

Immigration Support for Faculty

Lafayette College values the diverse perspectives and global expertise that international faculty bring to our academic community. As part of our commitment to recruiting and retaining outstanding scholars, the College provides immigration sponsorship for eligible faculty members, including work visas and permanent residency. The College does not provide financial support for spouses/dependents.

All faculty immigration sponsorship requests require approval by the Dean of the Faculty. Once approved, Human Resources coordinates the process with the College's outside immigration counsel.

Visa Sponsorship

The College sponsors eligible faculty for employment-based visas, including:

J-1 Exchange Visitor

Typically used for temporary appointments, including visiting professors and other short-term academic positions.

The College pays all legal and government filing fees for the faculty member's J-1 visa.

J-1 visas are applied for through a Designated Sponsor and not the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. If approved by the Dean of Faculty, Human Resources will coordinate the process with the College's Designated Sponsor.

H-1B Specialty Occupation

Typically used for:

- Tenure-track faculty appointments
- Visiting faculty appointments of two years or longer
- Positions that are not eligible for J-1 status

The College pays all legal and government filing fees for the faculty member's H-1B petition. (Faculty are responsible for expenses related to dependent family members.) The H-1B process generally takes 3–6 months.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Faculty who recently graduated from a U.S. institution may be eligible to work under F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT). Because Lafayette is not an E-Verify employer, the College cannot employ individuals using STEM OPT extensions.

Permanent Residency (Green Card)

Eligible tenure-track faculty are encouraged to begin the application process for permanent residency during their first academic year at Lafayette.

The College pays the faculty member's legal and filing fees and sponsors Green Card renewals for continuing eligible full-time faculty. Faculty are responsible only for personal expenses such as required medical examinations.

The Green Card application process typically takes 15–18 months or longer, depending on federal processing times. Once issued, a Green Card is generally valid for 10 years before renewal.

Naturalization Legal Consultation

While the college does not provide financial support for naturalization, full-time faculty can meet with the College's immigration attorney for a first free consultation to discuss their individual needs.

Travel Support

Visa Travel Support Letters

Employees in H-1B status who plan to travel internationally for business purposes, such as attending conferences, conducting research, presenting at professional meetings, or participating in other College-related activities, may require an employment verification or travel support letter for visa or re-entry purposes.

To request a travel support letter, please email Human Resources at least three weeks prior to your departure. Your request should include:

- Your full name and employee ID.
- Your travel dates and destination(s).
- The purpose of your travel (e.g., conference attendance, presentation, research collaboration).
- The name of the conference or event, if applicable.
- Any specific information or wording required by the U.S. consulate, embassy, or your immigration attorney.

The travel support letter will typically verify your employment with the College, your job title, H-1B sponsorship (if applicable), salary, and that your international travel is temporary and that you are expected to resume your employment upon your return.

Please note that a travel support letter does not replace any required travel documents. Employees are responsible for ensuring they have a valid passport, visa, H-1B approval notice, and any other documentation required for re-entry to the United States. Individuals who have

questions about international travel while in H-1B status should consult with Human Resources before making travel arrangements.

International Travel for Faculty in Visa Status

Faculty under a U.S. work-authorized visa (including, but not limited to, H-1B status) who plan to travel internationally should notify both the Dean of Faculty and Human Resources before making travel arrangements and prior to departing the United States.

Advance notification allows the College to review any potential immigration-related concerns associated with international travel and, when appropriate, consult with the College's immigration counsel to help ensure that all required documentation is in place for re-entry to the United States.

Depending on an individual's immigration status and travel plans, additional documentation, such as an employment verification letter, updated immigration documents, or guidance from the College's immigration counsel, may be necessary before departure. Failure to obtain the appropriate documentation prior to travel could result in delays or complications when seeking to re-enter the United States.

Faculty are encouraged to contact Human Resources as early as possible, preferably at least 30 days prior to international travel, to allow sufficient time for any required review, document preparation, or consultation with the College's immigration counsel.

Questions?

Human Resources coordinates all faculty immigration sponsorships in partnership with the Dean of the Faculty and the College's immigration counsel. Faculty members considering employment authorization, visa changes, or permanent residency are encouraged to contact Human Resources early to discuss available options.

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