

Information for J-1 Students Seeking Academic Training

Academic Training is defined as work, training, or experience related to a student's full course of study. This training must be directly related to the major field of study. A specific description of the training is required in order to authorize the training on the DS-2019 and the ARO/RO must provide written authorization of this approval.

Students in Degree Programs

Students in degree programs are permitted an initial total limit of 18 months of academic training (full- or part-time, paid or unpaid), whether before or after completion of studies. However, the total time spent in academic training must be equal to or less than the total time spent in the degree program. Earning more than one degree does not grant you additional time.

Examples:

- A student has been studying in his degree program for 18 months. He is eligible for up to 18 months of academic training.
- A student has been studying in her degree program for 24 months. She is eligible for up to 18 months of academic training.

An exception to this time limit can be made for up to an additional 18 months, only if it is to "satisfy the **mandatory requirements** of his or her degree program in the United States." The operative phrase here is *mandatory requirements* meaning that the extension cannot be granted without the training being a specific degree requirement. For example, if a masters in social work requires 24 months of supervised training, then the time limit can be extended to cover this requirement.

Postdoctoral Training

After completion of a US degree, the overall limit is 36 months, to be issued for 18 months at a time. *This overall limit includes time used for academic training while studying in the degree program*, regardless of if this training is full-time or part-time. All post-doctoral training must commence within 30 days after the last day of courses. Training approved **after** completion of your program must be reduced by any **prior** periods of academic training and must be **paid**, unless specifically waived by the ARO/RO.

Examples:

- A student completed 12 months of academic training *during* his studies. After completing his Ph.D., he is entitled to an extra 6 months of academic training to complete his first 18 months. He may then be authorized for an additional 18 months of academic training, pending approval of his department and ARO/RO.
- A student who has already done graduate work outside the US has been admitted with advance status and is able to complete her program in 2 years. She is not eligible for the 36-month time limit as the maximum time she spent in her program was 24 months. She is eligible for up to 24 months of post-doctoral training (18 months, with a possible extension of 6 months).

Student in Non-Degree Programs

For students in a course of study in a non-degree program, the total stay may not exceed 24 months. This 24 months includes study time and any academic training.

Unused Time

Unused time is not replaceable. This means that you have up to 18 months after your program to complete academic training (if authorized, with a possible extension of 18 months). Any time not used (for example, a 1-month break between employment) can not be "returned" to you; you will lose out on this training time.

How to Obtain Authorization for Academic Training

The Application

1. Obtain a letter of offer from your prospective employer that includes your job title, a brief description of the "goals and objectives" of your "Training program" (your employment), the dates and location of the employment, the number of hours per week, and the name and address of your "training supervisor". Make sure that your employer's letter includes all of these details

2. Give a copy of your employer's letter to your academic adviser or dean for use in completing the Recommendation for Academic Training form, available from the International Student Coordinator.
3. When your academic adviser's recommendation is ready, you should deliver or send it to your J-1 Responsible Officer, with a copy of the employer's letter attached. NOTE: Your J-1 ARO/RO may not be CGU; check your DS-2019 to be sure.
4. Your J-1 Responsible Officer must evaluate the "Academic Training" program and decide whether it is warranted and appropriate. If so, he or she will write you a letter of approval. To authorize "post-doctoral training" your J-1 Responsible Officer must also issue you a new Form DS-2019, for no more than 18 months at a time.

Authorization to Work

Social Security Number. To put you on the payroll, your employer will need your Social Security *number*, which you can obtain by applying for a Social Security *card*. Take your passport (if you are Canadian you may use another form of photo-bearing identification), I-94 card, Form DS-2019, and your J-1 Responsible Officer's written work authorization to an office of the Social Security Administration. Your Social Security card may be stamped "Not Valid for Employment." That stamp will still allow you to work; it means only that no funds will ever go into the Social Security account represented by that number.

Form I-9, "Employment Eligibility Verification." When you begin work, you and your employer must complete Form I-9, which requires you to document your identity and work authorization according to directions on the back of the Form. Of the various items acceptable as documentation, you may find that the most convenient combination is your passport (or other photo-bearing identification if you are Canadian), I-94 card, Form DS-2019, and your J-1 Responsible Officer's written work authorization. Your employer, who keeps Form I-9, will make copies of the documents you submit, and return the originals to you. Form I-9 must be updated any time that you receive a renewal of your permission for academic training.

Social Security and Other Taxes

Social Security taxes. In general, as a J-1 student you will be exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes for your first five years in the United States, as long as you continue to declare non-resident status for tax purposes (see Internal Revenue Service Publication 519, "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens"). International Place can answer any tax questions you may have, and they can assist you with filling out your tax forms.

Federal, state and local taxes. Unless you qualify under a tax treaty between the United States and your home government, your earnings as a J-1 student will be subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes, and employers are required by law to withhold those taxes from your paychecks. By April 15 of each year, you must file a federal income tax return and a "Required Statement" covering the prior calendar year to determine whether you owe more taxes or have a refund coming. International Place can answer any tax questions you may have, and they can assist you with filling out your tax forms.

A Note of Caution

As a J-1 student you are eligible for a variety of work opportunities in the United States, but employment without proper authorization is a serious violation of your status. Remember that before you start any kind of employment, you must first consult your J-1 Responsible Officer, whose written approval is necessary *in advance*.