



USAID PARTNERSHIP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM (PHER)

GUIDELINE FOR THE VISITING SCHOLAR PROGRAM

I. INTRODUCTION

The Partnership for Higher Education Reform (PHER) is a five-year initiative funded by USAID and implemented by Indiana University. PHER aims to modernize Vietnam's leading universities and strengthen the country's higher education system in alignment with the USAID Higher Education Program Framework. PHER builds on effective models, introduces innovative approaches, and develops new partnerships. Its strategy centers around four key programs – Governance Excellence, Teaching & Learning Excellence, Research Excellence, and University-Industry Linkages – and targets three major Vietnamese universities: Vietnam National University-Hanoi, Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City, and the University of Danang (3Us).

As a part of Vietnam's efforts to improve research and innovation capacity, PHER has established a Visiting Scholar Program (VSP). The goal is to support activities at the 3Us that expand the capacity of emerging scholars to improve their research skills, build connections with US scholars, and help support access to top laboratories, think tanks, and research centers where they can share knowledge with world-class scholars holding similar research interests. Ultimately, the VSP seeks to improve the quality and quantity of research being conducted at the 3Us in Vietnam by expanding opportunity through networking.

This document is intended to provide the 3Us with an overview of PHER VSP implementation.

II. OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of PHER VSP are to:

- improve the research and/or teaching capacity of emerging faculty at the 3Us with a focus on the seven scholarly areas represented by the Vietnam International Academic Networks (VIANs): (1) Economics, Business & Public Policy, (2) Information & Technology, (3) Health Sciences, (4) Climate & Environment, (5) Education, (6) Advanced Materials, and (7) Anthropology & Culture Studies;



- build and broaden strategic partnerships with laboratories and research centers at higher education institutions in the US and other parts of the world to improve research quality through international knowledge sharing among experts.

III. PROGRAM DETAILS

In 2024, the PHER VSP will support twenty-one (21) scholars from the 3Us (seven scholars from each of the 3Us) to carry out research and engage in relevant academic activities at US host institutions to help move the research of the Vietnamese scholars toward publication. By connecting Vietnamese faculty with laboratories and research centers at leading US universities, scholars from the 3Us in Vietnam will have a chance to experience a different tradition of research by interacting and collaborating with researchers in their field, thereby enhancing opportunities for publishing in top peer-reviewed journals. Academic activities during the exchange term may include but are not limited to the following:

- Conducting individual or contributing to ongoing laboratory research related to the scholar's focus area;
- Attending classes, seminars, or laboratory sections to learn from academic programs within the scholar's academic area and experience alternative pedagogical methods; ;
- Engaging with the host community by attending conferences and lectures, participating in research collaboration, making presentations of their own research methods/findings, and participating in formal colloquia and informal discussions in the U.S. where possible.

Upon returning from the visiting term abroad, sponsored scholars are expected to share knowledge learned during the VSP to the awareness of their Vietnamese colleagues through mentoring sessions focusing on research methodologies/research design.

All VSP scholars sponsored by PHER will adhere to the collective standards of research and academic integrity set by PHER, the 3Us, and the host institution abroad. The 3Us and international scholars agree to comply with the main objectives of the PHER project, which are to advance the research capabilities of 3Us.

Program Length

Each visiting scholar shall be hosted by a faculty/lab at a U.S. host institution for up to 3 months.

Matching Process

Scholars are encouraged to proactively connect with a host institution, faculty, laboratory, or research center at Indiana University or other institution in the U.S., that conducts research in their subject area and also linked to the relevant VIAN. Should there be a need for PHER’s assistance in finding a host for a nominated scholar, please allow up to 12 weeks for PHER to explore potentially suitable host institutions or labs in the U.S..

Note:

- If a nominated scholar prefers to identify a host institution of their own choosing, Indiana University/PHER must still manage international air travel. The scholar, however, will be responsible for in-country logistical arrangements with their identified host institution.

Deliverables

Each scholar is required to submit the following deliverables to PHER upon returning from the VSP:

- At least **one** manuscript submitted to WoS/Scopus or equivalent system acknowledging the support from PHER within 01 month from the exchange term end date as officially agreed with PHER;
- **One** report to her/his home institution and PHER on how their experience in VSP will be applied in their own teaching and/or research at their home institution in Vietnam within 01 month after returning from the visiting term abroad;
- At least **one** mentoring session for fellow Vietnamese scholars focusing on research methodologies/research design within 03 months after returning from the visiting term abroad;
- Other deliverables required by the scholar’s home institution (if any, these should be clarified in the Nomination Letter from the nominating institution in Vietnam).

Sponsorship

The program will fully fund the following expenses in accordance with the PHER Cooperative Agreement, applicable U.S. Government's rates and policies:

- Vietnam-U.S. round-trip airfare;
- Per diem (single-occupancy accommodation, meals, and incidentals);
- Health insurance;
- Costs incurred to obtain a US J-1 visa for selected scholars:
 - Round-trip domestic flight ticket;
 - Airport transportation;
 - Accommodation, meals, and incidentals, if applicable

Please be advised that PHER VSP scholars must obtain written approval from USAID before accepting any non-PHER funds through scholarships, assistantships, or wages, and that if they do

receive any financial compensation outside of their USAID allowances, their USAID monthly maintenance allowance will be reduced accordingly. PHER will work with each individual scholar to best support their logistical arrangements. Detailed administrative and financial guidelines will be provided in due course to the selected scholars.

IV. ELIGIBILITY & NOMINATION

Eligibility Criteria

- Be a Vietnamese citizen;
- Be a permanent faculty of Vietnam National University-Hanoi, Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh, or the University of Da Nang and nominated by the academic leadership of the corporate university;
- Hold at least a Master’s (preferably a Ph.D.) degree from an accredited university;
- Early and mid-career academics, and female academics are strongly encouraged to participate in the VSP;
- Have sufficient English proficiency by satisfying **one** of the following requirements:
 - The scholar completed a full-time degree program where English is the primary language of instruction;
 - The scholar provides proof of English proficiency exam results: IELTS 6.5, TOEFL iBT 79 or equivalent;
 - The scholar passes an English capacity interview with PHER experts;
- Agree to USAID’s Conditions of Sponsorship¹ and Visa Compliance for Exchange Visitors²;
- The scholar must be engaged in ongoing research for which findings can be integrated into a manuscript ready for journal submission after return from the exchange in the U.S;
- Other criteria articulated by the scholar’s home institution in Vietnam (these should be restated in the nomination letter from the corporate university academic leadership.) .

Nomination

Each University should nominate up to seven (07) scholars by transmitting the following two documents to PHER:

1. A nomination letter from the each university with a roster of the seven eligible scholars;
2. A research statement or proposal from each nominee describing the research activity that will be undertaken at the host institution with a clear publication plan;
3. For independently organized hosting relationships outside of Indiana University, a formal letter of invitation from the academic leadership at the host institution is required.

¹

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/AID%20252-1-%20%28Conditions%20of%20Sponsorship%20for%20U.S.-Based%20Activities%29.doc#>

² <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-200/252>



Each university should send nomination documents as outlined above along with Annex I (see attached) to hieuha@sangkienvietnam.org and copy Thao Hoang thaohoang@sangkienvietnam.org **no later than February 2, 2024.**

V. TIMELINE

VSP Introduction:	January 2024
Scholar Nomination:	Early February 2024
Pre-Departure Webinar:	Late February 2024
DS-2019 application, Visa Applications & Travel Arrangements:	Starting early February 2024 and at least 6 weeks prior to departure date
VSP Term:	3-month period between March and November 2024

VI. CONTACT

Please contact PHER Project Manager, Hieu Ha hieuha@sangkienvietnam.org (copy to Thao Hoang thaohoang@sangkienvietnam.org) with any questions about the VSP.



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VNU
VIỆT NAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY



The University
of Danang



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

ANNEX I

LIST OF NOMINATED SCHOLARS FOR THE PHER VISITING SCHOLAR PROGRAM

#	Scholar Full Name	Gender	Position/ Affiliation	Scholar Email	Research Area	Intended Exchange Period	Intended Host Institution (if any)	Intended Mentor (if any)	Note
00	Nguyen Van A	Male	Professor of X	Email address	Advanced Materials	dd/mm/2024 - dd/mm/2024	University of X	Dr. John Smith Department of.... Email:.....	
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