H-1B International Travel Memo

While you hold H-1B status, you are free to travel internationally. Before you travel, please review:

- International Center Travel Advisory on our website: [www.umich.edu/~icenter](http://www.umich.edu/~icenter)
- The University of Michigan Travel Information & Registration website includes current travel conditions and helpful links, as well as a registration for faculty, staff and students traveling for University-related activities: [www.umich.edu/~itoc/](http://www.umich.edu/~itoc/)

To re-enter the US after a stay abroad, you should always bring the following documents:

- Valid passport
- Valid H-1B visa stamp (see next page)
- H-1B Approval Notice
- Copy of your entire H-1B petition (If you do not have a copy, please request one from FSIS)
- Three last paystubs
- Employment Confirmation Letter from your department (template below)

**Employment Confirmation Template**

[DATE]

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Employment Verification of [Full Name]

This letter is written to confirm that [Full Name] will be/is employed with the University of Michigan, [Department Name], pursuant to the terms and conditions of our approved H-1B petition. [Full Name] will be employed in the position of [Job Title] at an annual salary of [Wage Rate].

Sincerely,

[Name of Department Administrator/Department Contact]

[Job Title]

Upon your return to the U.S.:

Please send a copy of your new I-94 record (cbp.gov/I-94) to the International Center for verification!
Applying for Your H-1B Visa:

NOTE: Canadian citizens are exempt from the visa requirement. Canadian citizens should present themselves at a Port of Entry for admission to the US in H-1B status.

If you are coming to the University of Michigan from abroad, you will need to apply for an H-1B visa to enter the US. To do so, you will need to make an appointment with the nearest US embassy or consulate. Please refer to the website of US embassy where you intend to apply for more information on the required documents. The exact visa application procedures and timelines vary from country to country and even from consulate to consulate. Therefore, please review the visa application instructions that are given on the US embassy or consulate website. For a list of all consulates and embassies, please refer to www.usembassy.state.gov/

If your dependents are outside the U.S., they should apply for H-4 visas at a U.S. Consulate. In addition to the items mentioned for an H-1B application, they should present a marriage certificate (for spouse) or birth certificate (for children). They can apply for their visas on the basis of the H-1B approval notice; no specific H-4 approval notice is required.

Please note that you may be selected for “administrative processing,” more commonly called a “background check,” by the consular official when you apply for your visa. Background checks can be imposed for a variety of reasons, including your personal background or the scientific or technical field in which they work. The government issues a new Technology Alert List (TAL) every year, which lists professions identified by the U.S. State Department as being a higher risk to national security. Working in a field included in this list does not necessarily mean that your visa application will be delayed, but you should be prepared for the possibility. The TAL is a classified document and not available to the public. Some fields on the TAL include nuclear technology, chemical, biotechnology, and biomedical engineering advanced computer/ microelectronic technology, materials technology, and information technology, robotics, and urban planning.

Unfortunately, FSIS cannot exert any control on the background check process. Because a background check is always an option, it is recommended you apply for your H-1B visa as soon as possible.

Below is a list of documents generally required when applying for your H-1B visa:

- **Passport**: It is strongly recommended that your passport is valid for the whole period covered by your H-1B Approval plus an additional 6 months.
- **Photograph**: Uploaded with your DS-160. Requirements: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/visaphotoreq/visaphotoreq_5334.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/visaphotoreq/visaphotoreq_5334.html)
- **DS-160 Confirmation Page**: Form DS-160, a web-based non-immigrant application, required at all U.S. posts. The form can be accessed through [https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/)
- **Application Fee**: Each applicant must pay a nonrefundable application fee, so be sure to bring the barcoded receipt to your interview. There may be additional reciprocity fees for certain countries. To find out if your country of citizenship merits additional reciprocity fees: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/reciprocity/index.htm](http://travel.state.gov/visa/reciprocity/index.htm).
- **Original H-1B Approval Notice (Form I-797)**
- **Copy of your entire H-1B Petition**: A copy is included in your approval folder.
- **Form I-797 Approval Notice for Waiver of 2-year foreign residency requirement – if you were subject to the 2-year requirement**. Eligibility of H-1B visa requires presentation of actual waiver from USCIS, not the recommendation letter from the U.S. Dept. of State.
- **Additional documents**: Your CV, a list of your publications and an itinerary or general statement about your plans in the U.S. Please refer to the website of the consulate where you intend to apply for a complete overview of additional documents.

To find out the typical wait times for scheduling an appointment and processing a visa at your consulate, go to: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html). Choose the city you will be visiting then click “Go.”
Travel to Canada or Mexico (Automatic Revalidation)

If you are only traveling to Canada or Mexico for a period of less than 30 days, you may be eligible to re-enter the US on the basis of an expired visa in your passport under a process called “automatic visa revalidation.”

In order to take advantage of Automatic Revalidation:

- The visit to Canada or Mexico is for 30 days or less.
- You did not apply for a new US visa stamp while in Canada/Mexico.
- Your passport must be valid for at least six months from your date of re-entry to the U.S.
- You must possess your portion of the approval notice (bottom left side of the I-797).
- You must possess an unexpired I-94 record* or admission stamp.
- You must apply for readmission to the U.S. within the authorized period of your H-1B status.
- You must have maintained and intend to resume your non-immigrant status.

*When exiting the U.S. for Automatic Revalidation do not surrender your I-94—you will need it for reentry.

NOTE: If you are required to have a Visitor Visa to enter Canada, please be sure to apply early, as visas can take 60-90 days to issue. For Canadian Visitor visa requirements and processing times: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp

Automatic revalidation is not available to nationals from countries identified as state sponsors of terrorism: http://www.state.gov/s/ct/c14151.htm

We recommend that individuals planning to re-enter the US under the automatic visa revalidation process carry with them the CBP automatic visa revalidation memo, which you can find at http://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/auto_reva_3.pdf. In addition, please print the relevant regulation, which can be accessed through our website.

If you will be traveling by air, you should confirm that your airline is familiar with the visa revalidation process and will issue you a boarding pass when returning to the US even though you have an expired US visa in your passport.
Travel while an H-1B petition is pending

Whether or not you may travel internationally while your H-1B petition is pending depends on a variety of factors:

✔ If our office filed a change of immigration status petition for you, you must not travel outside of the US while the petition is pending. Leaving the country while USCIS is reviewing your petition will cause USCIS to consider your petition for a change of status to be abandoned. Your underlying H-1B petition may still be approved, but you would have to depart the US and apply for an H-1B visa abroad to re-enter the US in H-1B status before you could start your H-1B employment. Once USCIS approves your change of status petition, you may travel internationally. Your H-1B status will take effect on the date that was requested.

✔ Traveling while an extension of status petition is pending with USCIS is permissible. Please note that you must be in the US when the H-1B petition is filed with USCIS. You must alert the International Center of any travel plans while your H-1B extension is pending with USCIS. If the extension is approved while you are abroad, you must re-enter the US using that Approval Notice. This means the documents may need to be sent to you while abroad. If you re-entered the US on the basis of your old Approval Notice, you would only be admitted until the expiration date of the old H-1B Approval Notice and you would likely have to travel again to have this corrected.

✔ If your H-1B extension is pending with USCIS and your current H-1B status has expired, you must not travel internationally because you will need a valid H-1B approval and visa to re-enter the country. If you must travel while your extension is pending and your H-1B status has expired, you will need to remain outside of the US until your H-1B petition is approved.

✔ If you are changing employers, you may travel while the U-M H-1B petition is pending. However, travel during this period is not recommended as you will need a valid H-1B Approval Notice and visa to re-enter the US. If you have a valid H-1B approval from your previous employer you may use that in conjunction with your U-M H-1B petition and Receipt Notice. Should your previous employer have withdrawn its H-1B petition - which is likely - you cannot use your previous H-1B approval. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you do not travel internationally during this period as you may not be able to return until your U-M H-1B petition has been approved.