

## **VISAS**

Please carefully review information related to your visa classification.

### **F-1 STUDENT VISA**

To obtain a visa for study in the U.S. you must apply to a U.S. Embassy or Consulate with evidence that you have been accepted as a full-time student by a U.S. institution, that you are in good health and have proof of financial support to cover your expenses for at least your first year of study.

The I-20 issued by your institution serves as evidence that you have been accepted as a student. To remain in the U.S. on an F-1 visa, you must be enrolled as a full-time student during the regular academic year. Once here, you should make sure that both the USCIS and the ISSI have your correct address and telephone number at all times.

#### ***Dependents***

The spouse or unmarried minor children of an F-1 student may enter the U.S. on F-2 visas provided that they have evidence of adequate financial support. Dependents on F-2 visas may not accept paid employment under any circumstances or study.

### **J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR VISA**

The Exchange Visitor is a temporary visitor who comes to participate in educational and cultural programs in the U.S. as a student, short-term scholar, intern, professor, research scholar, among others. Participants are selected by program sponsors universities, hospitals, government agencies or other sponsoring organizations who have exchange visitor programs approved by the U.S. Department of State.

An international student or scholar who accepts funding from an agency of the U.S. government (i.e. Fulbright Scholarships), an international organization, or the student's home government, usually receives a J-1 visa. There is a designated advisor at the ISSI who specializes in regulations and procedures pertinent to international students and scholars in J-1 nonimmigrant visa status.

When accepted as a participant in such a program, you will be issued a Certificate of Eligibility (Form DS-2019), which will be sent to you by

your program sponsor (the university, hospital, government agency or other sponsoring organization). You need this form in order to apply for your visa. To apply for a J-1 Visa, you must complete an application at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate with evidence of adequate financial support, and you must submit Form DS-2019. Those with "J" visa status are required by U.S. federal regulations to procure and maintain health insurance that is in conformity with the requirements of the U.S. Department of State, including clauses that cover "evacuation" and "repatriation." Please consult with the ISSI for details.

### ***Extension of Stay***

You may be issued a DS-2019 for one or more years. To extend your program of study or research, you should apply to the program sponsor who may issue a DS-2019 which will authorize your extension in SEVIS.

J-1 exchange visitors are typically for duration of status (D/S). Exchange visitors are expected to depart from the U.S. within 30 days of the end date noted on the DS-2019, unless a transfer or extension has been approved within the allotted time period.

Academic Training may be permitted for up to 18 months after completion of a program of study or up to 36 months in specific cases involving post-doctoral positions, provided that eligibility criteria are met.

### ***J-1 Employment***

The program sponsor can authorize employment within certain limits for those holding Exchange Visitor visa status. Exchange Visitor students may be employed with the authorization of the sponsor in the following ways:

- on-campus assistantships
- fellowships
- part-time on- or off-campus employment
- academic training

### ***School Transfers***

You may change from one program sponsor to another only with a release from the first sponsor to transfer your electronic record in

SEVIS to the new institution. A change from one institution to another is permissible within the given time limits, but a change in educational objective and changes among "J" categories are usually not permitted. The limits on the total amount of time you may remain still apply.

### ***Academic Training***

You may apply for a period of practical work experience in your field of study either before or after completing your degree program with J-1 status. For post-completion academic training you must receive a written job offer and have the academic training authorized within thirty days of completing your program.

The program sponsor, who will also issue a DS-2019 for an extension of stay for the academic training period, will provide a letter of authorization. For Academic Training after completion of studies, a job offer and application to the ISSI/program sponsor must occur within 30 days of completion of the academic program. For pre-completion Academic Training a notation will be made in your electronic record and a letter of authorization will be issued if the training is approved by an academic advisor. J-1 students may be eligible for up to 18 months of Academic Training (Post-docs may be eligible for a total of 36 months).

For complete details, please refer to the J-1 Academic Training information handout – ISSI Packet #312.

### ***J Dependents***

As a J-1 exchange visitor, your spouse and unmarried minor children may accompany you and will be given J-2 visa status if sufficient funds are available. J-2 dependents may apply for work permission using form I-765 to obtain an Employment Authorization Document.

Consult with the ISSI regarding application procedures.

### **H-1B TEMPORARY WORKER-SPECIALTY OCCUPATION**

This visa is appropriate for a person who will perform services in an occupation that requires "theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge and attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in that specific specialty or its equivalent."

If eligible, your employer will be required to make a request for a Prevailing Wage determination for that specific employer from the Division of Employment and Training and will file a Labor Condition Application with the Department of Labor as well. Both processes must be completed prior to submitting an H petition to the USCIS.

An H visa may be valid for up to six years provided appropriate extensions have been filed and the work is employer specific. H-1B visa applications at Northeastern are handled by University counsel in cooperation with the sponsoring department.

### **B-1 VISITOR FOR BUSINESS OR B-2 VISITOR FOR PLEASURE**

This visa is appropriate only for short visits. No paid employment is permitted. You may not enter the U.S. on a B-1 or B-2 visa as a student unless the visa in your passport and Form 1-94 are marked "prospective student." It is highly unlikely that USCIS will approve a change of status request from "B" visas to "F" or "J" visas unless this notation is made on the visa page.

International students may not study under the auspices of a B-1 or B-2 visa.

### **Other Visas**

**A-2:** A dependent of an A-1 (personnel in the diplomatic corps or an official of a foreign government), the A-2 may study full-time or part-time in the U.S. while maintaining A status. An A-2 holder may be granted limited employment by applying first to the Department of State and then may be authorized only for only certain types of employment.

**E-2:** A dependent of a trader or investor (E-1). Dependent spouse and children of an E-1 may study either full or part-time. E-2 spouses are eligible for employment with an EAD, but E-2 children are not eligible for employment.

**G-2, G-3, G-4:** Personnel and immediate family members of principal visa holder G-1, a representative to or employee of an international organization. Dependents may engage in full or part-time study while maintaining G status and are eligible for employment with an EAD.

**O-1, O-2, O-3:** Person of extraordinary ability (O-1) and his/her personnel (O-2 ) and dependent (O-3). The principal visa holder may be employed by the U.S. entity through which the status was attained. The O-2 (personnel accompanying the O-1) may be eligible for employment with an EAD, but the O-3 (dependent) is not eligible for employment.

**TN, TD:** Pertaining only to citizens of Canada and Mexico (TN) and their dependents (TD). This visa category allows for professional employment under NAFTA, but only with a specific employer. TN holders may only engage in part-time study while maintaining TN status but the dependent (TD) may engage in full-time or part-time study. TD holders are not eligible for employment.

There are numerous other non-immigrant visa classifications used when visiting the U.S., ranging from A-1 (career diplomat) to TN (professionals from Canada and Mexico under the NAFTA agreement). The ISSI can be very helpful in delineating the most appropriate visa options (if any) relating to your particular situation.

### **Immigrant Or Permanent Resident Visa**

The above mentioned types of visas are non-immigrant visas. They are issued to individuals who have no intention of abandoning their residences abroad. People who intend to remain in the U.S. to live and work for an indefinite time should apply for an immigrant visa. There are eligibility requirements and quota limitations on the number of such visas issued annually. Immigrant visas may be issued because of relationship to an U.S. citizen or permanent resident or because of permanent employment. Inquiries regarding immigrant status can be made at your local U.S. consulate, or, if in the U.S., at an USCIS office.

The U.S. government continuously responds to profound sociopolitical and economic changes throughout the globe. In certain instances, the U.S. government may accord Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to nationals of countries deemed to be in severe social/political strife.