

Visa costs are defined and described as allowable in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR §200.463(d) as:

Short-term, travel visa costs (as opposed to longer-term, immigration visas) are generally allowable expenses that may be proposed as a direct cost. Since short-term visas are issued for a specific period and purpose, they can be clearly identified as directly connected to work performed on a Federal award.

Visa costs discussed in this policy are specifically associated with research-related visas. See International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) for additional information on visas.

A. Federal Awards

Under the guidelines imposed by the Uniform Guidance, visa costs may be considered allowable direct charges under certain circumstances, and Principal Investigators (PIs) need to demonstrate that such costs fit the criteria provided in the Uniform Guidance. Visa costs are allowable, provided that they meet all four of the following conditions:

- Be critical and necessary for the conduct of the project, and
- Be allowable under the applicable cost principles, and
- Be consistent with the university's [cost accounting policies and procedures statement](#), and
- Meet the definition of "direct cost" as described in the applicable cost principles ([2 CFR 200.413\(a\) and \(b\)](#)).

The Uniform Guidance categorizes visa costs as a recruitment cost (2 CFR 200.463). Therefore, in like circumstances, visa costs are limited to initial costs only.

The following visa types may be allowable as a direct charge:

- **H-1B petition expenses.** An H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise in specialized areas. If the individual is being recruited to work on the sponsored project, H-1B visa fees are chargeable to that sponsored project because that project will receive a direct benefit from the university's appointment.
- **O-1 Visas.** An O-1 visa is a non-immigrant visa for an individual who possesses extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, and education. O-1 Visas may be charged to sponsored projects if there is a clear and direct benefit derived by the sponsored project to justify charging the expenses.
- **J-1 Visas.** A J-1 visa is a non-immigrant visa issued to research scholars, professors, and exchange visitors participating in programs that promote cultural exchange. J-1 Visas are allowable when the purpose of the visiting scholar or faculty exchange is to work on one or more sponsored projects.

The following costs related to visas are unallowable:

- **All student (F-1) visas.** The primary purpose of an F-1 visa holder is to join the university community as a student, and participation on sponsored projects is incidental to their roles as students.

- **J-1 visas.** The policy generally excludes exchange visas for visiting scholars or professors to come to the US to participate in teaching, scholarship, or research, unless the purpose is specifically to participate in a sponsored project. (See J-1 Visas above)
- **All Permanent Residency requests.** The primary beneficiary for a Permanent Residency request is the individual, and direct benefits to individual research projects cannot readily be shown.
- If the newly hired employee resigns within 12 months after hire for reasons within his or her control, all associated relocation costs, including any visa costs, must be removed from the Federal award and charged to a departmental account. If the unit terminates the employee, the costs are still allowable.
- Internal UAH processing fees, and fees for expedited processing, cannot be direct charged to a sponsored project.
- Renewal fees for visas cannot be direct charged to a sponsored project as they are not part of the initial recruitment cost.

B. Non-Federal Awards

Section [2 CFR 200.403\(c\)](#) of the Uniform Guidance requires that we apply our policies and procedures uniformly to both federally-financed and other activities of the university. Therefore, [UAH's Cost Policy](#) and related procedural statements are also applicable to non-Federal awards. The basic criteria for including visa costs are similar for non-Federal sponsored projects, but it is important to be familiar with the particular requirements or restrictions of each non-Federal sponsor. When allowed by the sponsor, a justification for the inclusion of visa costs should be provided in order to explain why they are necessary to fulfill the research objective of the project, and to ensure that the cost directly benefits the project.