

Employment of Foreign Nationals

Summary/Purpose: Employment at the University of Mississippi is subject to verification of an applicant's eligibility for employment as required by immigration laws.

1. Employment at the University of Mississippi is subject to verification of an applicant's eligibility for employment as required by immigration laws. Applicants for employment at the University of Mississippi may be asked whether they will be able to provide evidence of legal permission to work in the U.S.
2. Offers of employment will be contingent upon the ability to obtain appropriate work authorization in a timely manner.
3. All non-U.S. citizens are required to submit a copy of their permanent resident approval, immigrant visa or evidence of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service or Exchange Visitor Program authorization to work.
4. The University of Mississippi has a J-1 Exchange Visitor Program which is used to facilitate cultural exchange. J-1 status is a temporary visa category and holders of this status should have no intent to immigrate to the U.S. The use of the J-1 program is limited to non-tenure track appointments. The maximum length of employment for J-1 holders varies based upon the J-1 category used. The Office of International Programs works with the hiring unit to determine the appropriate category. Extensions beyond the initial authorization period are sometimes possible but will require timely completion of the OIP extension request.
5. Employees holding F-1 status may be encouraged to apply for F-1 practical training benefits for initial work authorization. Standard Optional Practical Training allows for 12 months of employment during which time, the hiring unit may choose to sponsor the employee for a visa status such as H-1b. The University of Mississippi is an e-verify employer so those whose OPT was based on an eligible STEM field may apply for an additional 17 month STEM OPT extension.
6. New employees or those who may be employed beyond the period of practical training may request sponsorship for an H visa. Applications for H visas will be prepared by the Office of International Programs and signed by the Director of Human Resources. The application process should be initiated by the employee's department five (5) to six (6) months prior to the expiration of practical training or the intended start date of employment. H-1 status may be granted for a three-year period and renewed for an additional three years. Departments are required to pay the filing fee.
7. Employees hired for tenure-track positions may request that the University apply on their behalf for U.S. permanent resident status. In special cases, the University may consider sponsoring non-tenure positions for permanent resident status. The request of employees to be sponsored by the University of Mississippi will be presented to the Personnel Committee for recommendation and to the Chancellor for approval. Applications for labor certification and immigrant status may only be prepared by university designated outside counsel.

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8. Employees holding TN status who wish to extend their status without leaving the country, should go to the Office of International Programs three (3) months before the TN expiration date.
9. HR continues to verify employment eligibility in the same manner as mandated by the federal government since November 1986 as outlined above. In addition, effective July 1, 2008, the University participates in the federal E-Verify program administered by the Department of Homeland Security. The University uses the E-verify program to confirm work eligibility status for all new employees. Participation in this program is mandatory per SB 2988, also known as the “Mississippi Employment Protection Act” (MEPA).