Services to International Students and Scholars (SISS) is the UCSF office designated to provide international students, scholars, and visitors with information, advice, and assistance in obtaining visa documentation and authorization for employment, and in the maintenance of immigration status. SISS is the sole campus entity authorized to submit immigration status applications on behalf of UCSF to federal agencies, to track and report international student and scholar data as mandated by federal and state law, and to improve and monitor compliance with state, federal, and University regulations governing immigration services.

This policy delineates the responsibilities of SISS and campus units with regard to sponsoring international students and scholars for study, employment, research, clinical service, and visits of any duration.

Policy

Students and scholars from foreign countries who visit UCSF for academic purposes are subject to the regulations of the DOS, DHS, and DOL.

Typically, a citizen of a foreign country who wishes to enter the United States must first obtain, either a non-immigrant visa for temporary stay, or an immigrant visa for permanent residence. In all cases, SISS prepares and submits application materials to the DHS, and upon approval, either issues a Certificate of Eligibility or forwards the official approval notice issued by the DHS, along with other required documentation, to the student or scholar.

Admission to the United States, including length of authorized stay, authorized activities, and immigration status, is determined and confirmed by the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CNBP) division of the DHS.

A. All requests for sponsoring international students in student academic programs and scholars in research, clinical, or any other employment-based program, must be processed through SISS.

B. UCSF employment-based permanent residency petitions must be processed through SISS. Faculty may verify current employment only for UCSF applicants who are self-petitioning for permanent residency. Faculty may not make any promise of either permanent or ongoing employment for self-petitioning applicants.
C. Campus units sponsoring health care professionals with any level of patient contact or responsibilities must submit appropriate State of California licensing and evidence of all required state and federal credentials prior to requesting services for employment-based status.

D. Departments are responsible for notifying SISS of the initial acceptance, initial arrival, and departure of a foreign visitor, furnishing academic guidance and counseling, and ensuring that foreign guests possess adequate health insurance for the duration of stay.

E. A student applying for an F-1 or J-1 visa may obtain a Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20 or DS-2019, as appropriate) upon receipt of a copy of the admission letter and a statement documenting adequate financial resources, including confirmation of adequate health and life insurance.

F. At the request of the department chair, SISS will provide a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (Form DS-2019) to postdoctoral scholars, visiting faculty, and researchers applying for a J-1 visa. Medical residents and clinical fellows who will engage in direct patient contact must obtain the Form DS-2019 through the Education Commission on Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). SISS coordinates submission of applications to ECFMG.

G. Visiting faculty and researchers with paid academic appointments at and above the level of postdoctoral scholar may be considered for J-1, F-1 Optional Practical Training, H-1B, TN, and O-1 sponsorship.

H. Visiting faculty and researchers with paid academic appointments may be sponsored for employment-based permanent residency subject to the hiring unit’s approval for individuals appointed in one of the following academic title series: Professor (Tenure-track); Clinical X; In Residence; Adjunct; Clinical; and Professional Research. Other eligibility requirements may apply.

I. UCSF does not permit individuals to volunteer for positions which normally would be on paid status. Permitting volunteers to occupy positions outside of those designated for humanitarian or charitable purposes is a potential violation of the U.S. Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act and jeopardizes UCSF’s ability to sponsor non-immigrants in employment-based visa categories.

Responsibilities

The Director of SISS is responsible for administering policies, providing services to international students, scholars, and visitors, and maintaining primary contact with the governing agencies involved in immigration services, including, but not limited to the DHS, DOS, and DOL.

References

- Code of Federal Regulations, Title VIII, XX, and XXII [4]
- United States Department of Labor Website [5]
- United States Department of State Website [6]
Services to International Students and Scholars [7]

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