



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS — FACULTY & STAFF IMMIGRATION**

**HOW CAN I CHECK THE STATUS OF MY CASE THAT IS PROCESSING WITH THE IMMIGRATION SERVICE?**

**I NEED A VISA TO TRAVEL TO A CONFERENCE ABROAD. HOW DO I BEGIN?**

**CAN YOUR OFFICE ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT IMMIGRATION PROCESSES THAT ARE NOT SPONSORED BY THE UNIVERSITY?**

**THE VISA IN MY PASSPORT EXPIRES SOON, BUT MY H-1B STATUS HAS BEEN EXTENDED BEYOND THE VISA EXPIRATION DATE. DO I NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO STAY IN THE U.S. LEGALLY?**

**CAN I WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY ON OPT?**

**HOW DO I CHANGE MY ADDRESS WITH THE GOVERNMENT?**

**I AM INTERESTED IN BECOMING A U.S. CITIZEN. WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?**

**OTHER THAN MY PASSPORT, WHAT OTHER DOCUMENTS SHOULD I HAVE TO FACILITATE TRAVEL?**

**HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET MY VISA STAMP ABROAD?**

**HOW CAN I CHECK THE STATUS OF MY CASE THAT IS PROCESSING WITH THE IMMIGRATION SERVICE?**

You can check case status [online](#) with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), by entering your case number.

On the same webpage, you can also sign up for email updates from USCIS when there is action taken on your case.

You can also find average case processing times [online](#).

**I NEED A VISA TO TRAVEL TO A CONFERENCE ABROAD. HOW DO I BEGIN?**

Please contact the Assistant Counsel for Global Affairs ([ajcolber\[at\]sewanee.edu](mailto:ajcolber[at]sewanee.edu)), who can assist you with the application process, with the dates and purpose of your planned travel.

**CAN YOUR OFFICE ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT IMMIGRATION PROCESSES THAT ARE NOT SPONSORED BY THE UNIVERSITY?**

Yes. While the Assistant Counsel for Global Affairs represents the legal interests of the University, she is also a resource for the University community and can answer general questions about immigration laws and processes, such as naturalization.

**THE VISA IN MY PASSPORT EXPIRES SOON, BUT MY H-1B STATUS HAS BEEN EXTENDED BEYOND THE VISA EXPIRATION DATE. DO I NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO STAY IN THE U.S. LEGALLY?**

The visa in your passport allows you to make an entry into the United States in the listed status. The end date listed on your Form I-94 indicates the end date of your legal status in the United States. When your H-1B status was extended, you should have received an approval notice from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services that included a new Form I-94 at the bottom. You may stay in the U.S. legally, as long as you continue to work for your sponsor employer, until the end date on that Form I-94.

If you depart the country and will return after the visa in your passport has expired, you will need to apply for a new H-1B visa at a U.S. consulate before you return.

Visa holders should contact the Assistant Counsel for Global Affairs ([ajcolber\[at\]sewanee.edu](mailto:ajcolber[at]sewanee.edu)) well in advance of travel abroad, to ensure that they have the documentation necessary to enter a third country and reenter the United States, and because departing the country can affect some immigration processes.

**CAN I WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY ON OPT?**

Yes. In order to work at the University on OPT (both pre- and post-completion OPT, and STEM OPT) you must have a valid Employment Authorization Card issued by the Department of Homeland Security.

**HOW DO I CHANGE MY ADDRESS WITH THE GOVERNMENT?**

Most non-citizens are required report a change of address with the government within ten days of a move. (The exceptions are short-term visitors, and A and G visa holders.) Reporting your address change is especially important if you have an application or petition pending with the immigration service.

You can change your address [online](#).

See also the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services [address change information](#).

**I AM INTERESTED IN BECOMING A U.S. CITIZEN. WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?**

Generally, to be eligible to become a citizen, you must have been a Lawful Permanent Resident (green card holder) for at least five years. The exception is for a green card holder who has been

married to, and living with, a U.S. citizen spouse; s/he is eligible for citizenship after three years, if s/he has been married to and living with the citizen spouse for those three years.

The other requirements for naturalization are enumerated on the [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website](#).

If you have questions about naturalization eligibility and/or the naturalization process, contact the Assistant Counsel for Global Affairs (ajcolber[at]sewanee.edu).

### **OTHER THAN MY PASSPORT, WHAT OTHER DOCUMENTS SHOULD I HAVE TO FACILITATE TRAVEL?**

Please see the [Traveling Abroad](#) section of our website for information about documentation for travel abroad for holders of various visa statuses.

### **HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET MY VISA STAMP ABROAD?**

You can find approximate visa appointment and processing wait times on the [Department of State website](#); however, the listed processing times do not include delays due to additional “administrative processing,” which can be lengthy. The Assistant Counsel for Global Affairs (ajcolber[at]sewanee.edu) can give you more information about the predicted time frame for your visa application.

**DISCLAIMER:** This information is intended to inform generally, not to advise in individual cases. Areas of law are rapidly changing. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Department of State regularly change regulations and processing and filing procedures. For legal advice seek the assistance of an immigration attorney.