H-1B considerations

Our professional associations are reporting extremely slow processing times for H-1B initial applications as well as extensions. Ironically the government systems do not allow the visa sponsor (OISS) to begin working on an H-1B more than 6 months in advance. Starting the process as early as possible diminishes the likelihood of later having to pay for Premium $$$ Processing. You can read a breakdown of the processing time steps [here](#).

We want to remind Yale departments that the immigration fees (including Premium Processing) for requesting H-1b sponsorship or extensions must be paid by the hiring department.

**Site Visits:** In the past month we saw a spike in USCIS conducting site visits at Yale. This is a reminder that host departments are **required to keep records** regarding the H-1b employee, and all similarly placed employees in the department.
Finally, remember that there are other visa choices besides the H-1B. For most new research scholar appointments the J-1 visa is much more appropriate, more flexible, and less costly.

New Hire Issues

At the start of the new year OISS began requiring that departments enter the new scholar’s UPI and NetID in ISD. We realize that you may not have this information at the time you are creating the ISD record, so we ask that you please go back and enter the data as soon as you have it. Thank you!

We would like to remind departments that after completing the ISD record and hitting the "submit" button, please begin the next steps in the hire process including STARS. On occasion the hire start date is listed differently in ISD, in STARS and on the Appointment letter. We’d like to prevent this whenever possible.

Background Checks and J-1 Transfers:

You may know that the J-1 visa allows researchers to change schools/employers, which is know as "transferring." The process is quick and easy to complete. However remember that the employee cannot start work until their Yale background check has been completed. Please keep this in mind and speak to your OISS Adviser if you know that the new hire is transferring in on a J-1 visa.

Other Announcements

Identity Theft and Fraud:
Nationally there has been an increase in fraud cases that target international visitors. It is usually done by phone, and the con artist is usually posing as an IRS or immigration government worker. We have been posting notices about this problem to international visitors at Yale, but would appreciate it if you could remind your scholars that they should never give their personal information out over the phone. They should also note that neither immigration nor IRS would ever make "cold-calls" that threaten to deport or fine them without first giving some written notice. They can always contact their adviser in OISS to discuss the issue, and then call the supposed government worker back later.
It's Tax Time!
Soon OISS will be notifying international scholars about the new tax season, and giving them access to the tax software we purchase for them called FNTR. OISS provides tax support to international scholars, however giving tax "advice" can be a legal issue. Normally when a scholar has lived and worked in the U.S. for a few years - they file their taxes in the same way we do (resident) by using Turbo Tax an accountant or preparing the return on their own.

STEM OPT:
Many students who graduate from U.S. schools can apply for work permission after graduation, which is called Optional Practical Training or OPT. They can have additional work permission time if their degree is in a Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) field. Having Yale scholars working on STEM OPT is preferable since Yale does not have to pay fees or do the visa processing. A law suite threatens to do away with STEM OPT, and next month we will know the fate of this visa option. Come to the OISS meeting (see below) if you are interested in hearing about the outcome.

Did You Know?
This year OISS has been running a brand new program called Understanding America. No, this is not about the impossible to explain presidential candidates...it's a series of talks with Yale faculty and other scholars about specific elements of U.S. culture. The events are free and open to the whole Yale community - come join us!

Information Session for Yale Administrators
Mark your calendars for St Patrick's Day - OISS will be serving green tea and green donuts as we discuss immigration updates and ponder which visa St Patrick would qualify for if he were visiting the U.S. Please send an RSVP e-mail to Parker - along with any questions you would like to have us address.

March 17th 9:00 - 10:30, 421 Temple Street
Questions? Contact your OISS Advisor

Yale University
Office of International Students & Scholars

NOTE: This newsletter is sent to registered ISD users. Please feel free to forward to other members of the Yale community.

International Center
421 Temple Street
New Haven, CT 06511
Phone: (203) 432-2305
Fax: (203) 432-7166