

## INTERNATIONAL FACULTY & SCHOLARS

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# APPROVAL NOTICE MEMORANDUM

**TO:** H-1B Beneficiary

**FROM:** UA International, International Faculty & Scholars

**SUBJECT:** H-1B Approval Notice

**CC:** Sponsoring Department

The I-797 Approval Notice is an official USCIS document indicating that an immigration benefit request has been adjudicated favorably, specifying the approved classification, validity period, and any applicable conditions.

The I-797 Approval Notice serves as evidence of petition approval by USCIS but does not, by itself, grant a visa, immigration status, or authorization to enter the United States.

The **dates of authorized employment** are listed on your **I-797 H-1B Approval Notice**.

Once the H-1B petition filed on your behalf by the University of Arizona has been approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), you will be notified and provided with a scanned copy of the H1B I-797 Approval Notice.

## Important H-1B Reminders

### 1. Employer-Specific Approval

Your H-1B approval is **employer- and position-specific**. You are authorized to work **only** for your sponsoring department at the **University of Arizona**, in the position described in the approved petition.

If any **material changes** are anticipated or occur, you must contact International Faculty & Scholars (IFS) immediately. Material changes may require a new Labor Condition Application (LCA) and/or an amended Form I-129 filing with USCIS.

Examples of material changes include, but are not limited to:

- New or substantially changed job duties not listed in the original petition or LCA,
- A salary change (generally 10% or more),
- Transfer to a different department or unit within the University of Arizona,
- Change in work location not listed on the petition or LCA.



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## 2. Period of Admission and Employment

An H-1B beneficiary may be admitted to the United States for the validity period listed on the approval notice. You may be admitted:

- Up to **10 days** before the start date, and
- Up to **10 days** after the end date, *if noted on your I-94 record.*

Employment is permitted **only during the approved validity period.** (8 CFR 214.2(h)(13)(i)(A))

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## 3. Termination of Employment

H-1B status **ends on the date your employment terminates**, even if that date occurs before the expiration date listed on the approval notice.

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## 4. Extensions of H-1B Status

If an extension will be requested, the sponsoring department must initiate the process:

- **No earlier than six (6) months**, and
- **No later than forty-five (45) days**

before the expiration date listed on the approval notice.

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## 5. H-1B Approval vs. Visa Stamp

The **I-797 H-1B Approval Notice is not a visa.** It grants **status/work authorization**, not permission to enter the United States.

You must apply for an H-1B visa stamp at a U.S. consulate abroad if:

- You were in the United States when approved and plan to travel internationally and reenter, or
- You received approval while outside the United States and will enter the U.S. for the first time in H-1B status.

Certain individuals (e.g., Canadian citizens) may be visa-exempt. It is your responsibility to confirm whether a visa stamp is required.

Below is a checklist of required forms and documents for applying for a visa at a United States consulate. Please see [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for the most current information and requirements for applying for a visa at a United States consulate.



## **Visa Application Checklist:**

*(Confirm requirements with the consulate prior to applying)*

- Original I-797 H-1B Approval Notice
- Copy of Labor Condition Application
- Form DS-160 Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application - <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>
- I-612 Approval Notice (if a 212(e) waiver was ever required)
- Valid passport (valid through approval period + six months)
- Passport-sized photo(s) (if required by the consulate)
- Recent pay stubs (if currently employed in the U.S.)
- Visa application fee (varies by visa type and nationality)

## **Visa fee information:**

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html>

## **Visa Application Tips:**

1. Approval of H-1B status/work authorization **does not guarantee visa issuance**.
2. Visa stamps are generally issued for the validity dates listed on the I-797 Approval Notice.
3. If your visa stamp expires but your H-1B approval remains valid, you do **not** need a new visa unless you travel outside the U.S.
4. Many nationalities may apply for a visa outside their country of citizenship, though applying in the home country may be easier for most.
5. Most consulates require an **in-person interview**, and appointment wait times may be several weeks or longer.
6. Some applicants may be subject to **Security Advisory Opinion (SAO)** processing, which can delay visa issuance.
7. **Administrative Processing** may be required in some cases and can take up to 60 days or longer. Case status can be tracked at: <https://ceac.state.gov>

## **Important Note:**

Due to changing requirements and variations among U.S. consulates, International Faculty & Scholars cannot maintain current information for all consulates and nationalities. You are strongly encouraged to consult the appropriate U.S. consulate or official government websites prior to applying for a visa.



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# H-1B Approval Notice – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## 1. What is an I-797 Approval Notice?

The I-797 Approval Notice is issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to confirm that your H-1B petition has been approved. It lists the authorized employer, position, and dates of employment.

## 2. When am I authorized to work?

You are authorized to work only during the validity period listed on your I-797 Approval Notice and **only** for the sponsoring department at the University of Arizona.

## 3. Can I work for another employer or department?

No. H-1B approval is **employer and position specific**. You may not work for another employer or in a different position or department unless a new or amended petition is filed with USCIS and approved.

## 4. What changes must be reported to IFS?

You must contact International Faculty & Scholars (IFS) before any **material changes**, including:

- Significant changes to job duties
- Salary changes (generally 10% or more)
- Transfer to another UA department or unit
- Change in work location not listed on the petition

Some changes require a new LCA and/or an amended H-1B petition.

## 5. Does the approval notice allow me to travel internationally?

The approval notice grants status and work authorization, but it is not a visa. If you travel outside the United States, you may need to apply for an **H-1B visa stamp** at a U.S. consulate before reentering, unless you are visa-exempt (e.g., Canadian citizens).

## 6. Do I need a new visa if my visa stamp expires?

If your visa stamp expires but your H-1B approval remains valid, you do **not** need a new visa unless you travel outside the United States. A new visa is required for reentry after international travel.

## 7. When does my H-1B status end?

Your H-1B status ends on the **earlier** of:

- The expiration date on your I-797 Approval Notice, or
- The date your employment with the University of Arizona ends.

## **8. How early can an extension be filed?**

H-1B extensions may be initiated by the sponsoring department no earlier than six (6) months and no later than forty-five (45) days before the current approval expires.

## **9. Will my family members receive approval notices?**

H-4 dependents receive separate I-797 Approval Notices, if applicable. Each dependent must also file a separate visa application (DS-160) when applying for a visa abroad.

## **10. Who should I contact with questions?**

For questions about your H-1B approval, employment, or travel:

AZ International – International Faculty & Scholars

email: [uaifs@arizona.edu](mailto:uaifs@arizona.edu)

website: <https://international.arizona.edu/ifs>

