INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES • UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI AT MĀNOA
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ACADEMIC TRAINING FOR STUDENT IN J-1 STATUS

Academic Training (AT) is a type of J-1 student work authorization in which the student performs work that is integral to his/her major or curriculum. AT may be authorized before or after completion of the program of study. AT may be authorized part-time (up to 20 hours per week while classes are in session) full-time (more than 20 hours per week) during university vacation periods, while writing a thesis or dissertation, or during a specified post-completion period. AT may involve unpaid work in some cases. Whether paid or unpaid, written authorization from the J-1 sponsor is required prior to starting employment. All authorizations are specific as to employer, location, and dates. Employment without proper authorization is a serious violation of J-1 status.

CONDITIONS FOR J-1 ACADEMIC TRAINING

1. AT is incidental to J-1 student status. The primary purpose for a student's stay in the US is to study and therefore AT employment should not slow progress toward the degree. For pre-completion Academic Training, a student must be in good academic standing.
2. If the AT will begin post-completion, the student must commence training no later than 30 days after completion but must receive written approval in advance of completion of study or the end date on the DS 2019 form, whichever is earlier.
3. Students must document how the AT is directly related to the major field of study and what goals and objectives will be fulfilled in the period of AT.
4. Throughout the period of AT, a student is subject to J-1 student regulations, including maintaining health insurance coverage for himself and any J-2 dependents.
5. Academic training may involve sequential or simultaneous activities with several employers, either paid or unpaid, provided the application and approval procedures are followed for each employer, and that overall time limits are not exceeded.

Time Limits: General

1. Academic Training 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 (ARO). It may not exceed the period of full course of study or 18 months, whichever is shorter. (Exception: doctoral students are eligible for a total of 36 months of AT with at least 18 months of that training occurring after completion of study.)
2. Part-time AT counts against the 18 or 36-month limit the same as full-time employment.
3. Earning more than one degree does not increase the maximum length of time allowed for AT.

Time Limits: After Completion of Study

1. Months of AT available **after** completion of study is dependent on total months available under J-1 regulations. Example: A master's level student who is eligible for a total of 18 months of Academic Training, and who completed 6 months of Academic Training during study, is eligible for 12 months of Academic Training after completion of study.
2. AT following completion of a program of study should involve **paid** employment.
3. Since all extensions of a DS 2019 must be processed in SEVIS prior to the expiration of a DS 2019 form, students must obtain a written offer of appropriate employment and apply for Academic Training prior to program end date. Employment should begin within 30 days of study completion.
4. A student may leave the United States after completion of study and reenter the US for J-1 "Academic Training," if s/he obtains written employment authorization from the sponsor before departing the US. Please also consult a J-1 student adviser in the ISS for travel advice.

Application

1. Obtain a letter of offer from the prospective employer that includes: job title, a brief description of the goals and objectives of the period of employment (i.e., training program), the dates and location of the employment, the number of hours per week, and the name, address, phone number and email address of your training supervisor.
2. Give a copy of the employer's letter to your academic adviser or department chair for use in completing your application for Academic Training. Your form details:
    A. The goals and objectives of the specific training program;

B. A description of the training employment, including its location, the name and address of the training supervisor, number of hours per week, and dates of training;
C. How the training relates to the applicant's major field of study; and
D. Explanation as to how the training is an integral part of the academic program of the student. The academic adviser, by signing the form, recommends the Academic Training.

3. Deliver the application form and employer's offer letter to the ISS for processing by your J-1 adviser.
4. The J-1 ARO evaluates the AT application and decide whether it is warranted and appropriate, and considers the duration and time limitations applicable. The J-1 Responsible Officer issues a letter of authorization and reports the employment in SEVIS. No single authorization can exceed 18 months. Doctoral students may receive extensions (new application and authorization is required) up to a total of 36 months.

AUTHORIZATION TO WORK, SOCIAL SECURITY AND TAXES

Social Security Number

The employer will need your Social Security Number (SSN) to put you on payroll. If you don't already have the SSN, see your J-1 adviser for assistance.

Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification

The I-9 form documents an employee's identity and authorization to work in the US. J-1 students would typically present his/her unexpired passport, I-94 card, unexpired Form DS 2019, and written authorization letter. Form I-9 must be updated any time there is a change of employers or renewal of an authorization for AT.

Social Security Taxes

In general, J-1 students are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes for the first five years in the United States as long as the student declares non-resident status for tax purposes (see Internal Revenue Service Publication 519, "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens").

Federal, State and Local Taxes

Many countries have negotiated a tax treaty with the United States that may lessen or eliminate federal income taxes for students. However, J-1 students no longer enrolled and on post-completion Academic Training are subject to both federal and state income taxes, and employers are required by law to withhold estimated taxes. Tax treaties do not impact state tax liabilities.