources?

A: Yes. We can supply samples of these materials for your consideration.

11. How much money should I prepare?

A: The fee will vary slightly on a yearly basis. If you plan to be a visiting scholar for 12 months during the 2018-2019 school year, tuition will be at least \$9,000 USD, Insurance will be around \$2,200 USD, cost of living will be roughly \$21,000 USD (including meal plan, in accordance with MSU Office of International Students' regulations). In total you should prepare at least \$32,000 USD. The fee for visiting scholars for less than 12 months will pay less according to their duration of stay.

12. Is the cost of living actually \$21,000 USD?

A: \$21,000 USD is the predetermined amount by the Office of International Students. In reality many visiting scholars do not need to pay this much.

13. If I am planning to be a visiting scholar for less than 12 months, how much will my tuition be?

A: For visiting scholars staying less than 12 months, the tuition varies with 3 and 6 month periods. 3 months of tuition will cost \$4,800 USD. 6 months of tuition will cost \$6,500 USD.

14. When are all the fees due? How should I pay?

A: Tuition should be paid in full within 3 weeks of arriving to MSU. Insurance should be paid for on a semester basis or according to the days of stay. Insurance must fulfill MSU requirements and must be valid from the day you come to the US until the day you leave. Delayed payments can cause your student status and visa to be terminated. You can pay these fees online with a credit card, bank transfer, or with cash.

15. Can payments be refunded?

A: Once you arrive at MSU no fees can be refunded.

16. Does the verification of work sponsorship need to be provided by my own work unit (danwei)?

A: Verification of work sponsorship does not necessarily need to be provided by your work unit. Out of the students we have, some obtain sponsorship from the national study abroad fund or their province's department of education, some obtain sponsorship from their school or business, there are also some that obtain sponsorship from other work units (danwei) mechanisms. Those who receive sponsorship from other institutions or work units to become a visiting scholar at MSU (not their personal work unit, national study abroad fund, or provincial department of education) must explain why it was necessary to obtain sponsorship outside of their work unit. Otherwise, we must emphasize that sponsorship must come from your work unit (e.g. university, college, provincial department of education, a governmental organ, a business, etc.) NOT from personal funds (e.g. parents, friends, etc.)

17. How much money does my work unit need to provide for a sufficient work sponsorship?

A: Your work unit must pay for at least 51%, whatever your work unit does not pay beyond that can be supplemented with personal funds.

18. How much money should be on my bank statement?

A: If your work sponsorship is not enough to does not cover the fee in its entirety, whatever must be supplemented by the applicant. Applicants need to obtain a bank statement verifying their financial resources and verify that they are capable of paying visiting scholar fees.

19. Can my child accompany me during my time as a visiting scholar? Can you help my child apply to school? What materials need to be provided to local schools?

A: Children can accompany visiting scholars. Children above the age of 5 can receive free public schooling. Children under 5 can only attend private preschools. The fees at these institutions are rather high, with costs per day varying between \$50 and \$80 USD. Some religious organizations have relatively cheaper preschool classes. All preschool institutions require you to reserve a spot beforehand. But we cannot guarantee that children will be able to enroll on schedule. Children enrolling in local schools must fill out a variety of forms and must further provide the following documents: a photocopy of their passport, DS2019 form, proof of vaccination, proof of residence within the school district (e.g. a rental agreement). VIPP can help contact local schools and begin the enrollment process.

20. Do children and family members need to pay fees?

A: For visiting scholars on 12 month periods, if family members plan to reside together and attend the same classes, you must provide a financial statement of approximately \$5,000 USD for a partner and \$3,000 USD per child. Additionally, if you plan for your child to be a visiting scholar, you must pay an \$800 USD application and service fee.

21. I need an invitation letter in order to apply for sponsorship from the national study abroad fund, provincial ministry of education, or work unit. Are you able to provide this?

A: Yes, we can provide this; however, you must first fill out the online application and submit the \$125 USD application fee.

22. How can the application fee be submitted?

A: To submit the application fee please log in to VIPP's website: <http://vipp.isp.msu.edu/apply/> pay through the link <https://commerce.cashnet.com/cashneti/selfserve/browsecatalog.aspx>

23. Can I use a domestic bank card to submit the application fee?

A: Only if it is a dual currency card.

24. Does the school provide housing? How much is the housing fee? How do I apply for housing?

A: Visiting Scholars can choose to live in campus apartments (Spartan Village). A one bedroom one living room apartment's monthly rent is about \$800 USD. A two bedroom one living room apartment's monthly rent is about \$1,100 USD. If you choose to rent with other people a two bedroom one living room apartment will cost each resident \$500 USD a month. You need to fill out this form on your own. For an explanation of the application process in Chinese and the application link please visit:

<http://vipp.isp.msu.edu/files/9815/0479/5381/spartanvillagecn.pdf>

We can also send you a copy of the application form. Upon completion of the form please submit it to MSU's office of campus housing (LiveOn) along with a \$40 USD application fee here:

<https://commerce.cashnet.com/cashneti/selfserve/edititem.aspx?PC=3460-SVAPPFE&ItemCount=1>.

After receiving the application fee, the office of campus housing will send you a confirmation email, after verifying available housing options they will expect you to pay your first month's rent as a deposit and will send you the link to pay. Upon receiving this deposit, they will assign an apartment to you.

25. Can I cook in the campus apartments?

A: Campus apartments have one bedroom, one living room and two bedrooms, one living room layouts. Both have a living room, bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom. This is all part of the package. The rent includes water, electricity, heat, A/C, internet and telephone costs. It comes with a refrigerator, microwave, cooking utensils, furniture and all the basic installations.

26. Is transportation convenient for on campus residents?

A: MSU's campus is extremely big, the campus has many public transit routes. If you choose to live in Spartan Village, you can take route 39, route 35 route on weekends, and route 20 to get to campus. Everyone can purchase the the half price discounted student semester bus pass at about \$58 USD. This way you can ride all on and off campus bus routes for the entire semester without limitation. Everyone with a student ID is limited to purchasing one bus pass.

27. I am currently applying to live in Spartan Village. When I am paying the \$40 USD application fee, it requires me to enter my name and PID number. Do I have this number?

A: When we send you the DS2019, we will also give you other important materials, e.g. the invitation letter, key facts about enrollment, information about MSU resources as well as your NetID and APID Number. This info includes your MSU email address for use through the duration of you time as a Visiting Scholar. Your student number is a series of numbers starting with A. When applying for campus housing, enter this number.

28. Who is responsible for off campus housing applications?

A: VIPP is not responsible for helping Visiting Scholars reserve or find off campus housing, but we can provide some assistance. There are certain matters to pay attention to when looking for off campus housing, such as convenience and safety. East Lansing, Haslett and Okemos are all areas with good public security, schools and environment. For those not considering buying a car, you must also consider if there are bus routes and how far grocery stores are.

29. How long does this Visiting Scholar application process last?

A: From the time you submit your information until you receive your DS2019, the entire application process will take 6 to 8 weeks.

30. Can the application fee and tuition be discounted?

A: No. The VIPP fees are hard set. Every September we submit the fees for the upcoming year.

31. Can bank statements come from any bank?

A: Yes, but it needs to have Chinese and English explanations. Bank of China (BC), Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), China Merchants Bank, China Construction Bank, etc are all acceptable.

32. Should Visiting Scholars contact academic advisors personally?

A: We encourage Visiting Scholars to contact academic advisors while they are preparing application materials. On the college or department's website you can view professors' research interests and contact information on the Faculty/Staff tab. When contacting an academic advisor, please remind them that VIPP is responsible for managing the Visiting Scholars program and they do not need the college or departments to provide any funds or pay. Please prepare your personal resume and research plan. Please clean up your form; avoid writing or punctuation mistakes, avoid different color letters, and make every effort to make it concise. If you need VIPP to contact an academic advisor for you, we will generally decide a course schedule and professors within the first 2-3 weeks of your arrival, but prerequisite waivers must

be approved by the professor. We cannot assure that we will be able to contact your most ideal professor and get you your ideal schedule.

33. Can you confirm a professor right now?

A: Only once you have been accepted to MSU to be a Visiting Scholar. We cannot confirm professors during the application period. After you arrive to VIPP you can simultaneously attend classes and tap into MSU academic resources, understand professors with similar backgrounds as yourself, attend academic events related to your field, and get in contact with professors through VIPP or yourself.

34. Can you provide professors' CV or website?

A: No

35. When does the VIPP semester start?

A: The VIPP terms of study coincide with MSU semesters, but we will start welcoming Scholars on the following dates: May 14th, 2018; July 2nd, 2018; September 5th, 2018; October 22nd, 2018; January 14th, 2019; March 11, 2019; May 13th, 2019; July 1st, 2019.

36. I am currently a visiting scholar at a college of MSU. My significant other has a J-2 student visa. Can they apply to VIPP to be a visiting scholar?

A: You can be a visiting scholar with a J-2 visa. After acceptance from VIPP, they can immediately start attending VIPP classes. We will also give a certificate of course completion. However, as to whether or not J-2 can apply for a study abroad certificate from the New York Service Center for Chinese Study fellows, you must call them yourself to explain your situation and inquire whether you can obtain a study abroad certificate.

37. Can teachers scan or take photos of the DS2019 and send it to me?

A: The US Department of State regulate that DS2019 forms cannot be scanned, copied, or photographed. We will use FedEx to send you the DS2019 form. Before we send it, we can tell you the DS2019 form's SEVIS number and your major code for you to use when obtaining your visa.

38. Can health insurance be purchased from domestic providers?

A: MSU regulations about health insurance are very strict. Although there is not one exclusive student or Scholar health insurance plan, there are not many insurance agencies that meet the requirements. Generally, VIPP Visiting Scholars all purchase the school's recommended Bluecare Network insurance.

39. What can I use my student id for?

A: Visiting Scholars' student ids is everyone's principle id on campus. It has many benefits. Everyone can use their student id to borrow library books, to use school workout facilities for free (swimming, badminton, basketball, tennis, ping pong, etc), and to purchase half price bus passes. It can also be used for getting meals at the student cafeterias.

40. How can I attend classes of a specialized college or major?

A: We typically recommend everyone to spend their first semester attending VIPP classes. During this time VIPP can help make arrangements for you to attend classes in areas of research you are interested in and with relevant professors. The second semester you can choose one or two classes to attend. Each college and department has open courses that you can find on the following website: <http://schedule.msu.edu>. Whether sitting in on classes is

allowed, you should verify this with the professor and college/department, VIPP cannot guaranty.

41. Does MSU have a Chinese Visiting Scholar or Chinese student QQ group or WeChat group?

A: Yes, we can recommend all Visiting Scholars through VIPP to join the WeChat group. MSU Visiting Scholars also have a QQ group.

42. I have a domestic driver's license; how do I apply for an American driver's license?

A: After arriving at MSU, scholars can purchase personal cars. They commonly by used cars because this is cheaper and selling the car is also easier. Obtaining an American driver's license is relatively easy compared to Chinese driver's license. It is also separated between a written and road test. You can also bring your Chinese driver's license here and the VIPP office can provide translating service. This way we can reduce the one month wait between the written exam and road test. For those without driver's licenses in China, you can enroll in an American driving school or find a friend to help teach you. The testing procedure for obtaining a license will cost about \$75 USD. Scholars can park their cars at the student apartments, but will be required to pay a parking fee.

43. Can I return home halfway through my trip?

A: You can return to home halfway through the trip, but you will need to first stop at the international student office to obtain a signature on your DS2019.

44. I would like to apply for my parents to come and visit, can they apply for J-2 visas?

A: Only your significant other and children can apply for J-2 visas. Parents and other close friends and family, such as siblings, must apply for tourist B visas before they can come to America.

45. I plan to leave for MSU next month, will you be able to meet me at the airport?

A: After you obtain your visa, the next step is to confirm your on or off campus accommodations as well as airfare. After booking your ticket, please tell us the time and date of your arrival and we will arrange for someone to get you from the airport or bus stop. Meeting Scholars at the airport upon arriving in Michigan is just one of the services we provide. In addition, we also provide other services, including: on campus move in assistance, school registration, student id application, bank card application, purchasing basic living essentials, purchasing health insurance, choosing classes, how to use the library, introduction to school resources, etc etc. This is all for helping everyone adjust as quickly and smoothly as possible to life and studying at MSU.

46. I want to book a flight to MSU, what airport is my final destination? Do you have any recommendations for times?

A: The best airport for your final destination is the Lansing Airport. We are only able to provide pick up service to those arriving within the Lansing vicinity. If your airline's final stop is in Detroit, you can take the Michigan Flyer bus from the airport to Lansing and we can pick you up from the Flyer's East Lansing stop. Airport arrival and car ride information and explanations in Chinese can be found on:

<http://vipv.isp.msu.edu/files/3715/0048/1435/ArrivalInstructionsChinese.pdf>

With regards to planning an arrival time, it's best if you arrive between a Monday and Friday because weekend flights are relatively expensive, also you cannot go to the rental office to move in on the weekends. Additionally, if you do not arrive before 5:00pm (17:00), you will need

to book a night at a hotel because the rental office closes at 5:00. We can help you reserve a hotel room.