

## Rice University Policy No. 842

### Immigration and Visas

#### I. General Policy

Rice University is required to comply with all laws and regulations governing the inviting, hiring, and admission of non-resident non-immigrant faculty, staff, students and visiting scholars. As such, all non-resident employees, students, visitors, and researchers must first be processed through the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) or Human Resources (in certain employment cases) to determine the appropriate visa status. OISS has the final authority concerning the appropriate visa category on behalf of Rice University.

Failure to involve OISS early in the visa process could delay the start date of studies or employment. Administrative sanctions for violations of immigration laws and regulations may include Rice's loss of the right to hire and train foreign scholars, loss of designation to sponsor F-1 and J-1 visas for postsecondary visitors, the inability to obtain approved visa statuses and assessment of monetary fines, as well as increased governmental scrutiny,

#### II. Roles and Responsibilities

**Non-Immigrant Students and Scholars** need to understand the regulations governing their visa status and are individually responsible for maintaining lawful immigration status. All non-resident, non-immigrant students and scholars are required to check-in with the OISS upon initial arrival to campus, and to attend a mandatory orientation. The OISS supports such non-immigrant students and scholars by keeping them informed via various communication channels including, but not limited to, mandatory orientations, emails, web resources, semiannual newsletters, workshops, trainings, etc. All non-immigrant students and scholars should read the communications sent, attend mandatory trainings as required, submit timely reporting as required by his/her immigration status, and abide by the guidance provided by OISS.

**Academic Departments and Faculty** need to contact OISS when contemplating employing foreign scholars, admitting foreign students, inviting foreign visitors to participate in a conference or seminar that entails payment or honorariums, obtaining visas and visa extensions, providing information to outside attorneys for visa applications, signing documents on behalf of foreign scholars, and any matter involving the academic employment, presence or training of foreign nationals. OISS works with Human Resources for H-1B filing and some employer-sponsored permanent residency. All academic department administrators, and anyone with significant immigration responsibilities, are expected to attend OISS's annual mandatory Academic Department Training, to read OISS updates via emails, memos, campus wide communications, and to adhere to all OISS guidelines.

**Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS)** is charged with administering the F-1 student visa program and the J-1 Exchange Visitor program designations and related government reporting for postsecondary level visitors to the University. OISS holds final visa oversight and authority for the F and J visa programs at Rice, as the F Principal Designated School Official (PDSO) and the J Responsible Officer (RO), as certified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Department of State (DOS), respectively. In addition, OISS has primary responsibility for the following immigration matters:

- Temporary professional worker visa (H-1B), in conjunction with Human Resources
- Temporary work visa for extraordinary ability in the sciences, education, business, athletics or the arts (O-1)
- Temporary work visa under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) for Canadian and Mexican Citizens
- Determination of appropriateness of visitor visa for purpose of visit (B-1 or Visa Waiver Program-VWP)
- Facilitation for obtaining other visa types that are not specifically named above
- Apprising the University of changes in immigration laws as they relate to individuals and University operations via various communication methods, including but not limited to, emails, memos, biannual newsletters, annual trainings, workshops, web based resources, etc.
- Making final determination of the appropriate visa category for invited foreign nationals to come to Rice.

**The Glasscock School of Continuing Studies** works with OISS to sponsor full-time ESL students on F or J visas. The OISS holds final oversight and authority on visa issues of the F and J ESL students.

**Human Resources** works with OISS and has processing authority for certain employment specific immigration matters, including:

- Processing of H-1B for faculty and staff (non-postdocs)
- Some employer-sponsored permanent residency statuses

### **III. Definitions**

**Non-immigrant visa** is any visa issued to persons with a permanent residence outside the U.S., but who wishes to be in the U.S. on a temporary basis such as tourism, business, temporary work, or study. For the most commonly used visa types at Rice University, see <http://oiss.rice.edu/resources/>

### **IV. General Guidance on Immigration**

Immigration documents concerning members or prospective members of the faculty and staff requiring approval of the University must be routed to the OISS for preliminary and/or final approval. This can include documents for the following types of non-citizens:

- Non-resident student pursuing academic programs at Rice
  - Certain staff member (full or part time)
  - Faculty or researcher (including full and part time, tenure and non-tenure track)
  - Person coming in under the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program
  - Person coming in to participate in a conference or seminar for compensation or receiving an honorarium
- Any other non-resident, non-citizen being brought to the University in any other capacity

Human Resources processes H-1Bs for non-postdocs, PERM, EB-12 and other employment based permanent residency processing, I-9s and E-Verify-related issues.

Administrative processing fees assessed by the OISS are to support the administrative staff required for immigration compliance.

## **V. Undocumented Students and Applicants for Admissions**

Rice University welcomes all applicants for admission to academic study, and considers academically qualified students as candidates for admission without regard to nationality or citizenship, including undocumented students living in the United States, such as those applicants covered by DACA. More information on such undocumented students is available at a link below.

## **VI. Cross References to Related Policies**

None

## **VII. Responsible Official and Key Offices to Contact Regarding the Policy and its Implementation**

Responsible Official: Vice Provost Academic Affairs  
Other Key Offices: Office of International Students & Scholars  
Human Resources (for H-1B and Permanent Residency matters)

## **VIII. Procedures and Forms**

For Academic Departments - <http://oiss.rice.edu/departments/>

For International Students - <http://oiss.rice.edu/student/>

For International Scholars - <http://oiss.rice.edu/scholar/>

Detailed procedures for specifically processing H-1B and University-sponsored permanent residency applications - <http://oiss.rice.edu/h1b/>

## **IX. Links to Additional Information**

See Undergraduate Admissions [DACA and Undocumented Students](#)

*Signed David W. Leebron*

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David W. Leebron  
President

Policy History

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