Center for Global Engagement

ACADEMIC TRAINING INFORMATION FOR J-1 STUDENTS

What is academic training?
Academic training is work, training, or experience related to a student's field of study, either paid or unpaid. Students can engage in academic training prior to completion of studies on a part-time basis or after completion of studies on a full or part-time basis, if the time limits are not exceeded. If a student wishes to do unpaid academic training after completion of studies, s/he must show proof of adequate funding to cover expenses. All academic training must either be fully in person or hybrid, fully remote work is not possible.

When should I apply for academic training authorization?
Internships to be done during the semester must be approved at least 1 week in advance of the internship start date.

Internships to be done after completion of the exchange program must be approved as soon as possible prior to the exchange program end date on your DS-2019 form, as you may need to apply for an extension of stay (see "*What is an Extension of Stay (EOS) Application?*" section below).

Who is responsible at Richmond for authorizing academic training?
The Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) reviews all documentation and makes the decision whether to authorize academic training. The ARO for Richmond is Diana Trinh, International Student Advisor & Event Coordinator.

How do I qualify?
• Your primary purpose in the U.S. must be to study.
• The academic training must be directly related to your major field of study that is reported on your DS-2019.
• You must be in "good" academic standing (maintaining a 2.0 GPA or higher and enrolled in at least 3.5 units per semester for undergraduate programs or 9 credits per semester for graduate programs).
• The academic training must be for a company in the U.S. and the work must be fully in person or hybrid.
• You must not have worked without proper employment authorization.
• Your academic advisor at Richmond must approve the proposed internship.
• The period for academic training cannot exceed the length of study in the US and has a maximum of 18 months. Students studying at Richmond for one semester can apply for academic training for a maximum period of 15 weeks. Students studying at Richmond for two semesters can apply for academic training for a maximum period of 30 weeks.

How do I apply?
1. Students must receive a new DS-2019 with Academic Training recommendation from the ARO by submitting the following documentation:
    a. Student Statement listing the contact information and description of the company, responsibilities of the position and how employment relates to your Richmond major.
    b. Employer Statement listing contact information for the company and supervisor, job description, job title, start and end dates, hours per week, and compensation if applicable.
    c. Departmental Recommendation from your academic advisor stating how the employment relates to the major and course description if credit is being awarded.

2. Once students have been recommended for Academic Training, students must file an Extension of Stay application (Form I-539) with USCIS.

What is an Extension of Stay (EOS) Application?

Changes to duration of status require exchange students to file an extension of status application with USCIS in addition to the academic training application submitted to the Center for Global Engagement.

Previously, only the academic training application and employment authorization through your ARO was required. Please read the Change to Duration of Status presentation for details.

On July 17, 2026, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a final rule introducing a fixed period of admission and extension of stay procedure (EOS) for F and J students. This rule takes effect on September 15, 2026.

Previously, J-1 students were admitted with no fixed end date, or duration of status (D/S), and can remain in the U.S. up to the DS-2019 program end date (including approved extensions for post-completion academic training). With the new final rule, students entering the U.S. starting September 15, 2026 will receive a fixed period of admission, or Admit Until Date (AUD), which is the current DS-2019 program end date plus a 30 day grace period.

Students who need to remain in the United States beyond their AUD – for example, to complete authorized post-completion Academic Training – will need to apply to for an Extension of Stay (EOS) by filing USCIS Form I-539 before their AUD ends. This needs to be filed after receiving an updated DS-2019 form with Academic Training recommendation from your ARO.

Alternatively, student may travel outside of the United States with their updated DS-2019 form and seek a new AUD upon re-entry. However, international travel carries additional risks and requirements, including having a valid J-1 visa. Admission and the length of admission is entirely at the discretion of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). CBP may admit you for a shorter period of time if your passport expires before the DS-2019 extended date on your EOS. This might not be the best option if your visa has expired as you will need to return to your home country to renew your visa before you can re-enter the U.S. for academic training, which can take weeks or months.

EOS approval can take 6-12 months or more. If the EOS is approved, your AUD will change to the new extended program end date and USCIS will mail you a paper I-94 arrival/departure record with this change. If the EOS is denied, you must depart the U.S. by the AUD. If the AUD has passed, you must depart immediately.

UPDATE on 9/15/26: A nationwide preliminary relief issued on September 14, 2026 blocks the duration of status rule from taking effect on September 15, 2026. As a result, the current F-1/J-1 regulations governing duration of status are still in effect, which do not require the extension of status application for academic training after the exchange program ends. The government is expected to appeal.

Common Questions and Answers

What is the cost?
There is no fee to apply for academic training.

When Can I Begin Academic Training?
You can begin academic training within the time frame you have been authorized by the RO as indicated on the DS-2019 and letter from the RO.

Can I travel home (or outside of the US) before or during academic training?
Yes, but if your visa expires while you are outside of the US or you have exhausted the number of entries permitted on your visa, you will have to apply for a renewal of the J-1 visa. It is not advisable for students to leave the United States if their visa needs to be renewed. Students traveling to Canada, Mexico or contiguous islands may re-enter the US on an expired J-1 visa under automatic re-validation as long as they are not outside of the United States for more than 30 days and they have a valid DS-2019.

Your DS-2019 must be extended before leaving the U.S. If you leave the US with an expired DS-2019, you will not be permitted to re-enter in the J-1 visa category and therefore will not be eligible for academic training.

Can I work for an international company while in the US?
No, academic training is only possible for exchange students who wish to work for a company in the US. Working for a company outside of the US is not possible.

Can I work fully remote?
All academic training must either be fully in person or hybrid, fully remote work is not possible under the **Department of State guidance**. Hybrid work is only possible if you work remotely no more than 40% of the time (e.g., two days out of five) Hybrid work is defined by the Department of State as in person work with the potential for "one to two telework days per week".

My DS-2019 expires at the end of the semester, what can I do about this?
Once the ARO has approved your application for academic training, you will receive the following:
• An extended DS-2019 that will note the new start and end dates and the purpose of the extension as academic training.
• A letter of authorization from the ARO.

Can I continue with my health insurance?
Throughout the duration of academic training, you are considered a J-1 student. As a J-1 exchange student, you are **required** by regulations governing this visa to have health insurance for the number of months you will remain in the US as a J-1 student. If you studied at UR for the fall semester only, your insurance expires on December 31st at midnight. If you studied at UR for the year or spring semester only, your insurance expires on July 31st at midnight. Students who complete their studies are no longer eligible for the group insurance plan. Short-term plans can be purchased through Wallach & Co. (http://www.wallach.com/) or Gateway (http://www.gatewayplans.com/student-exchange-health-benefits/) for individual coverage.

Can I change employers?
Not unless you have notified the ARO and the ARO has approved a new period of academic training. Authorization for academic training is employer specific. If you begin working for an employer who is not listed on the authorization letter from the ARO, you are in violation of your status.

What if I depart the US early and do not complete my academic training?
You must notify the ARO at the University of Richmond prior to departure. The ARO will notify the State Department of early departure, but this will not impact your future applications for a nonimmigrant or immigrant visa. It is simply a notification procedure.

CONSEQUENCES OF ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT
All visa holders in the United States must abide by the specific regulations governing their visa type. If a J visa holder works illegally, that individual is considered "out of status" and is ineligible for any privileges afforded to this visa type. Working illegally may also cause an individual to be deported and may cause fines to the employer.