

International Scholar FAQ

We hope you are doing well during this time. Please be aware that our ISS staff are still available to help you. They are working remotely and will continue to provide advising and process requests. Even though we cannot meet in person on campus, you can still reach us by email.

Scholar Advising

While in-person services are temporarily suspended, advisors continue to work remotely and are available through email.

J-1 related questions: David Lawson (dplawson@utk.edu)

H-1B related questions: Candice Gilreath (candice@utk.edu)

University-sponsored Permanent Resident related questions: Elizabeth Smith (elizabeth@utk.edu)

Travel

University Travel: For the most up-to-date information regarding university travel, please visit the Travel FAQ under Instructors and Staff at <https://utk.edu/coronavirus/>

Travel Restrictions: The most recent travel restrictions enacted recently related to COVID-19 can be found from the [Department of Homeland Security](#).

Consulate & Embassy Closures: In response to significant worldwide challenges related to COVID-19 pandemic, the [Department of State](#) is temporarily suspending routine visa services at all U.S. Embassies and Consulates.

J-1: Travel Signatures

If you have a travel emergency, please notify David Lawson at dplawson@utk.edu. With your host department, he will arrange to ship a new DS-2019 to you, as a travel signature is not needed to depart the U.S. Also, please remember that a travel signature is valid for one year or to the end of the DS-2019, whichever is shorter.

J-1: Ending your Visit

If you end your visit with UT more than 2 weeks before the scheduled end date, notify David Lawson (dplawson@utk.edu) of your departure date. David will contact your department and shorten the end date of your SEVIS record to reflect your early departure.

J-1: Extending your stay

If you are coming to the end of your visit and feel it is unsafe or you are unable to travel home, please keep the following in mind:

- There is a 30-day grace period after the end date on the DS-2019.
- Extensions require two things to be granted: the host professor must have something for you to do and you must have financial resources. If you are interested in extending your program, please contact David Lawson (dplawson@utk.edu) for the appropriate forms.

H-1B: Request or Extension

Submit all documents to your hiring department. Please consult with them as to how they would like you to submit to their office. Once your hiring department has all the documents needed for the H-1B Request or Extension request, they will submit the entire package to our office through UT's Secure Courier, the Vault.

If you have an I-539 and checks to also submit, please keep these for now. We will not need them until we are ready to file the H-1B petition. At that time, we will assess how to submit these documents.

H-1B: Premium Processing Suspended

On March 20, [USCIS announced](#) the suspension of Premium Processing for H-1B petitions. [Current processing times](#) for the Form I-129 with the California Service Center are 2-4 months, and we hope this will not change drastically. We will continue to monitor the situation and advise individuals accordingly, as each case is different depending on the start date and travel plans.

USCIS Offices

In-person services at USCIS offices (including biometrics appointments and AOS interviews) are temporarily suspended as USCIS offices are closed to the public. At this time, USCIS is continuing to process requests filed (such as I-129, I-539, I-140, and I-485).

Driver's license

On March 19, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee announced that all driver's licenses, learner permits, photo ID licenses that expire between March 12, 2020 and May 19, 2020 will be extended for six months from the original expiration date. However, this appears to only apply to U.S. citizens.

Non-US Citizens with Temporary driver licenses (Class XD and XID) will still need to visit in person to renew those licenses upon expiration of the current license. <https://www.tn.gov/safety/tdoshscovid19.html>

Tax Deadline

On March 21, The [Treasury Department](#) announced that the federal income tax filing due date is automatically extended from April 15, 2020, to July 15, 2020.

Additional Resources

Additional resources can be found on the University of Tennessee's COVID-19 website at <https://utk.edu/coronavirus/>