



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

University Center for International Studies
University of Pittsburgh

Guidelines Regarding the Use of Outside Immigration Attorneys

Overview

Only the Office of University Counsel (OUC) has the authority to approve the retention of outside legal counsel to represent the University of Pittsburgh and its schools, divisions, and departments.

For employment-based immigration filings in which the University of Pittsburgh is the petitioner or sponsor, the Office of International Services (OIS) has primary responsibility for preparation and submission, unless the hiring department receives authorization from OIS to use an outside immigration attorney. **Regardless of who prepares the petition, only the OIS director, associate director, or assistant director is authorized to sign immigration-related forms on behalf of the University.**

Departments must use one of the firms listed below, which have been vetted and approved by OUC to provide immigration services. Please note that when retaining the services of an attorney, the hiring unit and/or the foreign national employee is responsible for the payment of all associated legal fees and administrative costs. **In addition, current law requires that the employer pay any expense related to a permanent labor certification (PERM), including recruitment costs.** These costs may not be passed on to the employee. You are welcome to consult with OIS or the immigration attorney for additional information.

The purposes of these guidelines are:

1. To ensure top quality immigration-related legal services are provided to the University of Pittsburgh and foreign national beneficiaries;
2. To ensure consistency and accuracy in the representations made to federal agencies on behalf of the University;
3. To provide accountability at the highest institutional levels for petitions filed on behalf of the University of Pittsburgh;
4. To ensure compliance with the University's employment policies and practices, as well as any applicable laws; and
5. To provide a reliable means of maintaining accurate data on our foreign national employees and ensuring compliance with relevant immigration and labor regulations.

NOTE: Employees and/or their departments should not contact an outside immigration attorney directly until approval has been granted by OIS.

Scope of Work

The Office of International Services is responsible for processing the following types of employment-based immigration petitions, but may forward cases to outside counsel as needed and appropriate:

1. H-1B (Temporary Worker), O-1 (Aliens of Extraordinary Ability); TN; and E-3 petitions
2. First-preference employment-based permanent residency cases in the Outstanding Professors or Researchers (EB-1B) category;
3. Second-preference (Members of the Professions Holding Advanced Degrees (EB-2))
4. J-1 professors, research scholars, short-term scholars, specialists, and student interns, to include general advising regarding the Exchange Visitor Program;

Employment-based Immigration Petitions

The approved law firms identified below may be used for processing Permanent Labor Certification (PERM) cases and other employment-based immigration petitions, as well as any other specialized cases as deemed appropriate by OIS in consultation with OUC:

Alexander Castrodale
Dentons Cohen & Grigsby, PC
625 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
www.dentons.com
412-297-4712

Jim Alexander
Maggio Kattar Nahajzer + Alexander, PC
1800 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
www.maggio-kattar.com
202-483-0053

Rita Sostrin
Sostrin Immigration Lawyers, LLP
16030 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 300
Encino, CA 91436
sostrin.com
818-435-3500

Process for Using Approved Immigration Counsel

Upon determination that outside counsel will be used for any case, OIS will make initial contact with the appropriate firm. If necessary, an initiation call will be scheduled to discuss a general overview of the case, including processes and timelines. Initiation calls should include OIS, the international employee, the immediate supervisor, and the department administrator. After the case has been assigned, the department will communicate with the law firm directly, as needed.

When the case is ready for filing, the authorized signatory in OIS signs all appropriate paperwork. **NOTE: Only the OIS director, associate director, or assistant director is authorized to sign immigration-related forms, such as the ETA-9089, G-28, HHS 426, I-140, I-129, etc., on behalf of the University.**