Best Practices for Departments:
Panel Discussion with Expert Practitioners

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Meet the Panel!
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Common Issues
J-1 Visa Items
J1 Timeline

- **OIS processing time:**
  - Initial Request, 5-8 business days once fully submitted.
  - Start date must be set to at least 45 days from when it was fully submitted.

- **J-1 Visa process at US Embassy:**
  - Depends on the country.
    - [Visa Appointment Wait Times (state.gov)](state.gov)
  - Administrative Processing.
    - 2-6 months

- **J-1 Extensions:**
  - 3-5 business days once fully submitted.
  - Be aware of end dates for employees.
  - Please submit a departure notification for those who will not be renewing or leave 15 days before their intended end date.
Check-in and Orientation Process

- A scholar may enter 30 days prior and 30 days after their program start date
- Validation must occur with the Department Homeland Security System before the end of the 30 days. The following requirements must be completed before the OIS can validate the record:
  - Pre-Arrival Checklist
  - Virtual Orientation: Occurs only on Fridays at 10:30AM
- Validation of SEVIS record is important to both comply with regulations and to allow the J-1 Scholar to begin the process of applying for their SSN if a paid visitor.
- Once they arrive in the US the start date cannot be altered. A Late-Arrival request to amend their start date must occur before they are intending to arrive.
- Make sure to update and provide the employee a new employment letter with the new start date if entering a Late-Arrival request.
Health Insurance Requirements

• All J-1 Scholars/Interns are required to maintain health insurance for themselves and their dependents for the duration of their visit.

• J-1 minimums meeting the regulations can be found at the following:
  – Medical benefits of at least $100,000 per accident or illness;
  – Repatriation of remains in the amount of $25,000;
  – Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of $50,000; and
  – A deductible not to exceed $500 per accident or illness.

• J-1’s must submit proof of health insurance when:
  – Completing the Pre-Arrival and Orientation checklist
  – Requesting an extension
  – Renewal enrollment in UPMC plans are not updated with OIS. Manual submission of this update is necessary by the scholar.
Health Insurance Resources

We cannot recommend other plans or guarantee that they will be accepted by all local providers. The following companies offer insurance plans that minimally satisfy U.S Department of State requirements. Many of these companies target insurance services for international students, but also offer plans for J-1 exchange visitors:

- Betins International Health and Travel Insurance
- Compass Student Insurance
- Cultural Insurance Services international
- Insubuy
- International Student Protection
- ISO International Student Insurance
- Visit International Health Insurance

UPMC plans satisfying U.S. Department of State Requirements:

- UPMC Panther Gold
- Panther Advocate
English Proficiency Questions

• **What’s acceptable?**

  – **Native English Speaker**
    • If the J-1 exchange visitor is from a *country whose official language is English*.

  – **Recognized English Test** - Please [click here to view a comparison chart of different English Language Proficiency Test options](#)
    • TOEFL – 75 or above
    • IELTS – 5.5 or higher
    • Duolingo – 90 or above
    • English3 – 2.5 or above

  – **Signed Documentation from an Academic Institution or English Language School** - Acceptable documentation includes a transcript or diploma certifying completion of a degree at an institution where the sole language of instruction is English or official certification of completion of an English language program within the previous two years where proficiency attained is clearly indicated.

  – **English Language Interview** - If no other option is available to your scholar, there is the option to complete a PI-scholar interview. OIS will schedule and record the interview for compliance purposes. Please email ois@pitt.edu with the subject line "ELP INTERVIEW" for more information and to schedule. Please note: The supervisor/PI must be the interviewer.
Scholar Funding and Financial Evidence

- Exchange Visitor: $30,000
- Dependents: $5,664, per year, per dependent
- Original documents in English
- Documentation must be dated within the last six months.

Pitt & UPMC

- All DS-2019s are sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh
  - Offer letters must be on Pitt letterhead
  - Visitors must be sponsored for Pitt e-mail account
  - We strongly encourage that visitors are given a Pitt ID (access to facilities)
University Network ID, Email and Pitt ID

How it begins:

- Employee completes the E-Offer in Talent Center
- HR will enter the record into PittWorx's which will assign their Pitt account within 1-2 business days.
- The Record is confirmed in the system and HR will refer the employee to their Responsibility Center Account Administrator for more information on how to obtain their Pitt username and password

- **Paid** scholars and employees can receive a University ID. University ID will provide access to Port Authority buses and Pitt Shuttle bus for free.

- **Unpaid** visitors can only receive the temporary card. Visitors with a temp card will not have access to city buses. Recommend the Connect Card (www.connectcard.com) for using Port Authority.

- Reach out to Panther Central for more details at: Questions and Feedback | Panther Central | University of Pittsburgh
More J-1 fun...

J-2 Employment

- The J-2 is directly tied to the primary J1's program. Their EAD dates will run congruent to the J-1 program dates.
- The J-2 will need an updated J-1 DS-2019 to apply for an extension of the EAD.
  - If the J-1 works with a differing institution other than Pitt, the J-2 will need to work with that institution for the necessary documents to apply for an extension of the EAD card.

J-1 Student Interns

- Must be enrolled (and in good academic standing) at an post-secondary academic institution outside the US
- Internship at Pitt should be 32 hours per week
- Must complete the DS-7002 in addition to other J1 requirements
H-1B Visa Questions & Concerns
**H-1B Timeline**

- OIS processing time, 6 weeks (Consider it when choosing starting date)
- End date of the position = 3 years
- USCIS processing time, 6-8 months
  - Premium Processing, 15 calendar days (with additional fee of $2500). Necessary for change of status
- If employee is outside the US, an additional 2-4 weeks for visa stamping
Different types of H1B

- Change of Status (premium processing, end date in current status)
- Change of Employer ($500 fee is needed, but not premium, end date in current status)
- Extension (not need premium = 240 days grace period)
- Amendment (not need premium, receipt notice needed)  
  (Are the job duties significantly different?, are the minimum education and experience requirements significantly different?, does the pay increase more than 30%, does the pay decrease at all?, are they now working outside of the Pittsburgh Metro Statistical Area?, are they now supervising employees when they did not previously (or vice versa)?, are any special skills or travel required that weren’t required in the previous position?, is the employee moving from temporary to permanent staff/faculty or a tenured position?)
- Consular Processing (premium, dependents)
Why must the department pay this individual more?

- H-1Bs are subject to a **Prevailing Wage**. [www.flcdatacenter.com](http://www.flcdatacenter.com)
- The **prevailing wage** is a minimum salary requirement set by the Department of Labor for a specific position.
- It is based on:
  - Position description
  - Years of experience required for position
  - Degree level required of the position
Questions?