



Human Resources
Compliance and Immigration Services

Glossary of Immigration Terms

TERM	Meaning
Immigration Status	Refers to a visa category, such as B-2, F-1, F-2, J-1, J-2, H-1, etc.
F-1	Student visa
J-1	Exchange Visitor visa
J-2	Spouse or child of Exchange Visitors
H-1	Individuals who perform services in a "Specialty Occupation"
H-4	Spouse or child of foreign national
SEVIS	Student Exchange Visitor Information System, Dept of State Database
NSEERS	National Security Entry-Exit Registration System
Duration of Status (D/S)	Period of time a foreign faculty/staff/student are allowed to remain in the U.S. For example, this is defined as the time period during which a student is pursuing a full course of study or engaging in authorized practical training following completion of studies plus a 60 day (F-1s) or 30 day (J-1s) period to prepare for departure from the U.S. or to transfer schools.
OPT	Optional Practical Training: 12 months of employment authorization available to F-1 students specific to their field of study
USCIS Form I-129	Immigration form used for H-1B petition
USCIS Form I-539	Immigration form used for H-4 application
USCIS Form I-907	Immigration form used for premium processing
USCIS Form I-765	Immigration form used for employment authorization
USCIS Form I-797	Notice of Action issued by an immigration service center as a result of a submitted application/petition

Petitioner - In immigration law, a petitioner is a U.S. business/resident/university who makes a formal request that a foreign national be allowed to enter/stay in the United States.

Beneficiary – Foreign national receiving the immigration benefit.

PERM – Program Electronic Review Management. Request to Dept of Labor to certify a foreign national is more qualified for a position than a U.S. resident. Used for initiating a type of green card process.

Non-immigrant - A nonimmigrant is any alien whose reason for coming to the United States involves a temporary stay that will end when its purpose has been accomplished.

Immigrant – a legal foreign national in the United States other than those in the specified class of nonimmigrant aliens such as temporary visitors for pleasure or students. Immigrant is also used synonymously with lawful permanent resident.

LPR – Legal Permanent Resident (“green card”) is an immigrant who has been lawfully accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the United States.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) - the department of the U.S. government that was formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). The immigration functions of the department are administered by three bureaus including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP).

United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) -- Administers immigration documents and services.

U.S. Department of State (USDOS) -- The U.S. government agency that operates U.S. Consulates and Embassies worldwide for U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents seeking assistance abroad, as well as for non-U.S. citizens seeking visas to enter the United States, if a U.S. visa is required for entry. This agency also administers the J-1 exchange visitor program.

DOL – Department of Labor

Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) - U.S. government bureau that is responsible for immigration inspections at U.S. ports of entry, U.S. border patrol, and U.S. customs.

Designated School Official (DSO) - Employee of the school that is responsible for creating I-20s, SEVIS records, and representing the school in all matters that relate to F-1 students.

Port of Entry (POE) -- The airport, land border crossing, or port in the U.S. where one first arrives and applies to enter the country.

Passport -- Issued by the government of one’s country. A passport must be valid at all times during one’s stay in the United States.

U.S. Visa -- Enables one to enter and re-enter the United States for the time during which it is valid. The visa is stamped in one’s passport by the U.S. Consulate or Embassy.

I-94 Card -- The card one receives upon entering the United States, also known as the Arrival/Departure Record. I-94 card shows how long one is authorized to stay in the United States and includes a specific admission number. It also displays a visa status in the United States (F-1, J-1, F-2, etc.).

I-20 Form -- Students present this form to receive an F-1 visa and F-1 status upon entry to the United States. It is made up of two parts: I-20 School, and I-20 ID (Student) Copy. The expiration date in item #5 is the expected date of completion for your academic program. Each F-1 student must retain his/her form I-20 ID Copy to establish legal status in the United States.

DS-2019 Form -- Students and scholars present this form to receive a J-1 visa and J-1 status upon entry to the United States. After entering the United States, J-1 students and scholars must keep only the pink copy of this form. The DS-2019 form shows the authorized program participation dates and a description of the exchange program.