

The International Student Management Office (ISMO) manages the NDU Sponsorship program designed to offer support and assistance to International Fellows (IFs) studying at National Defense University. Sponsors have the opportunity to establish a meaningful relationship with the officer and their family in a way that both parties benefit from this unique international interaction.

As an NDU Sponsor, you are providing varied and essential support for the International Fellow and their family, helping them have a smooth transition and a positive experience during their year at NDU. Sponsors may support or provide assistance by:

- Advising the IF on transition items upon their arrival. Although ISMO will provide assistance in most transition items such as banking, schools, housing, and medical, the NDU Sponsor may assist in follow up.
- Providing ideas or advice about major purchases, travel, entertainment, and places of interest.
- Helping the IF and family with local shopping options close to their housing and throughout the D.C. metropolitan area.
- Advising the IF and family regarding safety, American customs, and traditions to include tipping, showing gratitude and use of American slang and gestures.

One of the real benefits of the NDU Sponsorship program is to show the IF the American way of life through participating in home and community activities together. Here are some examples of activities that have been enjoyed by both IFs and NDU Sponsor:

- Invitations into American homes for traditional American holidays such as Thanksgiving and Memorial Day.
- Attending local sporting events that may be unfamiliar to the IF and family, as well as attending their favorite sporting events, one being Soccer. DC United has several games throughout the year.
- Seasonal activities, for example ice skating in the winter or enjoying picnics on the Potomac and outdoor movies on the Mall during the summer.
- Dining at ethnic restaurants are always a favorite, especially when sharing your IF's culture.

General Guidelines:

1. Sponsors are expected to meet with their officer, in person, at least once a month. In the first few weeks, they may require more assistance as they are getting settled. You will be notified of the address and phone number of your International Fellow as soon as the information is available. On your first contact, identify yourself as their NDU Sponsor and find out if there is anything you can do to help them get settled and learn their way around the area.
2. For planning purposes, consult the Schedule of Field Studies Trips for the dates they will be away. This will be emailed to you, a few weeks after they arrive. Confirm arrangements and provide clear directions to your home or meeting place. Maintain your normal lifestyle. Be yourself. Be a good neighbor. Be a friend.
3. Meet your guests' basic food requirements as indicated by their religious or cultural tradition. Inquire about any dietary preferences.
4. Since this is a cultural exchange program, feel free to discuss similarities and/or differences in religion, eating habits, dress, or any other differences but do so as a learning or sharing experience. Avoid arguments or offensive statements. We are dedicated to celebrating cultural differences as we learn about each other. Be willing to explain any of your traditions.
5. Serving as a Sponsor entails certain responsibilities, to include propriety, accountability, respect for others, and mutual trust.
6. Participation is voluntary and there is no monetary reimbursement. Should there be costs involved, as the one who does the inviting, you should be prepared to treat your guests. They will sometimes try to pay for your costs or repay you for your kindness by inviting you to their home for dinner. Usually you work out something that involves you inviting them, and later accepting their invitation.
7. Lastly, NDU has special events to which you will receive a formal invitation to attend. Your attendance is important and greatly appreciated, but if you cannot attend, it is protocol to let the ISMO office and your student know.

Remember that for some of the officers, this is their first time in the United States. If your situation changes and you are unable to be an active participant, contact the NDU Sponsor Program Coordinators and the ISMO office immediately so arrangements can be made to ensure another NDU Sponsor can be assigned.