



J-1 Visa Holders – Academic Training

Academic Training allows eligible J-1 exchange students the opportunity to gain work experience in their field of study by participating in off-campus internship and employment opportunities. To qualify for Academic Training, the student must obtain approval from a J-1 exchange student advisor at the Office of International Programs.

Eligibility

To participate in Academic Training, an exchange student must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Academic Training must contribute to the student's academic field of study, as indicated on their DS-2019.
2. Students must maintain good academic standing during each semester of study at SF State, including
 1. Completing 12 units of course work (8 units for graduate students) with a passing grade for each course.
 2. Maintaining a 3.0 GPA.
3. Students must demonstrate satisfactory participation in campus internationalization (IEEC).
4. Students must maintain health insurance coverage for themselves and any J-2 dependents throughout their Academic Training period.
5. Students must maintain J-1 status for the duration of their program of study in the United States, including the approved Academic Training period as indicated on the [Maintaining Status webpage](#).
6. Students must demonstrate proof of funding to cover the entirety of the Academic Training period (this may include anticipated wages from paid Academic Training positions).

Failure to meet the above requirements may result in denial or revocation of Academic Training approval.

Limitations

1. The proposed employment must directly relate to the field of study indicated on the student's Form DS-2019.
2. Employment may be authorized for up to 4 months for semester exchange students and up to 9 months for academic year exchange students.
3. Students must apply for Academic Training by the deadlines indicated on the Academic Training website.
4. Students may work up to 20 hours/week) during the Fall and Spring semesters. They may work 20-40 hours/week during holidays and after the completion of the student's academic program.
5. Students participating in Academic Training after their academic program ends must begin Academic Training no more than 30 days after the end of their academic program as indicated on their original DS-2019.
6. Students who will receive payment for Academic Training employment may NOT start working until they have obtained a social security number and completed the necessary I-9 paperwork with their employer.
7. Students may not leave the U.S. and return for the sole purpose of pursuing Academic Training.

How to Apply for Academic Training

1. Review the Academic Training requirements at <https://oip.sfsu.edu/academic-training>.
2. Apply for internship and employment opportunities related to your field of study. SF State's Career Services and Leadership Development (CSLD) can provide additional support.
3. After receiving an internship or employment offer, obtain a letter of offer (see letter template on page 3) from the prospective employer that includes:
 - a. Job title
 - b. A description of the goals and objectives of employment
 - c. The exact dates of employment, number of hours to be worked per week, and monetary compensation.
 - d. The name of the company and physical address of employment
 - e. The name, title, contact details, and physical signature of the internship or employment supervisor
4. Ask an SF State professor familiar with your academic work in your primary field of study to complete the Academic Endorsement Letter.
5. Review and sign the Student Statement.
6. Submit the (1) offer letter, (2) academic endorsement letter, and (3) student statement to exchange@sfsu.edu from your SF State email address. OIP will process the application within 5 business days.
7. Upon approval, OIP will issue a new DS-2019, Academic Training authorization letter, and Social Security authorization letter, if needed. Applicable students will be asked to purchase an extension to their health insurance and submit proof to exchange@sfsu.edu. Applicable students may also be asked to submit proof of additional funding. Proof of funding should be submitted in paper form to the OIP front desk. Applicable students will not receive final Academic Training approval until they have submitted these materials.
8. Obtain a Social Security Number (if receiving payment).
9. Complete I-9 paperwork with your employer, and begin Academic Training.

Work Authorization and Taxes

Social Security Number: Students participating in paid Academic Training must obtain a Social Security Number (SSN) before beginning work. Such students will receive an SSN authorization letter from an OIP exchange student advisor. This letter will allow the student to apply for an SSN at their local Social Security Administration Office.

Students ready to apply for an SSN should:

1. Select a Social Security Administration office at <https://www.ssa.gov/locator/> and schedule an appointment.
2. Bring the following documents to the appointment: DS-2019, passport, [I-94](#), job offer letter, and SSN authorization letter from OIP.

It may take several weeks for students to receive their SSN. Students must have an SSN to complete their I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification with their employer and work legally in the United States.

Form I-9/Employment Eligibility Verification: Before beginning work, students must complete the Form I-9 with their employer. This form documents the student's identity and work authorization. Your employer will provide you with copies of the documents you submit for your I-9. Keep these documents for your records. The Form I-9 must be updated if the student's Academic Training is extended.

Social Security taxes: J-1 students are generally exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes for their first 5 years in the U.S. as long as they declare non-resident status for tax purposes (see internal Revenue Service Publication 519, "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens" - <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p519/>).

Federal, state, and local taxes: Unless you qualify under a tax treaty between the United States and your home government, your earnings as a J-1 student will be subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes, and employers are required by law to withhold those taxes from your paychecks.

Academic Training - Employer Offer Letter

(Template only)

Please find below the suggested language for the Academic Training (J-1 exchange students only) employer offer letter. The letter must be typed on official company letterhead and must contain the following:

- a. Job title
- b. A description of the goals and objectives of employment
- c. The exact dates of employment, number of hours to be worked per week, and monetary compensation.
- d. The name of the company and physical address of employment
- e. The name, title, contact details, and physical signature of the internship or employment supervisor

[Date]

To Whom It May Concern:

I confirm that [exchange student's first and last name] has been offered to position of [title of role] at [name of company or organization]. The dates of employment will be [month/day/year – month/day/year], and the student will work [number of hours] per week with compensation of \$ [amount in USD] per hour.

Employment activities will take place at the following location:

[physical address of employment]

The student's goals and objectives for this employment opportunity include: [detailed description of employment/internship activities and desired learning outcomes. Such activities must correspond with and support the student's field of study at SF State as indicated on the student's Form DS-2019].

If you require additional information, please find the employment/internship supervisor's contact details below:

[supervisor's name, title, phone number, and email address]

Sincerely,

[name and title of supervisor]

[supervisor's physical signature]

Academic Training – Academic Endorsement Letter

Please find below the Academic Endorsement Letter for Academic Training Form. Only an SF State professor familiar with your academic work and primary field of study should complete this form.

To be completed by the student:

Student Details	Position Details
Name:	Company Name:
SF State ID Number:	Company Address:
Field of Study (as indicated on the student’s DS-2019):	Employment/Internship Title:
Semester(s) of study (e.g. Fall 2021 & Spring 2022):	Dates of Employment (must match Offer Letter):
SF State Email Address:	Hours per week:
	Payment:
	___ Unpaid
	___ Paid (\$ _____ /week)

To be completed by the recommending professor:

Professor’s Name, Title, and Department:

Verification Statement:

I confirm that the student named above is completing or has completed the SF State Exchange Program in correspondence with the academic details indicated on this form and has located a professional development opportunity in the field of study indicated above. In this role, the student will have the following responsibilities:

I verify that the goals and/or objectives of the position correspond with the student’s program of study at SF State. The main goals and/or objectives of the position are:

Academic Training is an integral/critical part of the student’s academic program because:

Signed: _____
(recommending professor’s signature)

Date: _____

Academic Training – Student Statement

1. To the best of my knowledge, I am in good academic standing at SF State, including:
 - a. I expect to complete at least 12 units of coursework each semester with a passing grade in each course.
 - b. I expect to earn and maintain a 3.0 GPA or above for each semester I attend SF State.
2. I have contributed to campus internationalization through fulfillment of my IEEC requirement.
3. I will maintain health insurance coverage (SF State-approved policy only) for myself and any J-2 dependents throughout my Academic Training period.
4. I will provide necessary proof of additional funding (as determined by an SF State exchange student advisor) if necessary.
5. I understand that if I do not meet the above conditions, my Academic Training permission will be revoked and that I may lose J-1 status.
6. I understand that academic training may be authorized for up to 4 months for semester students and up to 9 months for academic year students and that no extensions beyond this period will be granted.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____