



Job description

PROGRAM ASSOCIATE **Immigration**

Please Note: To apply, you must have the required qualifications listed below.

Introduction

The Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF) was created by the U.S. Congress and established by the President of the United States in December 2000 as an independent federal government agency. VEF's primary purpose is to promote closer relations between the United States and Vietnam through educational exchange both for Vietnamese nationals to pursue graduate and post-graduate studies in the STEM¹ fields in the United States and for American citizens to teach in the same fields in Vietnam. VEF receives funding from the U.S. Government until 2018 without going through the annual congressional appropriation process.

Overview of the position

VEF is searching for a self-motivated and disciplined individual, who wants to make a difference and expand professionally in the field of international education, to provide program support for VEF's immigration advising and support functions and to assist in the execution of administrative matters related to VEF programs and their related activities. VEF offers the opportunity to be in an international, cross-cultural organization, interacting with various U.S. and Vietnamese entities. The position will involve occasional travel to Vietnam and will involve regular interactions with the VEF Field Office staff in Hanoi, Vietnam. Occasional travel within the United States is required, including travel to the VEF Annual Conference and to U.S. universities.

The Program Associate (PA) will report to the Senior Program Officer and serves as the VEF J Exchange Visitor Program Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO). The PA will assist the VEF Responsible Officer and play an integral role in helping VEF comply with complex government regulations and requirements and provide immigration advising and counseling for VEF program participants. In addition, s/he will assist the Senior Program Officer with the Fellowship and Visiting Scholar Programs, the U.S. Faculty Scholar Program, and other projects as requested. The Program Associate is located in the U.S. headquarters office in Arlington, Virginia.

KEY REQUIREMENTS:

- ✓ U.S. Citizenship
- ✓ Solid knowledge and experience in J immigration regulations
- ✓ Native English speaker
- ✓ Ability to pass and maintain a background investigation

¹ Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine

MAJOR DUTIES

Immigration

The Program Associate will assist with all immigration functions of VEF, serving as the ARO. The PA will be responsible for the following:

1. Advising and communicating regularly with the Fellows and Visiting Scholars and with their U.S. universities with regard to all immigration matters and VEF policies and procedures.
2. Issuing Forms DS-2019 for all VEF Fellows and Visiting Scholars as well as their dependents.
3. Maintaining and updating records for all VEF program participants in the VEF program administration system and in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) in order to meet all federal regulations.
4. Assuring immigration compliance and keeping all required information updated on SEVIS in a timely manner and processing all immigration benefits for program participants and dependents. Monitoring the Fellows' academic status and progress toward degree completion in order to assure legal compliance with immigration regulations and VEF Fellowship requirements.
5. Communicating with U.S. universities, when required, to monitor academic progress and other matters related to program participants.
6. Reviewing and authorizing immigration benefits and requests for all program participants, such as on-campus employment authorization, Academic Training authorization, program extensions, etc., and issuing relevant letters, documents, and communications to program participants on all immigration matters.
7. Conducting periodic reviews of immigration functions and data integrity reports.
8. Assisting with all other matters related to immigration and to VEF's authorization as a sponsor of an Exchange Visitor Program.

Other Activities

The PA assists the Senior Program Officer with programming related to the Fellowship and Visiting Scholar Programs, the U.S. Faculty Scholar Program, and other projects, while interacting with the VEF Hanoi Field Office staff, who have direct responsibilities for related activities, as well as interacting with various external entities. The PA will also assist the Senior Program Officer with the following:

1. Organization of, and activities for, the Pre-Departure Orientation for Fellows and Visiting Scholars.
2. Orientation(s) for U.S. Faculty Scholars.
3. Monitoring and verification of financial obligations of VEF for Fellows and for Visiting Scholars at each U.S. university.
4. VEF Alumni Network and Alumni Conference in Vietnam
5. Assist with planning and execution of the annual VEF conference.
6. Activities associated with U.S. universities, including
 - a. Communicating information regarding newly selected Fellowship nominees and Fellows for each new cohort as well as information regarding new Visiting Scholars.
 - b. Coordinating visits by U.S. universities to the U.S. VEF office or visits by VEF Alliance schools to the VEF office in Vietnam.
 - c. Arranging visits by VEF staff to U.S. universities.

OTHER DUTIES

In addition to the major duties listed above, the Program Associate does the following:

1. Regularly reviews systems, documents, and procedures relevant to his/her duties with the intent to improve the efficiency of VEF.

2. Contributes to the management, strategies, and directions of VEF by taking the initiative to offer new ideas and approaches.
3. Helps develop relevant budgets for program activities.
4. Is responsible for other duties as assigned by the Senior Program Officer and/or Executive Director.

QUALIFICATIONS

Required Background, Experience, and Skills

- Minimum of a bachelor's degree (not online) from an accredited U.S. university.
- Minimum of three (3) years of recent work experience as a Responsible Officer (RO) or an Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO), demonstrating thorough hands-on knowledge of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services/Department of State J visa regulations and Exchange Visitor Program regulations, in particular in the categories of Student College/University, Research Scholar, and Short-term Scholar.
- Knowledge and experience with SEVIS compliance and reporting requirements.
- Experience with, and oversight of, web-based management systems.
- Three (3) years of experience working directly with international students and scholars.
- Evidence of strong critical and analytical thinking skills.
- Ability to apply analytical methods and techniques to gather and summarize data and to identify and resolve issues.
- Demonstrated cross-cultural awareness skills, commitment to work with individuals of diverse backgrounds, and ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations.
- Strong computer skills in a PC/Windows environment including word processing (MS Word), database management (Excel, Access), presentations (PowerPoint), administrative computer systems, internet and electronic mail.
- Ability to work independently and manage the workload efficiently with serious attention to details and to accuracy of information.
- Proven ability to multi-task in a fast-paced work environment. Ability to manage details of several major projects at once with excellent organizational skills.
- Ability to communicate effectively and positively, both orally and in writing, at all levels with a high concern for interpersonal diligence and diplomacy.
- Experience in composing original documents and doing very close editing and proofreading of those same documents and of documents composed by non-native speakers.
- Ability to function within an unstructured setting with responsibility and accountability, while maintaining a positive and professional attitude and achieving quality performance.
- Experience planning and managing programs and activities for international students.
- Experience living, studying, and/or working outside of the United States.
- Ability to travel domestically and to Vietnam when required.

Preferred Background, Experience, and Skills

- Understanding of U.S. university graduate degree programs in the STEM fields.
- Experience working in a U.S. higher education environment, including familiarity with the administrative functions and roles of various key offices that work with international students/scholars and sponsored students.
- Experience working in international educational exchange.
- Fluency in a second language.
- Experience living, studying, working, or traveling in Vietnam, Asia (specifically Southeast Asia), or a developing country.

SALARY/BENEFITS AND START DATE

Salary/Benefits

The Program Associate is a U.S. Federal Government employee and is eligible for all applicable federal government benefits. Annual salary depends on background and experience. Teleworking arrangements and flex-time are an integral part of the U.S. staff schedules and can be considered for this position after the first two months of employment.

Start Date

As soon as possible.

Application Procedures

The application must include a cover letter that explains how the candidate meets the required background, experience, and skills, and that indicates the present salary and salary requirements. The application must also include the candidate's resume and the names of 3 professional references, including the referee's position, dates and circumstances of knowing the applicant, and the referee's contact phone number(s) and email address.

Applications can be emailed to pa@vef.gov. No phone calls will be accepted. Please note that only applications sent electronically will be accepted.

Deadline: April 14, 2013, or until filled

VEF is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer. Selection of the candidate for this position will be made without regard to race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, non-disqualifying disability, political affiliation, marital status, membership or non-membership in an employee organization, or any other non-merit factor.

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