H-1B- Specialty Occupation Category

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1271.html#1

- **The H-1B Specialty Category** is only intended for paid positions of a specialty nature (individual must have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in the field the job is in).
- UML must pay prevailing wage for the position as determined by the Department of Labor.
- This is the visa category most used for long-term faculty positions or tenure-track positions.
- The maximum amount of time on H-1B status is six years (with a maximum initial period of three).
- Concurrent employment is permitted; each employer must apply for a separate H-1B petition.
- Dual intent is allowed in H-1B status (i.e., person can intend to immigrate to US).
- H-4 Dependents are not permitted to apply for work authorization.
- There are significant employer fees associated with the H-1B Application Process (including the attorney fees – approximately up to $3,500 paid by employer).
- The H-1B applicant coordinates with their UMass Lowell department and an immigration attorney recommended by the International Students & Scholars Office (ISSO) in the preparation of an H-1B petition. The petition is submitted to the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services for approval. Processing can take from 6-12 weeks. **All** H-1B petitions must be reviewed and approved by the ISSO.

**ATTENTION: H-1B Premium Processing Temporarily Suspended**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) recently announced that it will temporarily suspend Premium Processing for H-1B petitions filed on or after April 3, 2017, [https://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/uscis-will-temporarily-suspend-premium-processing-all-h-1b-petitions](https://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/uscis-will-temporarily-suspend-premium-processing-all-h-1b-petitions). This will impact **new** international hires who need to enter the U.S. on H-1B sponsorship or are in the U.S. needing to change from a non-immigrant status to H-1B. Employees already in H-1B status, either extending H1B or transferring from one H-1B employer to another, will not be impacted.

Contact the International Students & Scholars Office at isso@uml.edu for additional information on the internal UMass Lowell process.