

GENERAL
INFORMATION

Case Preparation Tips for NIH Administrative Staff

Introduction: With so many possible scenarios, it is easy to miss important steps when you are preparing to send a case to DIS. Since we cannot begin processing a case until we have all the necessary items, here are a few tips to help you send complete cases every time and avoid delays.

GENERAL CASE PROCESSING

- **Checklists** – To avoid missing documents, bookmark the [DIS Checklists](#) page to have the most up-to-date checklist for each case you process
- **Completion** – Make sure each form is filled out completely
- **Signatures** – Confirm that all forms are signed and that all signers have the correct signature authority for the case type
- **Eligibility** – Evaluate a foreign national’s eligibility for a certain designation before you begin assembling a case, consult the [NIH Sourcebook and Manual Chapters](#) as needed
- **No Extras** – Do not submit extra documents beyond what is included on the checklist unless they provide essential case information
- **Pre-case Discussions** – Include any pre-case email correspondence with DIS regarding the case, DIS does not have a way to retain and reference pre-case discussions
- **Helpful Information** – Note helpful details that may not be included in the forms or supporting documents (ex: dependents joining later, family expecting a baby, etc.)
- **Area of Study & Proposed Duties** – Always complete both the general area of study and the description of proposed duties sections on the Form 829-1 and Form 590
- **Processing Times** – Reference the [DIS Processing Times Chart](#) when establishing start dates and planning case submission timelines
- **Travel Notification** – Let DIS know of any international travel plans for an individual whose case is being processed
- **English Proficiency** – After confirming the foreign national’s English proficiency, check the appropriate box in Section K of the Form 829-1 or the Form 590 English Proficiency Supplement
- **Worksites** – All worksites (rotations, telework, etc.) must be included. If additional worksites are anticipated but unconfirmed, provide an explanation with the case

RENEWAL CASES

- **End Dates** – Use the [DIS Case Status and Reports System](#) to confirm end dates
- **Plan Ahead** – DIS can process cases up to six months before a foreign national’s end date
- **Travel Plans and Visas** – Consider the foreign national’s travel and visa renewal plans. Send the case to DIS with plenty of time to process the case before travel

FTE CASES

- **FTE Supplement (Page 4 of 829-1)**– Must reflect the minimum requirements for the position, *not* the specific qualifications of the foreign national
- **Checks** – Do not include checks with the case. The Immigration Specialist processing the case will request the checks when needed
- **Credential Evaluation** – For all new and extension FTE cases, a [credential evaluation](#) for foreign doctoral degrees is required

NON-FTE CASES

- **Minimum Funding** – Make sure foreign nationals in unpaid designations have funding that at least meets the minimum stipend levels for NIH pre-doctoral fellowship positions, see Appendix 2 of the [IRTA Program Automated Fellowship Payment System Manual Chapter](#)
- **Degree Evidence** – For Fellows, provide degree evidence that meets DIS standards. Refer to [DIS Acceptable Evidence of Doctoral Degree](#)
- **Dependents** – When planning J-1 or J-2 renewal case submissions, keep in mind that J-2 dependents need at least 120 days lead time to renew their J-2 work authorization
- **Leave of Absence or Sabbatical** – Special Volunteers with an outside employer must be on formal Leave of Absence or Sabbatical during their time at NIH
- **Two Year Renewals** – If Institute/Center policy allows, DIS can process renewals for durations of up to two years

Contact [DIS](#) at (301) 496-6166 or DIS@mail.nih.gov if you have questions