Visa Applications and Requirements

When a Faculty Member wants to welcome a non-US Citizen into their lab, either as a paid employee or as a non-paid visitor, it is necessary to arrange for the proper visa before the person arrives. The process to obtain the proper visa normally takes at least 3-months from the time that the documents are submitted to the University’s Office of International Services (OIS) and it can take an additional few months to collect all the necessary documents, obtain the necessary signatures and pay the required fees.

Therefore, it is important that both the Faculty Member and the visitor plan the date of arrival in the lab to occur after the necessary visa is obtained. At the beginning of the process, it is often impossible to guarantee a start date so the purchase of items like airline tickets and leases for housing should not be made unless they can be changed easily or until the date of arrival is firm.

When a Faculty Member has decided to bring a non-US Citizen into the lab, they should first inform their Administrative Assistant and provide the necessary details including the visitor’s contact information. Stefanie Valdez, the Departmental Business Administrator will become involved and will work closely with the Administrative Assistant during the rest of the process.

Once the type of visa is determined, the timeline will become more certain and the costs to the Faculty Member for visa processing can be estimated. Visa fees range from $100 - $2500 and, depending on the type of visa, the Faculty Member may be responsible for paying for all of these costs. The Department does not pay these fees.

The Administrative Assistant will work with the Faculty Member and the visitor to collect the needed documents. If necessary, a meeting can be set up with OIS, the Faculty Member and the Administrative Staff person. If the visitor is available, they may attend the meeting also.

Once the visa documents are submitted to the OIS, the 3-month process begins. If the Faculty Member or the future visitor wants to know the status of the visa process or needs additional information, they should contact the Administrative Assistant who will act as intermediary between OIS, the Faculty Member and the visitor. This is to eliminate repeated emails and to ensure that all parties are informed of any additional questions and problems. If there are extensive problems or concerns, Stefanie Valdez will work with the OIS to determine the best solution to resolve matters related to the visa application process.
Once the application has been completed and the DS 2019 is ready, OIS will deliver the appropriate documents to the visitor. At this time, the visitor may make his appointment with the embassy of their country to obtain their visa.

Once the visa is issued and the employee or visitor starts work in the Department, they are obliged to inform the OIS, the Department Business Administrator and the Office of Human Resources whenever they:

1. Change their home address;
2. Leave the US;
3. Change the laboratory or Department in which they work;
4. Consider working or volunteering for another organization.