



This handout is for **J-1 students**. It describes "Academic Training," the term used by the U.S. 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."

The purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program is to promote mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange. And the purpose of "Academic Training" is to provide the student with training related to their field of study showing on the DS-2019 form as well as to provide cultural exchange.

"Academic Training" program should consist of bona fide training activities that are connected to a substantial academic framework. It should be designed to expose participants to the operations of their field. It should prioritize academic objectives and not be driven by the labor needs of a host organization. It should consist of primarily substantive roles (e.g., shadowing managers, participating in project design, management, or event planning) that involve no more than infrequent non-substantive tasks. "Academic Training" needs to be work-based learning and not ordinary employment or unskilled labor.

"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/dissertation.

"Academic Training" may involve sequential or simultaneous activities, either paid or unpaid, with several employers, provided the application and approval procedures are followed for each employer and activity, and the time limits are not exceeded.

### Your J-1 Alternate / Responsible Officer

To qualify for "Academic Training", you must first obtain written approval from your J-1 Alternate/Responsible Officer (A/RO), 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 will be appropriate. If DePaul University is your sponsor, then your A/RO is your ISS advisor: <http://offices.depaul.edu/global-engagement/student-resources/student-services/Pages/contact-iss.aspx>. If your J-1 sponsor is an agency such as IIE, AMIDEAST, USAID, or LASPAU, and if you are uncertain how to reach your A/RO, your ISS advisor will help you. However, the A/RO for DePaul University cannot grant employment permission for exchange students sponsored by outside agencies.

### Eligibility

- Your primary purpose in the U.S. must be to study rather than engage in "Academic Training."
- Your "Academic Training" must be **directly related to your field of study showing on your DS-2019 form**.
- You must be in good academic standing at the school named on your DS-2019 form.
- You must receive written approval **in advance** from the A/RO for the duration and type of academic training.

### Limitations – General

- 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 18 months, inclusive of any prior Academic Training in the U.S., or the period of full course of study in the U.S., whichever is

less. For example, if you studied at DePaul University in J-1 status for 2.5 months, then you will only be eligible for 2.5 months of "Academic Training" authorization.

- Non-degree students are eligible to participate in academic training, but are also subject to the requirement that time in academic training not exceed the time spent in the program of study, and that the student be primarily in the U.S. to study rather than engage in academic training. Non-degree programs are limited to a total stay of 24 months, inclusive of all study time and any authorized Academic Training.
- Previously approved part-time "Academic Training" employment counts against the total limit the same as full-time "Academic Training" employment.

### **After Completion of Your Program of Study**

- Your "Academic Training" must start no later than 30 days after completion of your studies, and you must submit a complete "Academic Training" application to your A/RO **at least two weeks before** your DS-2019 program end-date (or your last day of classes). Note, without the job offer, there is no basis on which to extend the DS-2019 for academic training, and your J-1 SEVIS record will deactivate once your DS-2019 program expires.
- Please remember to include DS-2019 program extension paperwork with your post-completion "Academic Training" application, since your A/RO will need to process an extension of stay before authorizing the "Academic Training." Please see "Academic Training" application for details.
- "Academic Training" approved after completion of your program must be reduced by any previously approved periods of "Academic Training." Previously approved part-time "Academic Training" counts against the total available limit the same as full-time "Academic Training."
- Unpaid post-completion "Academic Training" is allowed provided the student has adequate finances to cover any expenses related to his/her prolonged stay in the U.S.
- If you plan to leave the U.S. after you complete your program of study and want to re-enter the country for J-1 "Academic Training," you must obtain employment authorization **before you leave** the country. Consult your A/RO 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: <https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>, take your passport, I-94 card, Form DS-2019, and your A/RO written work authorization to a Social Security Administration 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 I-9, "Employment Eligibility Verification"**

When you begin to work, you and your employer must complete Form I-9 to document your identity and work authorization. Please review Form I-9 for detailed 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 U.S., 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 U.S. 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.

**NOTE OF CAUTION:** As a J-1 student you are eligible for a variety of work opportunities in the U.S., 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 A/RO, whose written approval is necessary in advance. For further information, call ISS at 312-362-8376 to make an appointment with your ISS advisor.