Academic Training

For J-1 Students
General Information

Academic Training (AT) is designed to allow J-1 Students the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to a practical work experience off-campus.

It is available as full-time or part-time employment to those in both degree and non-degree programs. Academic training can be paid or unpaid, and can be used before or after the completion of the academic program.

If you are considering academic training, your authorization must be processed before your official academic program completion date. In addition, the academic training/employment must begin within the first 30 days after the official academic program completion date.
Eligibility Requirements:

- You have completed at least 1 semester in J-1 status
- You are participating in, or have completed study in, a full-time academic program.
- You are in good academic standing at your educational institution names on your DS-2019.
- You are participating in academic training that is directly related to your major field of study.
- You can provide proof of health insurance.
- You can prove you have adequate financial support for yourself and J-2 dependents (if any)
- You have applied for AT before the completion of your academic program.
- You have not submitted a 2-year home residency waiver to the DOS
Length of Academic Training:

- The duration of AT may not exceed the length of the academic program. For example, if you are a Masters student who completed a program in 12 months, you are only eligible for 12 months of academic training.
  - *Exceptions to this time limit is available to STEM degree students who are eligible for up to 36 months of AT*

- Part-time and full-time academic training are counted the same in regards to the total time allowed. Part-time academic training is not counted at half the rate of full-time.

- AT used before completion of the academic program is deducted from the total time available.

- Completing more than one degree program at the same time does not increase your academic training period.

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Length of Academic Training (continued):

• Any J-2 dependents will have their DS-2019 extended along with the primary’s.

• Students who complete a degree program are permitted an overall academic training period of 18 months. This includes all academic training, whether before or after completion of studies.

• There are exceptions to the 18-month time limit, if you meet one or more of the following criteria:
  • After completing a Ph.D. program, you are eligible for an additional 18 months of post-doctoral training, for a total of 36 months of academic training.
  • If you are enrolled in a non-degree program, your stay in the U.S., including academic training, is limited to a total of 24 months. The term of your academic training would then be the time period remaining after you complete your non-degree program.
  • STEM-major undergraduate or pre-doctoral degree-seeking students, see next slide
Length of Academic Training (continued):

• Eligibility for 36 month STEM Extension
  • If you are an undergraduate or pre-doctoral degree-seeking student who is pursuing or recently completed STEM-related studies, you are eligible for a total of 36 months of academic training.
  • Non-degree seeking students are not eligible to apply.
    • The 36 month extension must be applied for no later than 30 days after completion of your STEM-related studies.
    • A complete list of STEM field CIP codes for which exchange students are eligible to apply for this academic training extension is included in the Department of Homeland Security’s STEM Designated Degree Program List at the following address: https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/stem-list.pdf.
Length of AT for Exchange Students:

- One semester (Fall or Spring) students are allowed four (4) months of Academic Training after the semester is completed.
- Two semester students (Fall and Spring) are eligible for a total of nine (9) months of Academic Training & may begin AT after completing one semester.
- Students who begin in the spring term and will continue to the Fall term may also use Academic Training to work off-campus during the summer between semesters or after completing the second (Fall) semester, not to exceed a total of nine (9) months.
- Total AT may be used pre or post completion. Example: If you qualify for 9 months of AT, and you use 3 months of pre-completion AT, you will only have 6 months remaining after completing your EAP program.
How to Apply:

Applications should be submitted via the compass.uga.edu portal. In the J-1 Student Services section, look for the Application and Recommendation for Academic Training Authorization.

- Obtain offer letter: The letter must include the start date, end date, number of hours/week, salary (if a paid position), name of your supervisor, address of the employment and duties of the job.
  - You may use this template for your offer letter: offer letter template
How to Apply (continued):

• Evidence of Sufficient finances: This information can be included in the offer letter, or, if the position is not paid, a copy of a personal bank statement showing liquid assets, translated to English and converted to US dollars, and dated within the last three months

• Academic Advisor Support: The academic advisor you specify in your online application will receive an email message which includes a link to review your information on the status of your current degree progress. They will indicate how this academic training is an integral and/or critical part of your academic program. Your should discuss your AT with your academic advisor prior to submitting your request.
While on Academic Training:

- Maintain Health Insurance
- Report any changes with 10 days: address, email, early departure
- If your employment changes, submit new AT request on Compass
  - There can be no gap in post-completion AT employment dates
- Request any necessary Travel Signatures on your DS-2019 (every 6 months if travelling)
Options after Academic Training:

- Depart the US within the given 30 day Grace Period
- Attend a New School: request transfer in Compass
- Attend a new academic program at UGA: email immigration@uga.edu to request update to DS-2019
- Change Visa Status: Students who want to change their visa status (to an F-1 student visa or other) should speak with an Immigration Advisor and an immigration attorney. This may require traveling out of the U.S. or a lengthy application process. Students are encouraged to plan well in advance.
Thank you for completing the J-1 Academic Training Workshop!