

To: All J-1 exchange students
From: Krittika Onsanit, Responsible Officer for J-1 Exchange Visitors Program
Re: Authorization for Academic Training
Date: October 16, 2007

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 or after completion of studies on a full or part-time basis, as long as 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.

When should I apply for academic training authorization?

Internships during the semester must be approved at least 1 week in advance of the internship start date. Internships after completion of the exchange program must be approved by the program end date on the DS-2019. Applications after this time frame will not be considered. Students may begin work no later than 30 days after completion of the exchange program.

Who is responsible at Richmond for authorizing academic training?

The Responsible Officer (RO) reviews all documentation and makes the decision whether or not to authorize academic training. The RO for Richmond is Krittika Onsanit, Director of International Student, Scholar & Internship Services.

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
- You must be in "good" academic standing (maintaining a 2.0 GPA or higher and enrolled in at least 12 credits per semester for undergraduate programs)
- You must not have worked without proper employment authorization
- Your academic advisor at Richmond must approve the proposed internship/research or employment
- The period of time 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 14 weeks. Students studying at Richmond for two semesters can apply for academic training for a maximum period of 28 weeks.

How Do I Apply?

Students must present the RO with the following documentation:

1. Student Statement describing the goals of the internship, description of the internship, organization name, address, supervisor, number of hours per week and duration, why the academic training is an integral or critical part of your major, and how it relates to your Richmond major.
2. Employer Statement describing job description and title, start and end dates of the

position, and name, telephone and address of the organization and supervisor.

3. Departmental Recommendation from your academic advisor endorsing the proposed academic training.

These forms are available from the Office of International Education's website at <http://oncampus.richmond.edu/academics/international/Intstudents/Immigration/immigin dex.html#j1links>.

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 depart the US on an expired visa 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 reenter in the J-1 visa category and therefore will not be eligible for academic training.

My DS-2019 expires at the end of the semester, what can I do about this?

Once the RO has approved your application for academic training, you will receive the following:

- an extended DS-2019, which will note the new start date for the extension as well as the purpose of the extension is academic training. The name of your employer will be noted on the DS-2019.
- letter of authorization for your employer with a copy of the J-1 visa regulations

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 June 30th at midnight. Students who complete their studies are no longer eligible for the group insurance plan. Our broker recommends Wallach & Co.

(<http://www.wallach.com/>) or Liaison International (<http://www.studentinsure.com/li/>)

for individual coverage.

Can I change employers?

Not unless you have notified the RO and the RO 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 RO, 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 RO at the University of Richmond prior to departure. The RO 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.

ALL VISA HOLDERS

CONSEQUENCES OF ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT

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