

## **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 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 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 by **December 1** if you are applying in the fall semester or **May 1** if you are applying in the spring semester. Applications after these deadlines will not be considered. Students must begin work no later than 30 days after completion of the exchange program.

### ***Who is responsible at Richmond for authorizing academic training?***

The Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) reviews all documentation and makes the decision whether or not to authorize academic training. The ARO for Richmond is [Diana Trinh, International Student Advisor](#).

### ***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 3.5 units per semester for undergraduate programs or 9 credits per semester for graduate programs).
- You must not have worked without proper employment authorization.
- Your academic advisor at Richmond must approve the proposed internship.
- 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 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?***

Students must present the ARO with the following documentation:

1. Student Statement listing the contact information and description of the company, responsibilities of the position and how the employment relates to your Richmond major.
2. 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.
3. Departmental Recommendation from your academic advisor stating how the employment relates to the major and course description if credit is being awarded.

### ***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.

### **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 31<sup>st</sup> at midnight. If you studied at UR for the year or spring semester only, your insurance expires on July 31<sup>st</sup> 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.