



## The University of Georgia

**Office of International Education  
International Student, Scholar, and Immigration Services  
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Athens, GA 30602  
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### **Non-immigrant visa sponsorship options at the University of Georgia:**

The University of Georgia (UGA) hosts an international population of more than 1,800 students, scholars, faculty and staff. The International Student, Scholar and Immigration Services (ISSIS) office advises departments and schools on the issues relating to the admission, appointment and hiring of internationals. This document covers the available non-immigrant visa and immigrant visa status options open to internationals sponsored by UGA. Please contact the ISSIS Office for more information regarding visa processing and time frames. Following this list is a more detailed description of each visa type.

#### **Staff, Scholar or Faculty:**

**B-1 or WB:** Visiting lecturer or consultant – appropriate for visitors staying for less than 9 days, with no employment, wages, or salary, and no active in-lab research; however reimbursements or honoraria allowed, if the person will not visit more than five other institutions for the same purpose, on the same trip. B-1 is also appropriate for clinical and medical electives or clerkships, when a medical or vet student will have clinical patient contact.

#### **J-1 short-term category:**

Visiting scholar or professor, appointment less than six month's duration, no extension possible; self- or College-funded. This category is appropriate for researcher positions, if less than six month's duration. The person should be studying or conducting research at the doctoral or post-doctoral level. No clinical patient contact is allowed in medical or veterinary medicine situations. Due to regulatory constraints this category may not be used if the researcher or professor has completed a previous J program at UGA within the last 9 months.

#### **J-1 research scholar or professor category:**

Visiting scholar or professor, appointment more than six month's duration, with maximum duration of five years, no extension possible beyond five years; self- or College-funded. This category is appropriate for non-permanent researcher positions. The person should be studying or conducting research at the doctoral or post-doctoral level. No clinical patient contact is allowed in medical or veterinary medicine situations unless it is directly supervised and only incidental to the purpose of the research program. Due to regulatory constraints this category may not be used if a person completed a J researcher or professor program within the previous two years.

**J-1 specialist category or O-1:** Visiting musician, artist, coach with no teaching duties, or specialist within a given field; For J-1's, maximum duration of one year, no extension possible. For O-1's, the petition can be extended indefinitely, one year at a time after an initial three-year period.

**H-1B, E-3 or O-1**, with immediate concurrent PR sponsorship: Faculty - full tenure. Clinical responsibilities allowed only with special filing.

**H-1B, E-3 or O-1**: Faculty - tenure track; (recommendation for immediate permanent resident sponsorship processing). If person already holds H-1B, E-3 or O-1 status with another employer in the U.S., we will transfer-in H-1B status. A J-1 visa category is inappropriate for tenure-track or tenured positions. Clinical responsibilities allowed only with special filing.

**H-1B, TN, E-3 or O-1**: full-time athletic coach only if there are specific classroom teaching duties written in the job description.

**J-1, H-1B or E-3**: Research Assistant Professor or Research Scientist. Full-time position with no clinical patient contact is allowed in medical or veterinary medicine situations unless it is directly supervised and only incidental to the purpose of the research program. If using the H-1B or E-3, we can file a special application to allow clinical duties.

**H-1B, TN or E-3**: Staff position – permanent full-time position, requiring a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in a specialty field. The employee must hold that specific degree.

**No option**: Part-time or fulltime staff positions with minimum educational requirement of less than a Bachelor's degree.

**Students:**

**F-1**: Student degree program; requires full-time enrollment

**B-1 or WB**: Medical or Veterinary elective student. Clinical patient contact allowed. No salary or wages allowed.

**J-1**: Exchange student - degree program. J sponsorship requires substantial outside funding (at least 30% - 50% of total funding) and full-time course enrollment.

**J-1 or F-1**: Exchange student - non-degree program, but with full-time course enrollment for academic credit (F-1 requires written plan of study from sponsoring faculty member or department, and a clear academic objective or certificate program). J sponsorship requires substantial outside funding (at least 30% - 50% of total funding) and full-time enrollment.

**J-1** Student Intern - non-degree academic program of research, study and training, but with no course enrollment for academic credit. Special student at UGA on independent study, enrolled in a degree program in the home country. This category requires a written plan of study from sponsoring faculty member or department.

**No UGA sponsorship needed**: Exchange student - in another U.S. degree program, with valid I-20 form or DS-2019 form issued by that U.S. school or agency (eg: IIE Fulbright sponsorship).

## **Visa Descriptions:**

### **Visiting short term lecturers, consultants, or conference/symposia attendees**

#### ***B-1 or WB Waivers Occasional Lecturers***

UGA may bring international business visitors on B-1 visas to campus for the purpose of one-time, short-term lectures, seminars, medical consultations (observations only), and may reimburse them for travel or living expenses in the form of honoraria, provided that the visitor:

- is not receiving a salary or wage from UGA
- will not be present at UGA for more than nine days, and
- has not accepted such payments from more than five other institutions/organizations within the last six months

(Reference: U.S. DOJ memo for Regional Directors from Michael A. Pearson, Executive Associate Commissioner, Office of Field Operations, 30 November 1999)

If the individual is a non-U.S. citizen and does not have a U.S. Social Security Number, or an IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), the College is required by IRS regulations to withhold a flat 30% tax rate from any payment. If the individual applies for an ITIN, or has a social security number, they may complete an IRS form 8233, and have a lesser amount withheld – or possibly no amount withheld, if their citizenship qualifies them for a U.S. tax treaty article. Please contact the ISSIS office and Accounts Payable to verify that an individual is eligible to receive an honorarium.

### **Veterinary medicine clerkship or elective exchange students**

#### ***B-1 or WB Waivers Occasional Lecturers***

UGA may bring international students admitted to Vet School medical clerkships or electives on B-1 visas, or in WB-business waiver status, and may reimburse them for travel or living expenses in the form of honoraria, provided that the visitor:

- is not receiving a salary or wage from UGA
- will not be present at UGA for more than nine days, and
- has not accepted such payments from more than five other institutions/organizations within the last six months

(Reference: U.S. DOJ memo for Regional Directors from Michael A. Pearson, Executive Associate Commissioner, Office of Field Operations, 30 November 1999)

This status is appropriate for international veterinary students coming to participate in medical clerkships, or visiting physicians or nurses who will be observing, with no clinical patient care or responsibilities.

If the individual is a non-U.S. citizen and does not have a U.S. Social Security Number, or an IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), UGA is required by IRS regulations to withhold a flat 30% tax rate from any payment. If the individual applies for an ITIN, or has a social security number, they may complete an IRS form 8233, and have a lesser amount withheld – or possibly no amount withheld, if their citizenship qualifies them for a U.S. tax treaty article. Please contact the ISSIS Office and Accounts Payable to verify that an individual is eligible to receive an honorarium.

### **Researchers and Faculty**

#### ***J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa***

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is overseen by the US State Department. The J-1 program is not appropriate for tenure-track, full-tenured, or permanent positions. UGA is authorized by the U.S. State

Department to issue DS-2019 forms to non-U.S. citizen researchers, faculty and specialists who have been hired by the College. This form allows the international to apply for a J-1 exchange visa at the U.S. embassy in his/her home country. The period of employment may range from a few days, to five years in length. The individuals may show funding from UGA, their home government or institution, the U.S. government, private or public grants or foundations, personal funds, or any combination of the preceding. The ISSIS office must be notified of any change in position or funding, as listed on the DS-2019 form, in advance. While employment is limited to the sponsoring institution and stated position, the ISSIS Office may authorize occasional off-campus lectures and seminars in advance for researchers and professors, if they are directly related to the individual's exchange program at UGA, and will not delay the completion of the program here at UGA. There may be restrictions placed on the individual's employment with UGA depending on the J-1 category used, and whether the individual has had any previous periods of J-1 employment in the U.S. Short-term scholars (six months or less) may not extend their program. There is a one-year bar to re-entry in the Professor and Research Scholar categories for anyone who has just completed a J-1 program and a two year bar to repeat participation in the J researcher and professor categories. Individuals accepting a J-1 program may be subject to a two-year home residency requirement at the end of their program, depending on their home country's skills list and/or their source of funding. This home residency requirement only comes into effect if the individual wishes to apply for an H or L visa, or for Permanent Residency in the U.S. J-1 exchange visitors have a 30-day grace period when their program ends before they must depart the U.S., or change to a different visa status.

Under the institutional Cost Recovery Program, ISSIS charges internal processing fees for visa sponsorship paperwork. Please see this website for a list of the fees:

[http://www.issis.uga.edu/images/docs/for\\_departments/fee\\_schedule.pdf](http://www.issis.uga.edu/images/docs/for_departments/fee_schedule.pdf)

### **Long-term, regular, fulltime staff / faculty positions requiring at least a Bachelor's degree**

#### ***H-1B Worker Visas***

The H-1B visa is used to bring skilled workers in a specialty field to the U.S. for temporary employment. The H-1B visa may be used initially for a tenure-track position, but is not appropriate in the long-term for tenured or permanent positions. It does allow "dual-intent", however, so an H-1B employee is free to explore permanent residency options. UGA may act as an H-1B petitioner to Citizenship & Immigration Services (CIS) on behalf of an international employee, researcher or professor who has been offered a position at the College. The international must hold at least a Bachelor's degree in the field in which he or she will be working, and the UGA position must require that degree in that specialty field as a minimum educational requirement. The H petition may be filed for an initial period of up to three years, with an additional three-year extension available. The process is quite lengthy, involving a Department of Labor certification of the wage offered, a Labor Condition Application to the Department of Labor (DOL), and, finally, an I-129 petition to CIS. Government filing fees are usually \$820.00 (as of fall 2010), and must be paid by the hiring department. From initial contact between the hiring department and the OVIS, to CIS Notice of Approval, it usually takes from 4 to 6 months, though an expedited "premium processing" filing is available, for an additional government fee of \$1,000, payable to the Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS). If a case is filed for premium processing, approval generally takes one to two months from start to finish. In addition to government fees, ISSIS charges internal processing fees for visa sponsorship paperwork. Please see this website for a list of the fees:

[http://www.issis.uga.edu/images/docs/for\\_departments/fee\\_schedule.pdf](http://www.issis.uga.edu/images/docs/for_departments/fee_schedule.pdf)

If the individual being hired has been in J-1 status at any time in the past, he or she may be required to return to their home country for two years before being allowed to apply for an H-1B visa. The temporary worker may not begin work until the Approval Notice has been received, unless he or she currently holds H-1B status in the U.S. at another institution or organization. In this case, the H status is "portable", and the employee may begin working at UGA as soon as our petition is received by CIS.

If outside the U.S., the employee may enter the country no more than ten days prior to beginning employment. The H-1B authorization is specific to the stated position, duties, employment dates and location filed with DOL. If any of these will change over the course of the employment, the International Office must be notified well in advance of the change. If the employment is terminated early at the behest of the department, it is then liable for travel and relocation expenses of the individual to his or her home country. The ISSIS office must send a notification of employment termination to CIS immediately, in order for the termination to be valid. **Until this notification of termination to DOL and CIS happens, UGA is liable for continued salary payment to the employee, regardless of when the employment ended.** At the end of the authorized employment period the individual must depart the U.S., or change to a different visa status.

### *TN Status*

This non-immigrant status is the result of the Trade NAFTA agreement, and allows certain Canadian and Mexican citizens to enter the U.S. for employment purposes. The employment must be temporary in nature, and must be found on a list of authorized employment fields published by the State Department (Professors are found on this list, and although post-doctoral researchers are not, Research Assistants are on the list.). The status must be renewed annually, and due to the temporary nature of the employment, is not suitable for tenure or tenure track positions. In addition to any applicable government fees, ISSIS charges internal processing fees for visa sponsorship paperwork. Please see this website for a list of the fees: [http://www.issis.uga.edu/images/docs/for\\_departments/fee\\_schedule.pdf](http://www.issis.uga.edu/images/docs/for_departments/fee_schedule.pdf)

### *O-1 Status*

This is also a non-immigrant visa status, and is available to individuals who are considered to be in the top few percent of all individuals in their field. This is a difficult standard to meet, and our office will review the applicant's CV to determine if he or she might qualify for an O-1. The O-1 is valid for up to three years initially, but then may be renewed only one year at a time. In addition to any applicable government fees, ISSIS charges internal processing fees for visa sponsorship paperwork. Please see this website for a list of the fees: [http://www.issis.uga.edu/images/docs/for\\_departments/fee\\_schedule.pdf](http://www.issis.uga.edu/images/docs/for_departments/fee_schedule.pdf)

### *U.S. Permanent Resident Applicants*

All full tenure or tenure track hires are eligible for permanent residency sponsorship by UGA, and should set up a meeting with their Immigration Advisor to discuss their options. For all other regular, full-time research or staff positions, the Department Chair and Dean must recommend all UGA-sponsored permanent residency requests. Information on how to apply for sponsorship from UGA is available here: <http://www.issis.uga.edu/for-departments/permanent-residency/initiating-the-pr-process.html>. This website will give a link to a required online form, and other required documents.

Once submitted, the online form and all documents uploaded to the form will be forwarded to ISSIS, attention Robin Catmur, Director. **It is important to note that departments and internationals are not authorized to hire outside law firms to file government petitions.** All UGA-sponsored petitions must be assembled and filed by the ISSIS office, or the Special attorney contracted with the State's Attorney General's Office.

Note that post-doctoral positions do not qualify for UGA-sponsored permanent residency, as they are temporary and / or training positions.

### *Categories of sponsorship:*

There are several different kinds of employment-based petitions for which the employee may qualify. These categories include:

***I) Employment First Preference (EB-1) (no labor certification required)***

Priority Workers: All Priority Workers must be the beneficiaries of an approved Form I- 140, Immigrant Petition for Foreign Worker, filed with CIS. Within this preference there are three sub-groups:

- 1) Persons of extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics. Applicants in this category must have extensive documentation showing sustained national or international acclaim and recognition in the field of expertise. Such applicants do not have to have a specific job offer so long as they are entering the U.S. to continue work in the field in which they have extraordinary ability. Such applicants can file their own petition with CIS, rather than through an employer;
- 2) Outstanding professors and researchers with at least three years experience in teaching or research, who are recognized internationally. No labor certification is required for this classification, but the prospective employer must provide a job offer and file a petition with CIS; and
- 3) Certain executives and managers who have been employed in at least one of the three preceding years by the overseas affiliate, parent, subsidiary, or branch of the U.S. employer. The applicant must be coming to work in a managerial or executive capacity. No labor certification is required for this classification, but the prospective employer must provide a job offer and file a petition with the BCIS.

***II) Employment Second Preference (EB-2)***

Professionals Holding Advanced Degrees, or Persons of Exceptional Ability in the Arts, Sciences, or Business: All Second Preference applicants generally must have a labor certification approved by the DOL, or Schedule A designation, or establish that they qualify for one of the shortage occupations in the Labor Market Information Pilot Program. A job offer is required and the U.S. employer must file a petition on behalf of the applicant. Aliens may apply for exemption from the job offer and labor certification if the exemption would be in the national interest, in which case the alien may file the petition, Form I-140, along with evidence of the national interest. There are two subgroups within this category:

- 1) Professionals holding an advanced degree (beyond a baccalaureate degree), or a baccalaureate degree and at least five years progressive experience in the profession; and
- 2) Persons with exceptional ability in the arts, sciences, or business. Exceptional ability means having a degree of expertise significantly above that ordinarily encountered within the field.

***III) Employment Third Preference (EB-3)***

Skilled Workers, Professionals Holding Baccalaureate Degrees and Other Workers: All Third Preference applicants require an approved I-140 petition filed by the prospective employer. All such workers require a labor certification, or Schedule A designation, or evidence that they qualify for one of the shortage occupations in the Labor Market Information Pilot Program. There are three subgroups within this category:

- 1) Skilled workers are capable of performing a job requiring at least two years of training or experience;
- 2) Professionals with baccalaureate degrees are members of a profession holding at least a university bachelor's degree; and
- 3) Other workers are capable of filling positions requiring less than two years of training or experience.

Approvals for sponsorships in the EB-3 category will be on a case-by-case basis, as this category is currently subject to government backlogs exceeding 6 to 8 years.

***IV) Employment Fourth Preference (EB-4)***

Special Immigrants: There are six subgroups:

- 1) Religious workers
- 2) Certain overseas employees of the U.S. Government
- 3) Former employees of the Panama Canal Company
- 4) Retired employees of international organizations

- 5) Certain dependents of international organization employees
- 6) Certain members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

***V) Employment Fifth Preference (EB-5)***

Employment Creation Investors: To qualify, an alien must invest between U.S. \$500,000 and \$1,000,000, in a commercial enterprise in the United States which creates at least 10 new full-time jobs for U.S. citizens, permanent resident aliens, or other lawful immigrants, not including the investor and his or her family.

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For further information on specific application procedures, please contact the ISSIS Office.