

Work Permit Visas

A **visa** is an official stamp in your passport authorizing you to travel, work, or study in that country for a specified length of time. All countries, including the US, require a **work permit visa** for foreign workers; employers will not hire you without one.

For select countries, short-term work permit visas are available by application. In other cases, such as for long-term employment, foreign employers will need to apply for the visa on your behalf. Student work exchange programs can legally assist students in obtaining a short-term work permit visa. Unpaid internships and volunteer positions may or may not require a work permit, depending on the host country's regulations.

It's always safe to assume that you'll need a visa, especially if you'll be traveling for a purpose other than tourism. Check out the visa requirements for specific countries by checking with the embassy or consulate of the country you will be visiting. Embassy and consulate contact information can be found on US Department of State's page that lists [websites of foreign embassies](#) [1] or the [US Department of State's Country Specific Information](#) [2]. [Perry International's Visa Requirement database](#) [3] can be useful in determining what type of visa, if any, is required based on the reason for travel and the traveler's country of citizenship.

For a list of organizations that can help with student work permit visas see [Work Permit Programs](#) [4].

What Else Should I Know?

- A passport is needed to obtain a visa.
- Even if you'll have an unpaid internship or volunteer position, you may still need a work visa.
- Other types of visas exist including: student visas, volunteer visas, intern visas, and research visas.
- Some countries have specific visas for the category of work; check to make sure you apply for the correct one.
- Special permission may be needed for a specific visa.
- It usually takes longer to get a work visa and requires more documentation than for other types of visas.
- If you do not have the proper visa, you could be deported at the border.
- You will nearly always need to provide a letter from your program, your employer or host organization to obtain a special purpose visa.
- Ask the program (if applicable) for advice on obtaining a visa.

Source URL: <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/abroad/swt/work/work-permit-visas>

Links

[1] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/consularnotification/ConsularNotificationandAccess.html>

[2] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html>

[3] <http://www.perryvisa.com/webPages/visa.php>

[4] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/abroad/swt/work/work-permit-programs>