

May 2, 2018

To: Departmental Business Officers and Academic Personnel Analysts
(via SBADM-L)

From: Cindy Doherty, Director, Academic Personnel

Re: Non-Citizen Postdoctoral Scholar appointments

As you are aware, the visa processing time for non-US citizens has increased dramatically. This issue has become particularly problematic for Postdoctoral Scholar appointments. J-1 visa applications require that the individual has an employment offer*. Postdoctoral Scholar (Postdoc) appointments require that the PhD has been awarded. The problem occurs when a department wishes to offer a non-US citizen a Postdoc appointment that begins soon after the PhD has been awarded. In such cases the campus has historically required evidence that the PhD was near completion (i.e. thesis has been successfully defended, PhD has not yet been conferred). The appointment letter would be issued contingent on the awarding of the degree.

In order to mitigate the longer processing time for visas, Academic Personnel will modify the appointment process to allow appointment letters to be issued further in advance of the PhD actually being conferred. The Postdoc Appointment Form has been modified to include a statement by the PI or sponsoring faculty member in the case that the PhD is not yet awarded, but expected prior to the proposed start date. The statement reads: "I verify that [candidate name] is a PhD candidate in good standing and is expected to have the PhD conferred by [date] by [institution name]. I understand that appointment as a Postdoctoral Scholar is not possible until the PhD has been conferred". In such cases the appointment letter will be issued indicating that appointment is contingent upon both eligibility to work in the US and conferral of the PhD.

Departments will be responsible for providing proof of the PhD at the time of appointment.

In addition, Academic Personnel will work with the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) to streamline the appointment date/visa date process so that start dates do not need to be modified multiple times. It will be understood that the start date indicated in the appointment letter can be adjusted if the visa process is delayed as long as the total period of employment remains at one year or longer.

Questions may be directed to Billy Ko at billy.ko@ucsb.edu or x4441.

*It is possible an individual may be asked for proof of Ph.D. at the time of their visa interview at the UC Consulate based on the fact that their employment, specifically as Postdoctoral Scholar, is for the basis of employment.

Additional Note: H-1, TN, and E3 visas require that the individual have the PhD in hand. There is no action the campus can take to mitigate the timeframe for these visa types.

Cindy Doherty
Director
UCSB Academic Personnel
(805) 893-8332
Cindy.Doherty@ucsb.edu