

ISO UPDATE



05/14/2025

ACADEMIC PERSONNEL & FACULTY

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON



AGENDA

> ISO Changes

- Staff Visa Sponsorship
- APF Reorganization
- International Scholars Outreach
- Visa Sponsorship Duration Changes
- J-1 changes
- H-1B changes

> Q & A Break 1

> Federal Changes

- Funding pauses
- Increased scrutiny of academic visas
- SEVIS terminations
- What hasn't changed?
- How to support scholars

> Additional resources

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Staff Visa Sponsorship Regularization

- > In June 2023, OAP and UWHR jointly announced a staff visa sponsorship pilot program for H-1B, E-3, and TN visas
- > In June 2024, that program was made permanent
- > ISO web content now reflects staff sponsorship processes and documentation
- > See [UWHR Staff Visa Sponsorship](#) and [How to Sponsor an H-1B](#) for more information.

APF Reorganization



Reimagining Our Work and Looking Ahead

We're evolving how we serve the UW academic community, with changes designed to strengthen support and streamline services.

- > **In October 2024, OAP began a reorganization under a new name: Academic Personnel & Faculty (APF)**
- > **Renewed commitment to supporting faculty and academic personnel**
- > **Some responsibilities are transitioning to UWHR**
- > **A new strategic plan and organizational structure are in development—updates coming soon**

APF Reorganization – ISO Changes

- > **ISO is now part of Academic Personnel & Faculty Affairs, reporting to Associate Vice Provost Marjorie Olmstead**
- > **Streamlined processes mean fewer escalations for exception requests**
 - > **For example, H-1B sponsorship exceptions can now be reviewed and approved directly by ISO**

International Scholars Outreach

- > **International Scholars Mailing List created 08/2024**
 - ISO's first direct channel to scholars/employees on UW-sponsored visas
 - Quarterly newsletter + occasional updates
 - 300+ members
- > **Quarterly International Scholars Orientation**
 - Information on APF, visa policies and processes, and Q&A session
- > **Revamped Scholar Resources landing page**
 - Includes calendar feed of walk-in hours and orientations



Visa Sponsorship Duration Changes

- > **ISO had limited visa sponsorship for multi-year-eligible appointments to the dates of the current appointment**
- > **With this change, units can choose:**
 - To sponsor the visa only for the current appointment dates; or
 - To sponsor the visa for up to the maximum period allowed by both (a) UW appointment eligibility limitations and (b) U.S. immigration law
- > **This will give units maximum flexibility and reduce precarity for scholars**

Visa Sponsorship Duration Changes - Examples

- **Assistant professor with clock waiver but no academic review, on H-1B**
 - Under old practice, visa could only be extended for one year
 - Under new practice, visa can be extended for up to three years
- **Incoming postdoctoral scholar appointed for one year, on J-1**
 - Under old practice, visa could only be issued for one year
 - Under new practice, visa can be issued for up to five years

J-1 CHANGES



- End of paper DS-2019 issuance
- Changes to J-1 funding floor

End of paper DS-2019 issuance

- > In April 2024, Department of State announced rule allowing use of scanned or digitally-signed DS-2019s for J-1 exchange visitors**
- > ISO implemented a “hybrid model” where we issued both original paper DS-2019s and scanned**
- > In December 2024, ISO announced shift to digital-only DS-2019s effective 01/01/2025**

Digital DS-2019s

- > ISO uploads DS-2019s to our Lux visa request tool once they're issued
- > Easy to download and provide to scholar
- > No need to mail originals via international courier
- > For J-1 extensions where unit provides EID on visa request, scholar gets a notification with download link when new DS-2019 is uploaded
- > Uploads are only accessible to the person who submitted the visa request or "viewers" on it; let us know if the point of contact changes!

J-1 Funding Floor

- > J-1 regulations require UW to confirm that J-1s possess “adequate financial resources to participate in and complete their exchange visitor programs” and to support their dependents
- > UW does this through its [J-1 funding floor](#), which sets minimum required funding for J-1 exchange visitors not subject to UW salary minimums (mostly visiting titles)
- > Last update to funding floor was in July of 2017

Updating to Reflect Cost of Living Changes

- > **Federal data shows a 35% increase in consumer good prices and other significant cost-of-living changes for the greater Seattle area**
- > **Peer comparisons also showed that most of UW's peers in similarly high COL areas have higher J-1 funding floors**
- > **ISO regularly receives feedback from J-1s stating that living in Seattle is more expensive than they expected**

New Funding Floor

- > Monthly funding floor for J-1 will go up to \$2500/month for visa requests received on or after July 1, 2025**
- > Funding floor for J-2 dependents will stay the same: \$1200/month for J-2 spouse, \$600/month per J-2 child**
- > At least 50% of total funding floor must be met with non-personal/institutional funds**

H-1B CHANGES



- Increased use of G-1450 Credit Card Authorization form
- Changes to H-1B employer letter

Increased Use of G-1450

- > Historically, UW used checks cut from departmental accounts or through Procurement to pay all USCIS filing fees**
- > Following UWFT in 2023, units began to use the USCIS G-1450 Credit Card Authorization Form to pay filing fees instead**

G-1450 Tips and Warnings

- > ISO needs a separate G-1450 for each USCIS filing fee
- > Each G-1450 must be printed and signed; ISO can accept signed originals or scans, but not e-signatures
- > Card used for G-1450 needs to be active and valid; ISO will check in close to filing to make sure this is still true
- > Slightly higher rate of rejections on petitions using G-1450s, so if you have time, we recommend requesting checks through Workday Finance instead
- > Form of payment must match across fees and applications; so no mixing checks and G-1450s on the same application

Changes to H-1B Employer Letter

- > Effective 07/01/2025, ISO will start providing first drafts of the “Employer Letter to USCIS” to units**
- > By generating the first draft in ISO, we hope to reduce the email and time burden of producing this document**
- > More details to come**

Q&A Break 1: UW Changes



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Q: Are there repercussions when a postdoc who is sponsored for, say, two years on a J-1 visa leaves early?

A: For J-1s, we would need you to let us know so that we can shorten their DS-2019; they'll then get their usual 30-day grace period to depart the U.S. No other repercussions.

Q: For initial DS-2019s (for those outside the US), are there any issues with using copies for visa appointments at US consulates? I am strongly advising people take their originals with them to their appointments.

A: All consulates should be accepting digitally signed DS-2019s or scanned signed DS-2019s; that said, we have heard anecdotally that some consulates are requiring signed originals (in direct contravention of Department of State guidance and the regulations). If a consulate doesn't accept the digital DS-2019, let us know.

Q: Will the new H-1B employee draft letter be a draft that can be copied to letterhead?

A: Yes! We will send it to you as an unlocked Word document so that it can be put on department letterhead.

Q: Is there a way for ISO to automatically add every new scholar to the International Scholars Mailing List?

A: Unfortunately, no; there's no system that captures this information to feed it into UW Groups.

Q: Some DS-2019s are blurry in scans and some scholars want a printed version instead. Is this something that can be looked at?

A: Yes, ISO can explore ways to make sure DS-2019 scan quality is sufficient. Please contact us if you get a blurry scan.



FEDERAL CHANGES



Federal Funding Pauses/Delays/Cancellations

- > **State of federal funding for many researchers is uncertain**
- > **US law doesn't allow employers to put H-1B and E-3 employees on furlough or reduce FTE to reflect funding loss**
- > **F-1 OPT holders, J-1s, and TNs may have more flexibility based on the different laws for those visa types**
- > **Contact ISO if you have questions regarding funding issues for an international scholar**

Increased Scrutiny of Academic Visas

- > The White House has published a number of “extreme vetting” executive orders
- > In particular, high level of scrutiny reported:
 - At consulates during visa stamp application
 - At border during application for admission
 - At USCIS during adjudication of applications for immigration benefits
- > This scrutiny can include review of social media
- > See the Provost’s [Federal Policy Updates](#) for information

SEVIS Student Terminations

- > In late March/early April, the Department of Homeland Security terminated thousands of F-1 student records in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) without notice
- > Termination meant students might
 - Lose employment authorization
 - Lose ability to remain in U.S. or change status to other visas
 - Be subject to removal (deportation) from U.S.
- > After several lawsuits, many of these students have had their records (at least temporarily) reactivated.

Ramifications for Scholars

- > UW employs many F-1 OPT student visa holders in academic personnel titles (e.g. Postdoctoral Scholar)
- > J-1 Exchange Visitors are also administered through SEVIS, so could be subject to similar terminations and resulting immigration restrictions
- > ISO has closely monitored reports of SEVIS terminations and provided guidance to scholars
- > As of today, UW has experienced no terminations of J-1 Exchange Visitors

What hasn't changed?

- > ISO can still:**
 - issue DS-2019s and bring exchange visitors to UW on J-1 visas**
 - file H-1Bs and other visa petitions**
- > Agency processing times have not changed**
- > H-1Bs and other visa petitions are still getting approved**
- > Permanent residence pathways are still open**

How to Support Scholars

- > **Listen.**

These are scary times for academics on visas; sometimes they just need to be heard.

- > **Refer them to ISO.**

If they have questions about their UW-sponsored visa, the ISO team are the best people to answer them.

- > **Share [Know Your Rights](#) resources.**

If they're worried about immigration enforcement or being detained, this will help them prepare.

- > **Recommend they talk to an immigration attorney.**

If they are particularly worried about being detained, or about a non-UW visa application, this is who can help them.

- > **Share [Employee Assistance Program](#) resources.**

EAP has counseling and other resources to support wellbeing and peace of mind.

Q & A Break 2: Federal Changes



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Q: Can we put an H-1B and/or E-3 holder on layoff?

A: You can't put them on furlough; the only real option for those visa types is

(1) keep paying their full-time salary or

(2) terminate (with an offer for reasonable costs of repatriation).

If you do (2), they get a grace period of up to 60 days to move to another employer or apply to change status.

Q: Are scholars able to get their visa approved if it has been denied previously?

Do people actually get their visa if they reapply?

A: It really depends on the reason for a denial. If the denial is based on insufficient documentation, hypothetically they could reapply with the necessary documentation and get an approval; but if the underlying reason for the denial hasn't changed, then it will still be denied. Scholars from some countries are subject to additional national security scrutiny that may result in delays or denials that are unlikely to change with reapplication. Sometimes UW Federal Relations can assist in overturning a denial or getting an approval; but we aren't sure how well that will work under the current administration.

Q: Where do I send people who aren't on a UW-sponsored visa through ISO?

Can I just send them to AILA?

A: ISO recommends the following resources:

- [American Immigration Lawyer Association Directory](#)
- [UW Law School Immigration Clinic Resources](#)
(includes low and pro bono options)
- <https://www.avvo.com/> and <https://www.justia.com/>

Note that the UW EAP does include some legal assistance, but does not currently include immigration assistance.



Additional resources

- > [Federal Policy Updates](#) (Office of the Provost)
- > [Resources for UW's Global Community](#) (Office of Global Affairs)
- > [Resources for International Scholars](#) (ISO)
- > [Current Visa & Travel FAQ](#)
- > [Visa Guidance for Unit Administrators](#)
- > [APF Office & Team Contacts](#) (includes ISO walk-in hours)

