

TRAVEL IN H-1B STATUS

Travel and Return to the U.S. with a Valid Visa

Whenever you travel outside the U.S. and will re-enter as an H-1B, carry the following documents with you:

- Passport (valid for at least 6 months beyond your anticipated stay)
- Valid visa stamp (not required for citizens of Canada or Bermuda)
- H-1B Approval Notice (Form I-797). The upper portion is retained by the employer (and lent to you) and the lower portion (which contains your new I-94 card) was given to you when your petition was approved.
- Most recent pay stub(s) to verify continued H-1B employment
- I am also happy to write a status letter to accompany your documents. Please contact me at least 1 week before your planned departure. Your department may also be willing to write a letter verifying your employment.

Traveling and obtaining an H-1B visa:

If you will be applying for a new H-1B visa while outside the U.S., the documents required for you to obtain your H-1B visa are generally the following:

- Passport, valid for travel to the United States and with a validity date at least 6 months beyond your intended period of stay in the United States
- Copy of H-1B petition -- I-129, LCA, and supporting documentation -- that was filed with and approved by USCIS. (You received a copy when your petition was approved).
- Original Form I-797 H-1B petition approval notice
- Several recent PSU pay stubs (to verify your continued H-1B employment)
- Form DS-156, Nonimmigrant Visa Application
- Form DS-157 (if applicable)
- Two photos conforming to DOS specifications
- Machine Readable Visa (MRV) fee
- Visa reciprocity fee (if applicable)

Keep in mind:

- Always plan on the possibility of delays in visa issuance (security clearances, processing delays) and allow sufficient time to obtain your visa.
- If you anticipate traveling during a holiday season, schedule your appointment early.
- Document requirements vary from post to post. Consult your consulate's/embassy's website at: <http://www.usembassy.gov/> for requirements.

Consult the International Faculty Advisor before travel if:

- a new petition for H-1B employment at PSU is currently pending.
- a petition for H-1B extension has been filed by PSU and is currently pending.
- PSU has filed a new H-1B petition for your employment at PSU under *portability* and you have changed jobs from another employer where you were already in H-1B status.
- you have a pending I-485 (Application to Adjust Status)

In some of these cases, travel may not be feasible or additional documentation may be required or recommended.

When you return to the U.S.:

- **Fill out your I-94 card carefully.** If you make a mistake completing the I-94, do not cross it out but request a new card. Remember to enter your date of birth in the order requested (DD/MM/YYYY), which is different from the order typically used in the U.S. Be consistent in how you write your name.
- **Review the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) stamp on your I-94 card and in your passport.** Make these documents are stamped and marked correctly with the following information:
 - Your date of entry into US
 - Your status as H-1B (or H-4 for dependents); and
 - That the end date is listed as your H-1B Approval Notice's end date (if your passport expires sooner, that end date will be given). CBP may also grant an additional 10-day grace period (beyond your petition's end date) in which you may stay in the U.S. but may not work.
- **If you notice any mistakes,** ask the CBP officer to review your documents **before** you leave. If no changes are made or your documents still appear to be incorrect, consult the International Faculty Advisor immediately upon your return to campus.
- **Do not remain in the US beyond the end date on your I-94 card.**

NSEERS (Special Registration)

If you are subject to NSEERS (Special Registration), be sure to follow the special exit procedures upon departure (i.e., prior to boarding your plane at the airport departing the US or reaching the US-Canada or US-Mexico border if driving by car): Do **not** travel by train or bus to Canada or Mexico since they bypass US Customs and Border Protection on the US side of the border and enter Canada or Mexico. More information is available at: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/specialregistration/walkawaymaterial.pdf>.

Dependents

H-4 dependents should carry the following in order to enter the US (or apply for an H-4 visa):

- H-4's passport valid until the end of the H-1B petition
- H-4 visa stamp (except citizens of Canada or Bermuda)
- H-1B Approval Notice (Form I-797) for H-1B employee (original recommended)
- Copy of the H-1B's passport identification pages (should include photo, bio info, passport issuance date, and expiration date - be sure extension date is included if applicable)
- Copy of H-1B's H-1B visa stamp
- Copy of H-1B's I-94 card (**FRONT and BACK**)
- Copy of marriage certificate
- Employment verification for H-1B employee— several latest pay stubs and/or current employment letter from department
- If applying for a new H-4 visa stamp, also carry the following:
 - A copy of the H-1B petition (I-129 and LCA)
 - Original marriage certificate