STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

What is the H-1B Visa? All about it

International Relations

25 Dec 2025

What is the H-1B Visa? All about it

1. H-1B is a U.S. work visa for foreign professionals
2. Allows U.S. companies to hire skilled workers from abroad
3. Mainly used in IT, engineering, data science, finance, healthcare, research

Who Issues the H-1B Visa?

Issued and regulated by USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services)

BECOME IAS

Eligibility Criteria

- Job must be a specialty occupation
- Candidate must have: Bachelor’s degree or higher (or equivalent experience)
- Employer must sponsor the visa
- Job must match the applicant’s education

Annual Cap (Quota)

- 65,000 visas under regular cap
- 20,000 extra visas for candidates with U.S. Master’s degree
- Total annual limit: 85,000
- Demand usually far exceeds supply

Selection Process

- Earlier: Random lottery system
- Now moving toward wage-based selection
- Higher salary = higher priority
- Entry-level jobs face tougher competition

Application Timeline

- Employer registers candidate (March)
- Selection announcement
- Full petition filing
- USCIS review & approval
- Visa stamping & travel

Validity & Extension

- Initially valid for 3 years
- Can be extended up to 6 years
- Further extensions possible with Green Card process

BECOME IAS
AI Powered UPSC Preparation by ZINKPOT

Benefits of H-1B Visa

- Legal work authorization in the U.S.
- Pathway to Green Card
- Dependents (H-4) allowed
- Some H-4 spouses can work

Limitations & Challenges

- Very high competition
- Job-loss risk (limited time to find new sponsor)
- Entry-level & fresh graduates affected most
- Long Green Card wait for Indians