

ISSO Faculty & Scholar Services

Immigration Guidance
and Updates for 2026



ISSO Presentation Agenda

This presentation will focus on the current immigration landscape and policies impacting Columbia University visa sponsorship for faculty and researchers.

The most common types of visa sponsorship:

- J-1 Exchange Visitor
- H-1B Specialty Occupation
- O-1 Extraordinary Ability
- Permanent Residence



ISSO Presentation Agenda

We will provide 2026 updates on the regulations, policies and practices of the government agencies below, as they impact our faculty and researchers.

- DOS: Department of State
- DOL: Department of Labor
- DHS: Department of Homeland Security
- USCIS: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- CBP: U.S. Customs and Border Protection



Department of State (DOS) Updates

Updates on visa Issuance at U.S. consular posts abroad



Policy changes in 2025 will continue to impact faculty and researchers in 2026:

- Non-immigrant visa applicants must apply for entry visas in their country of nationality or residence.
- DOS implemented procedures for vetting the online and social media presence of visa applicants.
- In-person interviews are no longer waived for certain visa renewal applications.
- Visa reciprocity agreements updated, impacting duration and number of times an entry visa can be used.

Initiate visa sponsorship and extension requests as early as possible, to maximize processing time.

Department of Labor (DOL)

Permanent Residence (PR): EB-2 Special Handling PERM

REMINDER

As offer letters are being issued for tenure-track faculty and full-time lecturers:

Initiate PR sponsorship with ISSO as soon as the employment offer is accepted.

Special Handling PERM (Program Electronic Review Management) is a DOL process which allows universities that have conducted a competitive recruitment campaign to file PR for eligible instructional faculty on that past recruitment.

PERM must be filed by ISSO within 18 months the date of the offer letter, irrespective of appointment start date at Columbia.

Many steps must be completed during this 18-month window.

Permanent Residence (PR): EB-2 Special Handling PERM

To initiate PR sponsorship, submit these items to isso-pr@columbia.edu

- Permanent Residency (PR) Initial Review Form
- Updated CV
- Academic Search and Recruiting (ASR) / Interfolio posting
- Initial offer letter



These materials confirm department's commitment to sponsor PR.

ISSO waives the mandatory \$2,000 sponsorship fee only if PR cases are initiated for instructional faculty within 60 days of the offer letter issuance.

Department of Labor (DOL)

Permanent Residence (PR): EB-2 Special Handling PERM

After your department initiates PR sponsorship with ISSO:

ISSO must obtain a Prevailing Wage Determination (PWD) from Department of Labor (DOL)

- May take DOL up to 6 to 9+ months to issue a PWD
- During this time, ISSO will work with the department to gather additional documentation such as evidence of posting requirements and preparation of recruitment report
- Follow all ISSO guidance, even if the process does not seem intuitive

Once the PWD is issued, ISSO files a PERM application with the DOL

- Can take DOL 12+ months for a PERM to be certified
- A certified PERM is included in subsequent steps in the PR process with USCIS

Department of Labor (DOL)

Permanent Residence (PR): EB-2 Special Handling PERM

If PERM is not filed within 18-months of date of offer letter, “Re-selection” PERM is required using outside counsel and a re-test of labor market will be required.

- Counter-intuitive, but required and legal
- 18-month clock begins anew

Department of Labor (DOL) Updates

Project Firewall (Sept. 2025) is a new H-1B enforcement initiative whereby the Secretary of Labor can directly certify certain investigations and site visits.

Ensure H-1B documentation is accurate on wage forms and documentation submitted to ISSO.
Contact ISSO in advance if there are any changes in employment:

Job Duties

Work Location (Including Remote Work)

Leaves of Absence

Change in Source of Funding or Loss of Funding

H-1B Worksite Visit Guidance (FDNS)

With school leadership, establish and communicate site visit protocol to your department staff and H-1B employees. Site visits may be at remote work locations.

**Contact ISSO and OGC in case of an FDNS site visit
(Public Safety can assist with this connection)**

**Designate a department “go-to” person and a back-up.
Communicate this to staff.**

**Verify investigator’s identity and agency
(badge, business card)**

**Maintain spirit of cooperation and limited communication
while waiting for ISSO/OGC guidance**

H-1B \$100,000 Fee

9/19/2025 Presidential Proclamation restricts entry of certain H-1Bs unless the employer pays \$100K fee.

Who IS subject to the \$100,000 payment?

New H-1B petitions approved by USCIS as a “*consular notification*”.

- i.e. H-1B status is obtained upon entry to the U.S. and not a change of visa status inside the U.S.

Who IS NOT subject to the \$100,000 payment?

H-1B petitions approved for a change of status (e.g., F-1 to H-1B), extension, amendment, or change of employer.

ISSO Guidance for Departments:

Reach out to us ASAP once you have identified a candidate abroad needing visa sponsorship. We will explore alternate visa sponsorship options with you.

It is essential that anyone for whom we are filing an H-1B petition inside the U.S. not travel internationally while the petition is pending adjudication with USCIS.

USCIS Adjudicative Holds & Re-Reviews

USCIS policy updates in Dec. 2025 & Jan. 2026

Places a hold on the final USCIS adjudication of all pending immigration benefit requests filed on behalf of individuals from countries designated as “high-risk” under PP 10949 and PP 10998.

USCIS will conduct a re-review of approved benefit requests of those who are from countries listed in PP 10998 that were approved on or after January 20, 2021.

What to Expect?

Affected individuals under PP 10998 should expect longer processing times, potential evidence requests, and interviews.

Prior USCIS approvals on or after 01/20/2021, may be re-opened and re-reviewed and USCIS may request additional documentation.

DHS Premium Processing Fee Increases (March 1)

Premium Processing is a USCIS service that expedites the review of certain immigration petitions and applications.

The respective fee increases for applications commonly utilized by Columbia ISSO are as follows:

Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker (including H-1B, O-1, E-3, and TN):

➤ \$2,805 to \$2,965

Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Workers:

➤ \$2,805 to \$2,965

Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status:

➤ \$1,965 to \$2,075

DHS Proposed Duration of Status "D/S" Rule

This would replace the "duration of status, D/S" with fixed admission periods, impacting F and J international students and exchange visitors.

J-1 admission to the U.S. would be only until the program end date noted in their DS-2019 — not to exceed 4 years —, plus the 30-day grace period.

3. Form Covers Period: From (mm-dd-yyyy): 09-11-2017 To (mm-dd-yyyy): 12-09-2017	4. Exchange Visitor Category: SHORT-TERM SCHOLAR Subject/Field Code: _____ Subject/Field Code Remarks: _____ To conduct research on lions.
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U.S. Department of State		CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR EXCHANGE VISITOR STATUS (J-NONIMMIGRANT)		OMB APPROVAL NO. 1545-0019 06/30/2017 ESTIMATED BUREAU TIME: 45 min *See Page 2
1. Exchange Visitor Name: LION	Given Name: RORY	Gender: MALE	ID Number: N00056789	
Date of Birth (mm-dd-yyyy): 02-01-1974	City of Birth: ITALY	Country of Birth: IT	Citizenship Country Code: IT	Citizenship Category: IT J-1
Legal Permanent Residence Country Code: IT	Legal Permanent Residence Country: ITALY	Position Code: 214	Position: UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS	
Primary Site of Activity: Columbia University 2960 BROADWAY NEW YORK, NY 10027-6950				
3. Program Sponsor: Columbia University in the City of New York			Program Number: _____	
Participating Program Official Description: PROFESSOR; RESEARCH SCHOLAR; SHORT-TERM SCHOLAR; SPECIALIST; STUDENT ASSOCIATE; STUDENT BACHELORS; STUDENT DOCTORATE; STUDENT INTERN; STUDENT MASTERS; STUDENT NON-DEGREE				
4. Exchange Visitor Category: SHORT-TERM SCHOLAR Subject/Field Code: _____ Subject/Field Code Remarks: _____ To conduct research on lions.				
7. During the period covered by this form, the total estimated financial support (in U.S. \$) to be provided to the exchange visitor by: University of Lions: \$5,000				
6. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE ISSUES OR CERTIFICATION BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICER OR ALTERNATE RESPONSIBLE OFFICER THAT A NOTIFIED ALIEN COPY OF THIS FORM HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (INCLUDE DATE).		5. Jane Doe Alternate Responsible Officer: Name of Official Proposing Form: _____ Title: _____ Address of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer: 2960 Broadway, 1850, MC 5724 New York, NY 10027 Telephone Number: 1-212-234-6855 Date of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer: 08-09-2017 Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____ Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy) of Signature: _____		
8. Statement of Responsible Officer for Relaying Sponsor (FOR TRANSFER OF PROGRAM): I, _____, Director of the exchange visitor form program number _____, sponsored by _____, to the program specified in item 2 is necessary or highly desirable and is in conformity with the objectives of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended. Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy) of Signature: _____				
PRELIMINARY ENDORSEMENT OF CONSUL OR IMMIGRATION OFFICER REGARDING SECTION 212(e) OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT AND PL 94-484, AN AMENDMENT (see form list on page 2). The Exchange Visitor in the above program: 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Not subject to the two-year residence requirement. 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Subject to two-year residence requirement based on: A. <input type="checkbox"/> Government financing and/or B. <input type="checkbox"/> The Exchange Visitor Skills List and/or C. <input type="checkbox"/> PL 94-484 as amended.		ALL USAID PARTICIPANTS G-8004 AND ALL ALIEN PARTICIPANTS SPONSORED BY A-SABOR ARE SUBJECT TO THE TWO-YEAR HOME RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT. TRAVEL VALIDATION BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICER (Maximum validation period is up to 6 months for Short-term Scholars and 4 months for Camp Counselors and Summer Work Travel) (1) Exchange Visitor is in good standing at the present time _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____ Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer (2) Exchange Visitor is in good standing at the present time _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____ Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer		
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE FINAL DETERMINATION REGARDING 212(e). EXCHANGE VISITOR CERTIFICATION: I have read and agree with the statement in item 2 on page 2 of this document. Signature of Applicant: _____ Place: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____		Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____		

Proposed Duration of Status “D/S” Rule

The I-94 is evidence of legal status in the U.S. and shows the duration one is allowed to remain in the U.S.

Current I-94s for J-1 and J-2 Exchange Visitors state “D/S” to reflect Duration of Status

Most Recent I-94

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America's Borders

CMB No.
Expiration Date:

Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number: 123456789
Most Recent Date of Entry: 2018 August 14
Class of Admission: J1
Admit Until Date: D/S

Details provided on the I-94 information form:

Last/Surname: Roary
First (Given) Name: Lion
Birth Date: 1784 September 21
Passport Number: 123456789
Country of Issuance: Columbia

Get Travel History

Effective April 26, 2013, CBP began automating the admission process. An alien lawfully admitted or paroled into the U.S. is no longer required to be in possession of a prepared Form I-94. A record of admission printed from the CBP website constitutes a lawful record of admission. See 8 CFR § 1.4(d).

If an employer, local, state or federal agency requests admission information, present your admission (I-94) number along with any additional required documents requested by that employer or agency.

Note: For security reasons, we recommend that you close your browser after you have finished retrieving your I-94 number.

If you inquire or complain regarding your I-94, please click here.
Accessibility | Privacy Policy

www.cbp.gov/i94

“D/S” Duration of Status includes the duration of the J-1 program, as indicated by the expiration date on Form DS-2019, plus a “grace period” of 30 days.

The Program Sponsor (CU) is currently able to extend the DS-2019 (up to the category limit) while the J-1 visitor remains inside the U.S. — thus extending the duration of status in the U.S.

Proposed Duration of Status “D/S” Rule

What are some of the proposed changes for J-1 scholars?

J-1 and J-2s would be admitted only until the DS-2019 end date, not to exceed 4 years (even if the DS-2019 is for 5 years), plus a 30-day grace period. The I-94 would not match the DS-2019 end date.

J-1 Exchange Visitors who need an extension for any reason must file a Form I-539 extension application with USCIS with fee (and “optional” Premium Processing).

If they remain in the U.S. without applying for an extension, they accrue "unlawful presence" as soon as their specified admission period expires. Unlawful presence has serious consequences.

What is next?

DHS is expected to publish a final rule in the coming weeks or months – potentially incorporating changes from a prior public comment period. ISSO will update our community once the rule is published.

ISSO Presentation: Workflow Updates for H-1B Requests

Next ISSO Faculty & Scholar Services Webinar: Tuesday March 17th, 11am-12 noon

Registration link will be sent in early March and included in our upcoming ISSO Department Newsletter

It will cover:

ISSO's plan to further streamline H-1B sponsorship requests

- A single document upload in SSP (not 2-step process) for all petition materials except G-1450
- Revisions to the H-1B sponsorship letter templates
- Step-by-step guidance for completing the H-1B wage forms

Further government agency updates impacting H-1B sponsorship

Alternatives to H-1B sponsorship and factors to consider (H-1B vs J-1 vs O-1)

Staying Informed



ISSO
Webinars,
Presentations
and Events



ISSO News,
Website and
Announcements

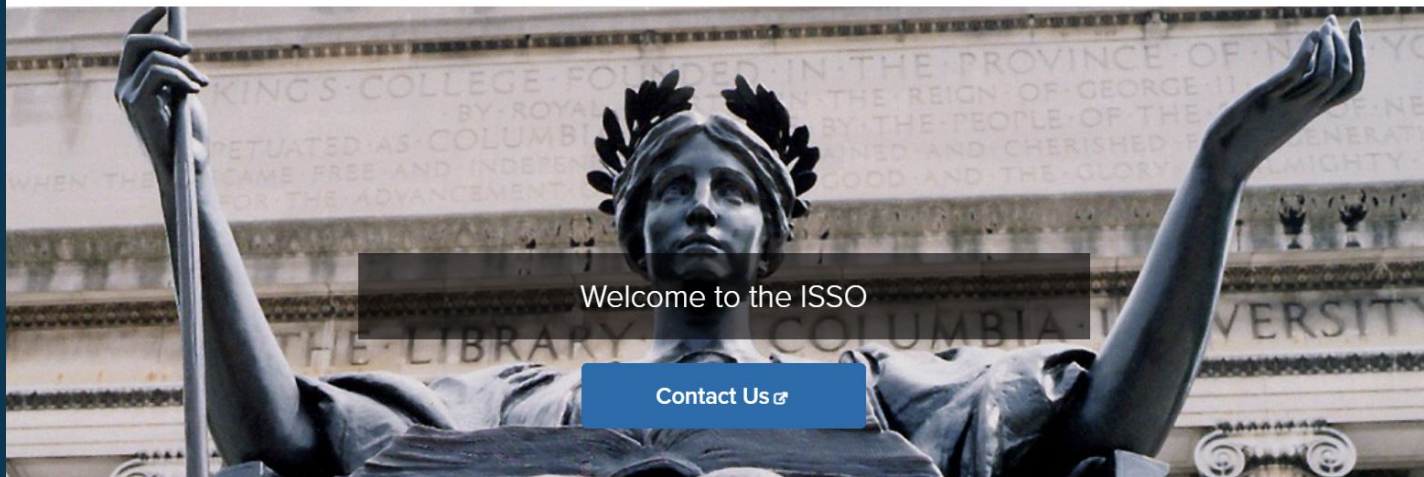


ISSO Newsletter
for Department
Administrators

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Welcome to the ISSO

Contact Us 

I WANT TO



[isso.columbia.eu](https://isso.columbia.edu)

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Document drop-off & pick-up and drop-ins
M-F 9am-5pm