



### Global Education Office (GEO)

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# ACADEMIC TRAINING FOR STUDENTS IN J-1 STATUS

## I. EXPLANATION

As a J-1 Student you may only work off campus in the US or on-campus for more than 20 hours per week if you have received special written work authorization in advance from an international advisor. “Academic Training” is the name used to describe J-1 Student work authorization for certain types of study-related employment. Academic Training is flexible and offers a variety of employment situations to supplement your academic program in the United States. It is available before and/or after completion of your program of study. This handout will explain Academic Training, how to qualify, how to apply, and other important information.

To qualify for “Academic Training”, you must first obtain written approval from an international advisor who represents your J-1 sponsor and issues your DS-2019. The international advisor must evaluate the proposed employment in terms of your program of study and your individual circumstances, and decide whether it would be appropriate or not. If your DS-2019 is issued by UNM, then UNM is your sponsor and an international advisor in GEO will be able to help you. If your DS-2019 is issued by another agency, then that agency is your sponsor and your J-1 Responsible Officer is at that agency. If UNM is not your sponsor an international advisor in GEO can help you identify your responsible officer, but has no authority to grant employment permission; you will need to contact your sponsor to find out their requirements for off campus work and whether or not you are eligible. The information below will explain basic rules regarding Academic Training for J-1 students.

## II. CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

1. You must be in the US primarily to study rather than to engage in Academic Training
2. You must have a job offer for a position that is directly related to your major field of study
3. You must complete 1 semester and be in good academic standing PRIOR to qualifying for Academic Training
4. You must receive written approval in advance from your J-1 Responsible Officer (GEO advisor for those on UNM DS2019s) for the duration and type of training. **YOU CANNOT WORK OFF-CAMPUS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED!**
5. There are restrictions on when students may apply for part-or full-time Academic Training. Students can take Academic Training:
  - a) **Part-time or Full-time:** during the annual vacation period (as long as you plan to enroll in the next semester)
  - b) **Part-time:** during the course of study provided the training and other employment, on and off campus, does not exceed 20 hours per week total
  - c) **Full-time:** upon completion of all requirements for a degree, excluding thesis
  - d) **Full-time:** upon completion of ALL requirements of the exchange or degree program. (Students should apply a 30 days before program completion but **MUST** apply by the end date on their DS-2019 form -see application deadline information below)
6. Students authorized for part-time training cannot work more than 20 hours per week
7. Throughout your Academic Training you must maintain legal J-1 student status in the United States. This includes: applying for extensions of your DS-2019 before the expiration of the document, and maintaining health insurance coverage for yourself and any J-2 dependents
8. “Academic Training” following completion of your program of study must involve paid employment or you must demonstrate that you have adequate funding to cover your expenses.

## III. DURATION

- 1 **Students in a Degree Program.** For students in a degree program the Academic Training authorization is limited to the total period of study for the degree program or 18 months, whichever is shorter, except for students who complete Ph.D. programs. Students who complete Ph.D. programs are eligible for up to 36 months of Academic Training. (A new DS-2019 form must be issued for the second 18 month period.) Both part-and full-time employment in Academic Training count against the 18 or 36 month limit.
- 2 **Non-Degree Students (Exchange Students at UNM).** Students in a non-degree program are never allowed to stay

more than a total of 24 months. This time includes all study time and any authorized academic training. For Exchange Students at UNM the maximum time allowed to stay in Academic Training is equal to the amount of time spent as a non-degree student in the exchange program. For example, if a student spent one academic year at UNM as an exchange student, the student could only be authorized for a total of 9 months of academic training.

#### **IV. APPLICATION PROCESS**

Provided you meet the requirements, and UNM is your program sponsor, an international advisor in GEO will authorize the training. You do not need to apply through US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). However, it is recommended that you apply as soon as you receive the job offer, or AT LEAST two weeks before you plan to begin employment. Remember that if you are applying for the Academic Training after completion of your studies, you must apply before the end of your program and before the expiration of your DS-2019 (Ask to speak with an international advisor if your DS-2019 expiration date is approaching and you have still not been able to secure employment). To apply, follow the steps below (those on non-UNM DS-2019s should contact their program sponsor for instructions.)

**STEP 1: Be Informed.** Read this handout thoroughly and carefully.

**STEP 2: Obtain An Offer Letter From Your Employer.** Get an offer letter from your Academic Training employer that includes your job title, a brief description of the “goals and objectives” of your employment, the dates and location of the employment, the number of hours per week, how much you will get paid (if applicable) and the name and address of your “training supervisor”. Make sure that your employer’s letter includes all of these details. If the Academic Training is unpaid you will need to demonstrate that you have adequate funding to cover your expenses for the duration of your Academic Training work permission.

**STEP 3: Receive Your Department’s Recommendation If You Are A Degree-Seeking Student or Your Advisor Recommendation at Your Home Institution If You Are an Exchange Student.** The regulations require that your academic advisor recommend Academic Training as an integral part of your academic purpose. If your DS-2019 is issued by UNM and you are a degree-seeking student, your academic advisor or dean MUST complete the “GEO Academic Training Recommendation” form (attached.) Exchange Students will need to receive this recommendation from their advisor at their home institution. A letter or an email from the advisor can be substituted for the form for exchange students. You should give a copy of your employment offer letter to your academic advisor to assist him/her in completing the GEO form or supplying all the information in an email or letter. The GEO form (attached) meets the requirements of the regulations which stipulate that the academic advisor’s recommendation must establish:

- a) The goals and objectives of the specific training program
- b) A description of the training program, including its location, the name and address of the training supervisor, number of hours per week, and dates of the training
- c) How the training relates to the student’s major field of study
- d) Why it is an integral or critical part of the academic program of the exchange visitor student

Your advisor must only approve your Academic Training for the length of time necessary to complete the goals and objectives of the training.

**STEP 4: If you will be doing the Academic Training post completion of your studies,** make an appointment to meet with a GEO advisor. Bring your academic advisor’s recommendation to the appointment with a copy of the employer’s letter attached. In addition you will need to bring proof of health insurance for the duration of your Academic Training and proof of funding if applicable. An advisor in GEO must evaluate the “Academic Training” Program and decide whether it is warranted and appropriate. If so, he or she will write you a letter of approval. Your international advisor must also issue you a new DS-2019 Form and a letter approving the training.

**STEP 5: Work Start and End Dates.** Once you have received the authorization from an advisor in GEO, you can work beginning on the date and for the employer as specified in the letter of approval. You must not continue employment beyond the completion date authorized unless you apply for and are granted another period of Academic Training. If you wish to change employment you MUST repeat the whole application process BEFORE beginning the new employment.

**REMEMBER:** AS A J-1 STUDENT, YOU CANNOT WORK UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED TO DO SO BY AN ADVISOR IN GEO. WORKING IMPROPERLY OR WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION IS A SERIOUS VIOLATION OF YOUR STATUS AND COULD LEAD TO DEPORTATION FROM THE US!

## V. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### A. Making a Decision Regarding Participation In Academic Training

- **Academic Training Time Used Is Cumulative.**

Any Academic training authorized part-or full-time before or after a degree program while you are in the US in J-1 status counts toward the total limit. For example, if you obtain permission for 6 months of Academic Training (part time or full time) during or after a bachelor's degree and continue to study in a master's program which is 18 months or longer, you will be eligible only for another 12 months of Academic Training in connection to your master's level study.

- **Actual Date Academic Training Employment May Begin:** You may not begin work until the following requirements are satisfied: 1) you have obtained a letter authorizing the employment from the J-1 Responsible Officer and 2) the date is reached when the letter authorizes employment to begin.

- **Change in Employment.** The letter authorizing you for Academic Training states the specific position, employer, dates, and location of the employment. If there are any changes in the employment or you wish to work for a new employer, you must complete the entire application process again.

### B. Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) and Social Security Number

When you begin work, you and your employer must complete a form entitled "Employment Eligibility Verification" (Form I-9), which the employer retains. The I-9 must be updated each time you receive a renewal of your work permission. This form requires you to document your identity and work authorization according to directions on the back of the form. For J1 students, the most typical combination of documentation is: your passport, I-94 Departure Record, your Form DS-2019, and your Academic Training Authorization Letter from your program sponsor. Your employer, who keeps Form I-9, may make copies of the documents you submit, and return the originals to you. You will also need a social security number. If you do not already have a social security card or if you have a card which is marked "not valid for employment," take your passport, I-94 Departure Record, Form DS-2019, and your Academic Training Authorization Letter to the office of the Social Security Administration, and apply for a Social Security card. Note that your number will remain the same if you already had one, but the notation on the card should indicate that employment is valid with authorization.

### C. Social Security and Other Taxes

In general, J-1 students who have been in the US less than five years are "non-residents for tax purposes" and are exempt from Social Security (FICA) and Medicare taxes (see Internal Revenue Service Publication 519, "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens"). However, your earnings are subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes. Tax returns must be filed on or before April 15 each year for the previous calendar year. The results of the filing will determine if any of the withheld taxes can be refunded to you.

### D. Special Information for Academic Training after Completion of the Degree

#### **Application Deadline and J-1 Status Expiration**

You must submit an application to an international advisor before you complete your program of study (or the end date on the DS2019, whichever is sooner). **If your DS-2019 expires or you leave the US after completing your studies without applying for Academic Training, you are no longer eligible to apply for the training.**

Your lawful J-1 status expires 30 days after the date you complete degree requirements or 30 days after the expiration of your DS-2019 form, whichever is sooner. You are expected to leave the country by that date or make other arrangements to lawfully remain in the U.S.

**If you intend to apply for Academic Training, you MUST apply before your DS-2019 expires. You CANNOT be authorized for Academic Training once your DS-2019 expires! Please contact GEO BEFORE your DS-2019 expires if you have any questions.**

#### **Travel Outside the US While on Academic Training Post Completion of Studies**

Reentry provisions of the regulations require students who have graduated and are on authorized Academic Training to present the following documents to reenter the US:

1. Valid form DS-2019, endorsed for travel by the international advisor program sponsor within the last six months indicating the Academic Training work authorization

2. A valid Academic Training Authorization Letter
3. A valid passport
4. A valid J-1 visa stamp (unless traveling to Canada or Mexico for less than 30 days –see an advisor for details)
5. We also recommend that you bring a current letter from your employer confirming that you are still working for them under Academic Training. Those who do not carry all of these documents may not be allowed to reenter the US.

Those who travel outside the US while on Academic Training run the risk of not being allowed to reenter the US at all. This risk increases if the J-1 visa has expired and a new one is required in order to reenter the US. Be sure to consult with an advisor in GEO when contemplating travel outside the US and reentry to continue Academic Training.



ACADEMIC TRAINING RECOMMENDATION FORM FOR UNM J-1 STUDENTS To be completed by the Academic Advisor or Department Chair or Dean

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Exchange Students will need to receive this recommendation from their advisor at their home institution

Name of Student, Field of Study, semester, Date

He/she is seeking permission to engage in "Academic Training." Please review and approve the information below:

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM:

Organization Name/City: Job Title

Name and address of the training supervisor/employer:

Number of work hours per week Dates of Training: From to

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVE OF THE SPECIFIC TRAINING PROGRAM:

3. HOW DOES THE TRAINING RELATE TO THE STUDENT'S MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY?

4. WHY IS THE TRAINING AN INTEGRAL/CRITICAL PART OF THE STUDENT'S ACADEMIC PROGRAM?

As the student's Academic Advisor or Dean, I have reviewed the Academic Training program outlined above. I certify that this information is correct and I approve of the amount of time requested as necessary to complete the goals and objectives of the training. With this letter I recommend that GEO authorize this student to participate in the "Academic Training" program as described above.

Name and title of the Academic Advisor, Department Chair or Dean Phone Number and/or Email Address

Signature of the Academic Advisor, Department Chair or Dean Date

EVALUATION BY GEO ADVISOR

- 1. I have reviewed this letter and determined that this "Academic Training" is or is not warranted.
2. The criteria and time set forth in 22 514.23(f)(3) and (4) are or are not satisfied.
3. In order to ensure the quality of the "Academic Training" program. I hereby evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the "Academic Training" in achieving the stated goals and objectives as satisfactory or Unsatisfactory

J-1 Student Advisor/International Advisor

Date