

How LONG Does it Take to Process an H-1b Application?

[LONGER THAN YOU THINK!!!]

Departments and their international employees are often surprised to learn how much time is currently needed to process H-1B paperwork in Tennessee. Often they assume that the process can be completed quickly, based on past experience, on misleading information from websites or attorneys (who are trying to attract business), on the experience of friends in another part of the United States, or just on wishful thinking.

We provide the table below to give a general idea of how much time should be allowed to process an H-1B application in order for an employee to begin working, or to avoid losing work authorization. Please note that these time estimates are calculated from the day that all materials are received by the UT Center for International Education. Incomplete application packages will result in longer processing times. Inconsistent processing times in U.S. Government Agencies or unexpected problems arising during the process will also lengthen the time needed. For this reason, we always recommend that the host department begin the H-1B process **as soon as possible!**

If you have concerns about the time needed to process an application, please contact Wendy Syer in the UT Center for International Education, 865-974-3177.

IF EMPLOYEE IS	WITH STANDARD PROCESSING ALL* REQUIRED MATERIALS SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY CIE NO LATER THAN	WITH \$1000 PREMIUM PROCESSING FEE	COMMENTS
Outside the U.S.	9 months before the employee will begin work	4 months before the employee will begin work	Total time will depend on the time needed to obtain a visa at the U.S. Consulate. (Varies according to Consulate and country of employee's citizenship)
In the U.S. in a different immigration status (such as J-1 or F-1 with Practical Training)	8 months before the employee will begin work or before the current work permission ends	3 months before the employee will begin work or before the current work permission ends	If employee plans to travel outside the U.S. before getting final approval of the H-1 petition, more time may be needed. Contact CIE immediately to discuss.
In the U.S. in H-1B status and currently employed by another employer	3 months before the date employee will begin work at UT OR 2 months before leaving previous employment whichever is earlier	Not usually necessary or recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If employee plans to travel outside the U.S. before getting final approval of the H-1 petition, more time may be needed. Contact CIE immediately to discuss. • Employee must remain employed by other employer until paperwork is mailed to INS.
Already employed at UT in H-1B status	2 months before the end of the current H-1B approval or I-94	Not usually necessary or recommended	If employee plans to travel outside the U.S. before getting final approval of the H-1 petition, more time may be needed. Contact CIE immediately to discuss.

* The check for the application fee should be sent directly to CIE from the UT Treasurer's Office. Also, in some cases, if time is limited, the department can arrange with CIE to send some materials up to a week or two after the original package is mailed. This might include: copy of applicant's diploma, I-539 and check for dependents, and [in rare cases] copy of the applicant's current I-94.