H-1B Information Session
Understanding your H-1B Employment

A presentation by
the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)
Faculty and Scholar Services – Morningside & Manhattanville
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Agenda

1. Overview of H-1B Status
2. H-1B Documents
3. Conferences and Lectures
4. International Travel
5. Extension of H-1B Status
6. Forthcoming Stateside H-1B Visa Revalidation
7. Permanent Residence
8. Q&A
1. H-1B Overview
Overview of H-1B status

Employment-based visa that allows foreign nationals to work in the United States in a “specialty occupation”

Specialty occupation requires “theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge”
Overview of H-1B status

H-1B visa holder can have dual intent, i.e., may pursue permanent residence while maintaining H-1B status and preserving the ability to travel internationally.

H-1B status is employer-specific and position-specific.

Maximum period of 6 years in H-1B status, with limited exceptions.
Overview of H-1B status

H-1B status is appropriate for officers of research, officers instruction, and other positions deemed critical to the department or the University.
2. H-1B Documents
H-1B Status Documents

- Approval notice (I-797)
- I-94
- Entry / admission stamp
- H-1B visa stamp
Your responsibilities as an H-1B employee

Contact ISSO if there is any change in employment:

- Job title
- Work location
- Change in the source of funds

In some cases, an amended H-1B petition must be filed as per USCIS regulations.
Your responsibilities as an H-1B employee

We understand that there are many kinds of leave (research, medical, etc).

Leaves of absence

Discuss with your ISSO adviser the terms of the specific leave in advance so we can advise accordingly.
Your responsibilities as an H-1B employee

Report change of residential address on Form AR 11 within 10 days of change

Any accompanying family members must each submit Form AR 11
3. Conferences and Lectures
You cannot receive an honorarium or other remuneration for such activities, although reimbursement for travel and reasonable expenses is allowed.

You may have opportunities to give lectures at other institutions or conferences.
4. International Travel
International Travel

Every time you travel internationally, be sure to always have with you:

- Unexpired Passport and H-1B visa stamp*
- Original approval notice Form I-797
- Complete H-1B packet filed by ISSO (recommended)
 Upon Re-Entry

Retrieve your electronic I-94 to confirm you entered in H-1B status and that the “Admit Until Date” is correct.

Electronic I-94 Record
International Travel

Refer to our page on documents you need to return to the US.

*Refer to the ISSO website for guidance on trips of less than 30 days to either Canada or Mexico.
5. Extension of H-1B Status
Extension of H-1B Status

Extension requests are submitted by your academic department. This can be submitted up to six months before the current stay expires.

- Timely filing of an extension allows for continued employment
- Must be physically present in the U.S. at the time of filing
- Contact your ISSO adviser before you travel internationally, if you have questions

Note: time spent abroad may be “recaptured” to allow for post-6-year extension. We recommend you keep records of all international travel including admission and exit stamps, boarding passes and travel itineraries.
H-1B Grace Period and Loss of Employment

- If your employment ends at the same time as your status expires, then check your I-94 record as it may indicate an additional 10-day grace period.
- 60-day grace period permitted in certain circumstances and at the discretion of USCIS.
- If you will be leaving Columbia prior to your I-94 expiration, contact ISSO.
6. Pilot Program: H-1B Stateside Visa Renewal
Department of State announced the intention to resume stateside **renewals** of H-1B visas in early 2024.

**Tentative details:**

- Limited to H-1B visa **renewals** (first-time H-1B visa applicants not eligible)
- Must be physically in the U.S. when applying
- Must remain in the U.S. while visa renewal is being processed
- Priority may be given to citizens of countries with lengthy consular processing times
- If the visa application must undergo administrative processing, it will be returned and visa can only be obtained abroad

In future, may be expanded to include O-1s population; No current proposal for J-1 or F-1
Suitable candidates are ones who:
- Plan ahead for future travel (no imminent travel)
- Have an expired H-1B visa or one that will be expiring in 4-6 months
- Can wait, since processing time is unclear

This may not be the best option if:
- Frequent/urgent travel
  - Process to return passport in an emergency remains unclear
- Admissibility triggers, e.g., DUI or record with law enforcement
- Dual-use technology roles (sensitive fields) which may require security clearance/administrative processing
- Nationality/birth country deemed as one of the “countries of concern”

https://isso.columbia.edu/content/news-highlights
7. Permanent Residence
By the end of six years in H-1B status, you must either depart of the United States or acquire some other status, e.g., permanent residence (green card).

Different ways to apply for permanent residence:
- Family-based
- Employer-based
- Self-petition

For more information on Columbia’s permanent residence policy, please refer to our website.
Questions and Answers