

FAQs for Senior Lawyers Visiting Professors

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*last updated pre-Covid!

FAQs for Senior Lawyers Visiting Professors

What is a "Senior Lawyer"?

A "senior lawyer" has at least 15 years of significant practice experience in the area in which he or she proposes to teach.

Can any lawyer with 15 years practice experience apply?

Yes.

How long are the assignments?

Usually about two weeks, but some visiting professors have also taught their courses in only one week or twelve weeks. The main importance is that a minimum of 15 hours are taught and the host and visiting professor agree on the schedule.

Are the positions remunerated?

No.

What costs are involved?

For utilising the CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL LEGAL STUDIES' services to obtain a teaching position, a payment of a placement fee is due.

In addition, the senior lawyer must cover his or her own travel cost and cost associated with his or her stay in the country of assignment.

Will housing be provided?

Sometimes, the university can provide a faculty apartment, or a dorm room with ensuite bathroom. Some hosts, however, cannot afford to assist with housing financially, but they will be able to help find suitable lodging in a hotel near the faculty.

Can I choose my teaching location?

Yes, to a certain extent. We do our best to assign you to your first choice host, however, course requests take precedence and the university that needs your expertise may be in a different country than coveted.

How does the tax refund for US federal income tax work?

Your selection to teach is made by the CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL LEGAL STUDIES on behalf of CILS Benefactors Inc. As CILS Benefactors Inc. is a tax-exempt public charity under section 501(c)3 of the United States Internal Revenue Code, properly receipted and reasonable travel expenses incurred in taking up your teaching assignment should be deductible from your federal income tax. To claim any deduction, you must provide relevant receipts to

yolanda.salvacion@gmail.com and such expenses will appear in the public record as donations to CILS Benefactors Inc.

Are there luggage restrictions when travelling to my destination overseas?

It will depend on your destination, airline and booking class. Make sure you have checked with your travel agency regarding how much luggage you are allowed to bring on the flight ticket you have booked. Also be aware that luggage contingents for a transatlantic flight may be different from an inner-Continental connection. There are also several luggage delivery services to be found online if you prefer to try out such an alternative.

What money (and how much) shall I bring?

If you go for an assignment in the Euro zone (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurozone>) the easiest is to withdraw cash from a cash machine after arrival. For other host countries you will have to change into the local currency. A few of the fellow EU members, but not Euro zone members, may accept the Euro as well. Check with your bank or credit card provider if your cards will work outside the US. Do not travel with too much cash.

Will I need a visa?

Most host countries will not require a visa, but a valid US passport with at least 6 months left before renewal, however, always double check regarding updates at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>. If you travel to a country that requires you to obtain a visa, the host will also assist to the best of their ability with invitation letter or confirmation of accommodation et. al.

Do I need medical or travel insurance?

It is advised that you make such arrangements. Credit card companies sometimes provide travel insurances.

Do I need to dress up for the teaching?

Best to ask your university contact.

Can I distribute teaching papers to students in advance?

Yes. Discuss with your contact, whether the university has a web upload possibility, or if you should email them to him/her (or any other assistant).

Will students read the materials before I teach?

Do not get your hopes up. Many students will take your class as an elective course. In addition, they are likely shy about their English language capabilities.

Shall I bring or expect to receive gifts?

There is no rule to this, but some visiting professors have brought small tokens to the host contact and/or students (as an incentive to get them to speak). Some hosts give gifts to the visiting professors, others give nothing.

Will everyone speak English?

Most will understand English, but not everyone will be fluent. If you go to a country that uses the Cyrillic Alphabet (Bulgaria for example), studying the alphabet in advance may help you with street signs.

May I attend other classes?

It is advisable to offer to your host contact that you would be willing to make guest appearances or presentations in other classes or at events that may be planned at the university during the time of your stay. It is some of the best exposure for you and use of your spare time.

My spouse is interested in teaching. Is this possible?

It depends on the host, but we have had many visiting professors whose spouses organised successful assignments (for instance an English language literature class), while the Senior Lawyer was teaching the law class.

My spouse is also a lawyer. Can we co-teach?

Yes.

What is the best time to teach?

1. Many hosts prefer the visiting professor to come for a fortnight in the middle of the semester (March/April in spring, or October/November in fall) although there are senior lawyers who have successfully taught during other months.
2. Time of day depends on the university, the classes, and the structure. Some only offer evening courses, others only morning courses.

Teaching Tips

Note: The below tips have been compiled by US visiting professors. If you are from a country other than the US, some suggestions may not apply, yet most of them are universal.

Preface

You are what you are. Some of you may have very little experience in teaching, but you do have a wealth of information and experience both professionally and personally. You have achieved varying degrees of success and all that is involved in relation thereto.

Teaching is not only a process of conveying information, stimulating ideas, giving instruction and assistance, but it is also a means of connecting, reaching out and establishing personal relationships. If you just concentrate on relaying information and legal principles, you won't be nearly as successful as you will be if you connect to your students on a more personal level.

If the opportunity arises, choose the most remote location. Choose where you never have dreamed of wanting to go. It will probably be the BEST experience of your life, and potentially much more gratifying than choosing Budapest, Warsaw, or Prague.

STEP program by the US State Department

It might be helpful to Senior Lawyers on assignment if they register their trip in advance with the *Smart Traveler Enrollment Program* (STEP program <https://step.state.gov/step>) of the US State Department. I have done this on past assignments and found it to be helpful/reassuring to know that State Dept would contact me or my relatives in case of an emergency. Sometimes the info passed along to you from State Dept may simply be info on an upcoming street demonstration that you may want to avoid.

Take Initiative!

Establish initial contact with host institution

Follow up and finalise contact

Contacting the designated law school can be very challenging. Start early and be persistent! If email is not enough, call. But make sure to *check the spam filter of your email!* Also consider contacting the Senior Lawyer Administration at CILS if you do not already cc them on your university communications. Sometimes your messages do not reach the university but are filtered out as spam, and the SL Admin's are not.

After contact with the liaison faculty representative is established, you could request the opportunity to speak to the Dean or an Assistant Dean to introduce yourself and to talk generally about the subject matter of your course or courses and your teaching schedule.

Do NOT become aggravated or frustrated because of a lack of a prompt and meaningful response.

If you know already that your emails are not caught in their spam filter system, but reach their destination, work on the assumption they have been read and acknowledged.

When you suggest your course dates and you do not receive a response, it may well be, the dates have been noted, and the contact does not realize the necessity to re-confirm. It helps for your own state of mind to send such messages with a read receipt. Keep communicating with CILS at any time if it makes you feel more secure.

You must bear in mind that your course may not be the most important topic on your contact's agenda (especially if you establish contact for a course that would be scheduled a year later, rather than the next semester)! Important to consider are university holidays, the bureaucracy, and the potential lack of funding, ie your host contact may be an international relations admin, while at the same time vice dean, or professor, or student coordinator.

Do not expect that the host law school will take the initiative in setting up your schedules, course subject matter and related activities. If they do, great, but you may probably have to take the lead and suggest, propose, and work out the structure and details of your teaching experience.

Find out number of students and the level of education.

Some hosts also have assignment opportunities for spouses (English language course, music, or theater, et al)

Ask about visiting the courthouse (if you are in a city with a courthouse).

Be flexible

Your hosts may have the best intentions; however, organization may be lacking.

Simply go with the flow with a smile. Most, if not all, of you will find out that you will have to be somewhat flexible once you arrive at the host law school. Advanced planning in great detail and specifics is possible but rare, and sometimes difficult because of the distance involved and the difficulty of communication.

Therefore, it is important, again, to keep in mind that the personal relationships, friendships and good will that you establish are probably more important than the actual teaching of legal principles. This does not mean that your presentations and instructions should not be scholarly, but only that the most important part of your experience will not be the imparting of legal doctrine. You will find that the students are much more interested in how you practice law, the American lifestyle and you as an individual than they will be in any erudite and academic legal doctrine.

Suggest that you are available for guest presentations in two or three of the law school classes, or as a speaker at a law school event.

Assist with the law school's Moot Court Team (no matter what your expertise), students will be happy to have the opportunity to do a training session with a native speaker of English. If the university participates in exchange programs, offer to help students with their interviews for their semesters abroad (if English will be the main language).

Your Course

The subject matter of the course you teach will depend on your areas of specialization and on the desire and needs of the host. Keep in mind that the most interesting thing to your students will be your practice of law not the legal principles involved. Some institutions may have a definitive curriculum where your course will be worked in, but most may be looking for course suggestions from you

Suggest that you can teach your course to Erasmus students ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erasmus Programme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erasmus_Programme)) as well as to the local student body.

Some of your subject matter may be presented in special seminars or lectures independent from the general course that you teach. You may also be asked to visit different law school classes to give presentations. For example, even though you may not be a family lawyer you may be asked to give a short presentation in a family law class about the practice of law in the US.

Teaching in English to Non-Native English Speakers

Try to introduce yourself in their language. That should be a nice ice breaker.

Remember students are not lawyers.

Your language is not their mother tongue.

Undergrad law students at your host university will likely be of the same age as an undergraduate COLLEGE student in the US.

You will need to be able to relate to these younger people and project your personality to that age level.

The American judicial system is something foreign to them (probably only known by virtue of television shows).

Therefore, teach simple, and straightforward.

Test the speaking ability and comprehension of your students. Most often the comprehension level is much higher than the speaking level.

At the beginning of your first class ask students to tell you about themselves, where they are from, how old they are etc.

You need to speak slowly. When you think you speak slow, think again, and speak even more slow. Be sure to speak loud and clear (without shouting).

Ask them if they understand your explanation. It is always appropriate to go back and repeat. Do not use complicated words, slang, or academic terms.

Keep your vocabulary simple.

They may not be aware of “backhanded compliments” or may take “he's in the doghouse” literally with a man sitting in a dog house.

Again, speak slowly and clearly. Use simple words and go back and restate.

If you are required to use interpreters, it is very helpful if you have a written outline to accompany your presentation. Also, if possible, you should arrange to meet with your interpreter in advance and go over the materials with him or her and establish a protocol.

Once again, a straight lecture type approach (especially with interpreters) will not be as efficacious as a more informal presentation. The informality engenders more of a personal bonding with the students, and they are more likely to pay attention and contribute if this personal connection is present.

And lastly, yes, again, speak S.L.O.W.L.Y.

Course Materials

Students will not read your materials in advance. It is a simple fact.

Provide basic source materials for your program, eg, CISG, NY Convention on Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, Paris Convention (IP), US/Country

Treaties, Hague Conventions, include a section on US Law, US Constitution, US Court System, FRCP and/or State Rules of Procedure

Teaching Style and Methods

One of the keys of success is making sure that all the audience starts at the same point you are at with respect to making your presentation.

Therefore, simple introductions and basic reviews are absolutely necessary.

You cannot presume that the students know from whence you are beginning. You need to lay the proper foundation.

Do not take yourself or the subject matter too seriously.

The level of student participation is much less intense (especially if it is an elective course) and students might be used to the lecture method only. Because of the language barrier, it is important that you be relaxed, speak slowly and clearly and interject some fun and levity into your presentation.

It will be helpful to have a written outline to which the students can refer to because often their reading comprehension is better than their listening comprehension.

Do not necessarily expect students to read your materials BEFORE class.

Interject personal stories and lots of examples. Students seemed to be enthralled and extremely interested in them.

Ask your spouse to make a short presentation to the class about their experiences in their jobs, their lives.

Suggest to the host institution to award a certificate of participation to those attending your lectures. You may want to make up the certificates yourself in advance here in the United States and bring them with you or have them shipped. It will be something that the students will greatly treasure, and it will help to keep your attendance consistent.

Host Country and University - Be Prepared

Learn something about the history of the country and university.

Try to find out as much as possible about the culture, geography and weather of your designated host country and law school.

If possible, try to speak to someone who has either visited or is from the location to which you are going. If you have a Bulgarian, Latvian, Hungarian ... community in your hometown, contact them.

Do you know what the EU countries are versus Schengen countries? Not all are the same <http://www.schengenvisa.info.com/schengen-visa-countries-list>.

Contact the country's embassy if you are uncertain or ask your contact at the institution about the need for a visa. Make sure your travel and teaching dates are correct in the invitation letter, in all relating documents otherwise, your visa may not list the same dates as your teaching dates.

Make sure you know how to get from the airport to your housing. Some hosts have a student rep or the host contact him/herself at the airport at your arrival, but some just do not manage, so be certain you know your way around on your own.

Do NOT mistake 1.05 with 1.05pm! 1.05 is 1.05am. 13.05 is 1.05pm. After arriving at the airport realizing you are 12 hours late for your flight, you will know the difference, and believe me, it is not a pleasant experience!

If you can, familiarise yourself on google maps with your daily trip from housing to the Institution already from home. Can you walk? Do you need public transportation? If yes, know if you can buy the ticket in the bus/train or only outside the vehicle, will they take bills or will you need coins, are there pre-paid tickets available at all (if yes, where), Day passes are usually cheaper than single tickets, weeks passes cheaper than day passes.

Try to find out as much as possible in advance about your living accommodations. Accommodations tend to be rather far from luxurious, but adequate and clean. One of the considerations of where you live is how far it is from the law school. Again, advanced planning is important. If you do not get enough specifics by email, try WhatsApp, Signal or old-fashioned telephoning.

Food is usually very reasonably priced and very good. It is important for you to make contact in advance with someone who is either from the host country or who has visited there so that you can find out more about eating habits, the style of food and its availability. Sometimes finding vegetarian dishes may be a challenge.

Check the University website. If there is no English version of the website google the university and law faculty; Find out about the setup for your course (access to internet/intranet, computer or office for you to use, with or without student assistant, powerpoint, library, et. al.

What to Take

- Cash might still be king. Best to ask your university contact. Credit cards (with pin for ATM machines), US Dollars and Euros should work. Be aware that

small shops in some of the host countries do not accept American Express cards due to the high transaction fees.

- Pack your usual toiletries, and enough of any prescription drug for duration of trip, cold/flu remedies, antibiotics prescription from your doctor, stomach remedies; Drug stores are well equipped and pharmacists much more useful than in US (if you have a translator) still best to take what you normally use and know
- Electronics: Chargers/converters, laptop/tablet, outline of lectures, cell phone (check with provider if it will work in the host country), GPS, i-pod, powerbank
- Make sure your clothes are season appropriate.
- Other things: Peanut butter or other US specific food or drink you cannot live without), Swiss Army knife, plastic cutlery, flashlight, alarm clock (or use cell phone)
- Books, basic office supplies (letterhead, pens, paper, etc., business cards)

What NOT to Take

- Any new item in original box
- Coffee maker or tea pot (Learn to make "cowboy coffee")
- US local cell phone
- Too much cash
- Whatever you cannot take due to customs regulations

Suggestions for Gifts (for faculty coordinator, students, other contacts)

- Book of your hometown
- Books for children (inquire if your faculty coordinator, contact or dean has small children)
- Something unique to your home area
- Law book on subject of interest
- US brands of alcohol (Bourbon; California Wines ;)
- Fridge magnets
- Pens
- Baseball hats or scarfs of your favorite sports team etc

What Attitude to take

- Teach from your world - Live in their world
- Be open - Be available - Be humble - Be flexible
- Don't Stress – Do Enjoy

Some general points

For your first class, and your first appearance at the university make sure you are appropriately dressed in business attire! (Ask your contact to be sure).

The dress code for faculty is more formal than the US, and, if you are a man, make sure you know how to tie your tie!

Blue jeans are not considered adult attire for the instructing professor in most of the host schools.

Remember CILS sends you **not only** as a visiting professor, but as an ambassador. You are from one of the leading economies in the world - dress like it and act like it. It is expected.

Point out several sincere good things about the host country, people, and local area. Do not make unfavourable comparisons between the US and the host country.

Express gratitude for students' study of English and compliment them on their speaking ability.

Do not criticize (too harshly) or make light of their national and local problems.

By all means be proud to be American, but at the same time express admiration and respect for other cultures and people and acknowledge the US is not perfect.

Stay out of the political arena as much as you can. Endorse American democracy, free enterprise, and capitalism, but do not get specific about US politics or the host country's politics.

If you tip in restaurants 10% is (still) considered too much. Consult your travel book, your university contact and/or SLVP alumni.

If you go to a country where the Cyrillic Alphabet is in use, make SURE, you know it. It will make your life so much easier being able to decipher street signs!