

## Potential Delays in Visa Issuance and at Ports of Entry

There are a number of factors that may contribute to delays in having a visa issued to study or work in the United States, regardless of whether you are applying for first or subsequent visa in any visa classification. This has a result of heightened security measures instituted since September 11, 2001.

Security checks and the requirement to have an appointment for an interview are the primary causes for delays. The Department of State's (DOS) web information on non-immigrant visas is a good source of current information:

- [Visa Information for Temporary Visitors](#) provides general information for temporary visitors to the U.S., including students.
- [Visa Wait Times](#) provides approximate wait times for visa appointments and visa processing at each U.S. consulate. Note that appointments for "F" students and "J" Exchange Visitors have priority over other classifications.
- [United States Embassies and Consulates Worldwide](#) provide information on procedures, fees, and online application forms.

### **Visa Interview Requirement:**

All nonimmigrants require a visa appointment. Note that appointments for "F" students and "J" Exchange Visitors have priority over other classifications.

### **Technology Alert List and Sensitive Areas of Study**

Students, faculty and researchers who are considered to be studying, researching or teaching "sensitive areas" as determined by the U.S. government may also be required to undergo security clearances before a visa can be issued. There is a document called the "Technology Alert List" that visa officers consult for this purpose. There are 15 broad subject areas on the Technology Alert List, with detailed specializations within each area. China, India, Israel, Pakistan and Russia have received special mention by the U.S. State Department because these countries are considered to possess nuclear capability that is of concern to U.S. national security. However, even if you are not a citizen of one of the countries listed above, your field of study (especially if it is in the sciences, technology or engineering) might require your visa application to undergo a security clearance REGARDLESS of the country you are from. Such clearances can add weeks to the amount of time needed for visa approval.

In addition to completion of this form, the DOS continues to require a further security check for men from countries with large Muslim populations.

### **Name Check by DOS and DHS**

The "name check lookup" is conducted by the State Department at the time of visa application and by the Department of Homeland Security at the port of entry—irrespective of whether the visitor holds a valid visa. This name check has recently resulted in unexpected and severe problems for non-immigrants—some arising from previous overstay(s), others from discovery of a record of illegal activity in the United States, and others because of mistaken name matches with listings in the database.