

Global Immigration alert

December 2025

United States

Changes to H-1B and H-4 visa vetting processes lead to appointment cancellations

Executive summary

Following the Department of State's (DOS) 3 December 2025 announcement that it will expand the requirement for conducting online presence reviews to H-1B and H-4 visa applicants, some foreign nationals with visa appointments scheduled in December began receiving cancellation and reschedule notices. Specifically, Mission India posts are advising that the number of visa applications processed each day must be reduced in order to properly comply with this new requirement, and H-1B and H-4 visa applicants can consequently no longer be interviewed on their original appointment dates.

Background and analysis

On 18 June 2025, DOS announced that it would require all F, J, and M nonimmigrant visa applicants to adjust the privacy settings on all of their social media profiles to "public" in order to facilitate comprehensive and thorough vetting of online presence. On 3 December, DOS announced that this requirement would be expanded to all H-1B visa applicants and their dependents, effective 15 December 2025.

Within a few days of this announcement, Mission India began notifying H-1B and H-4 applicants with appointments scheduled 15 December and later that those appointments would be cancelled due to "operational constraints." Thus far visa interviews are being rescheduled for March, April, and May. Additionally, although the policy is not supposed to take effect until 15 December per the DOS announcement, visa refusals are already being issued and applicants advised that processing of their applications will be paused until they set all social media account privacy settings to "public."

What this means

Although reports indicate that visa appointment interview cancellations and rescheduling appear to be concentrated in Mission India, the issue could spread to posts in other countries. Foreign nationals already present in the United States in H-1B and H-4 status with scheduled visa appointments should verify that those appointments have not been cancelled before departing the country.

If it is necessary for post to reschedule an interview, the applicant should be notified at the email address listed on their Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application (Form DS-160) associated with the visa appointment. Applicants should frequently check the listed email address, including the spam/junk folder for potential updates.

While DOS has only formally announced the online presence review requirement for the F, J, M, H-1B, and H-4 visa categories to date, anecdotal reports from visa applicants indicate that consular officers are advising that the "public" setting is necessary when adjudicating applications for other visa categories as well. Any nonimmigrant visa applicants (beyond those listed above) who have an online social media presence with a "private" setting may therefore experience delays or refusals in the application process.

We will continue to monitor and share future developments. For additional information, or if you wish to discuss this further, please contact your EY Law LLP professional or Mehlman Jacobs LLP professional.

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