This handout is for J-1 students. It describes "Academic Training," the term used by the United States Department of State for certain types of study-related employment. It provides background information on eligibility and limitations. For directions on how to apply, see the handout entitled "Academic Training for J-1 Students: Application Procedure."

"Academic Training" is flexible in its format. It is available before completion of your program of study as well as afterwards. If you stay within the specified time limits, you may work either part-time or full-time while classes are in session as well as during the vacation periods. Under certain circumstances, you may interrupt study to work full-time, for example while you are writing a thesis. J-1 students in non-degree programs are eligible for "Academic Training."

For more information, please make an appointment with an advisor in the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS).

Your J-1 Responsible Officer / Alternate Responsible Officer

To qualify for "Academic Training", you must first obtain written approval from your J-1 Responsible Officer (R.O.), or Alternate Responsible Officer (A.R.O.), who represents your J-1 sponsor and issues your Form DS-2019. S/he must evaluate the proposed employment in terms of your program of study and your individual circumstances, and then decide whether it would be appropriate. If DePaul University is your sponsor, then your Alternate R.O. is Ewa Pawlak. If your J-1 sponsor is an agency (such as USAID, AMIDEAST, or LASPAU), and if you are uncertain how to reach your J-1 R.O., the staff in OISS will help you find out. However, the R.O. / A.R.O. for DePaul cannot grant employment permission for exchange students sponsored by outside agencies.

Eligibility

1. Your primary purpose in the U.S. must be study rather than "Academic Training."
2. You must be in good academic standing at the school named on your Form DS-2019.
3. The proposed employment must be directly related to your major field of study.
4. Throughout your "Academic Training" you must maintain permission to stay in the United States, in J-1 student status, and apply for extensions as necessary.
5. You must maintain health insurance coverage for yourself and any J-2 dependents throughout your "Academic Training."

Limitations – General

1. Your employment may be authorized for "the length of time necessary to complete the goals and objectives of the training, provided that the amount of time ... is approved by [both] the academic dean or advisor and... the responsible officer," (quotes are taken directly from the federal regulations). It may not exceed "the period of full course of study" or 18 months, whichever is shorter. If you receive a Ph.D., however, your "post-doctoral training" may last as long as 36 months. To authorize "post-doctoral training" your J-1 Alternate R.O. must also issue you a new Form DS-2019, for no more than 18 months at a time. Additional "Academic Training," beyond the 18 or 36-month limit, is allowed only if it is required for the degree.
2. Part-time employment for "Academic Training" counts against the 18 or 36-month limit the same as full-time employment.
3. Earning more than one degree does not increase your eligibility for "Academic Training."
After Completion of Your Program of Study

1. "Academic Training" approved after completion of your program must be reduced by any prior periods of "Academic Training."
2. Unpaid post-completion "Academic Training" is permitted provided the student has adequate finances to cover any expenses related to his/her prolonged stay in the United States.
3. You must submit your application to your J-1 R.O. / A.R.O., including a written offer of appropriate employment, before your program end-date as noted on your DS-2019 form.
4. If you plan to leave the United States after you complete your program of study and reenter the country for J-1 "Academic Training," you must obtain employment authorization before you leave. Otherwise you will have trouble reentering. Consult your J-1 R.O. / A.R.O. for advice before your departure.

Social Security Number

Your employer will need your Social Security Number to pay you. To apply for a Social Security card, take your passport, I-94 card, Form DS-2019, and your J-1 R.O.'s written work authorization to a Social Security office. Your card may be stamped "Not Valid for Employment." However, you are still eligible to work; it simply means that social security taxes will not be deducted from your paycheck.

Form 1-9, "Employment Eligibility Verification"

When you begin to work, you and your employer must complete For I-9, to document your identity and work authorization; the back of the form has instructions.

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").

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; employers are required by law to withhold those taxes from your paychecks. By April 15 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.

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 (both on-campus and off-campus), you must first consult your J-1 Responsible Officer, whose written approval is necessary in advance.

For further information, call OISS at 312-362-8376 to make an appointment with an advisor.