

Cornell University

International Students and Scholars Office

B-50 Caldwell Hall
Ithaca, New York 14853-2602
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ACADEMIC TRAINING FOR STUDENTS IN J-1 STATUS

[Please note that this handout is intended for J-1 students on the Cornell J program. If you are a J-1 student but your DS-2019 is issued by an agency or institution other than Cornell, you must contact your program sponsor to gain authorization for academic training.]

I. What is Academic Training?

Academic training is a type of employment directly related to your major area of study that is authorized by your J-1 program sponsor who issues your DS-2019 form. It is designed for students to apply knowledge and skills learned at school.

II. Who May Engage in Academic Training?

All J-1 students in degree or non-degree programs may apply for academic training either during the course of study or after completion of studies. Students may work part-time while school is in session and full-time during the summer and winter breaks.

III. Approval from your J-1 Responsible Officer

To qualify for "academic training," you must first obtain approval in writing from the ISSO. If your J-1 sponsor is another agency, and if you are uncertain how to reach your J-1 Responsible Officer, the staff at the ISSO can help you find out, but has no authority to grant employment permission.

IV. Eligibility

1. You must be in good academic standing at the school named on your DS-2019.
2. The proposed employment must be directly related to your major field of study.
3. Throughout your "academic training" you must maintain permission to stay in the United States, in J-1 student status, and apply for extensions as necessary.
4. You must maintain health insurance coverage for yourself and any J-2 dependents throughout your academic training.

V. Duration of Academic Training

1. Your employment may be authorized for the length of time necessary to complete the goals and objectives of the training, provided that the amount of time is approved by both your academic adviser and the ISSO advisor. It may not exceed the amount of time it took for you to complete your full course of study, or 18 months, whichever is shorter. If you receive a Ph.D., however, your post-doctoral training may last as long as 36 months, provided you have a postdoctoral research position.
2. Part-time employment for "academic training" counts against the 18 or 36 month limit the same as full-time employment.
3. You may have only one opportunity for academic training regardless how many degrees you receive.
4. Academic training before completion of studies will be deducted from the total 18 or 36 months.

VI. How to Apply

1. You must apply for academic training **before the ending date on your DS-2019** and the job must begin **no more than 30 days after you complete your program**.
2. **A job offer letter** from your prospective employer on company letterhead that includes: job title, a brief description of the "goals and objectives" of your "training program" (your employment), the dates and location of the employment, the number of hours per week, salary, and the name and address of your "training supervisor" (the quotations come from the regulations). Make sure that your employer's letter includes all of these details. (See the sample letter, attached.)
3. **Academic advisor's recommendation.** Give a copy of your employer's letter to your academic adviser for use in completing the attached advisor's recommendation form.
4. **Bring the job offer letter and the advisor's recommendation form to the ISSO.** The ISSO advisor will write you a letter authorizing the academic training. The ISSO may also issue you a new DS-2019 form extended for your academic training, for no more than 18 months at a time.

VII. Authorization to Work

Social Security Number. To put you on the payroll, your employer will need your Social Security number, which you can obtain by applying for a Social Security card. Take your passport (if you are Canadian you may use another form of photo-bearing identification), I-94 Departure Record card, your DS-2019 form, and a letter at the ISSO to an office of the Social Security Administration.

Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification. When you begin work, you and your employer must complete Form I-9, which requires you to document your identity and work authorization according to directions on the back of the form. Of the various items acceptable as documentation, you may find that the most convenient combination is your passport (or other photo-bearing identification if you are Canadian), I-94 Departure Record card, the DS-2019 form, and your J-1 Responsible Officer's written work authorization. Your employer, who keeps Form I-9, will make copies of the documents you submit, and return the originals to you. Form I-9 must be updated any time that you receive a renewal of your permission for "Academic Training."

VIII. Taxes

Social Security taxes. In general, as a J-1 student, you will be exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes for your first five years in the United States, as long as you continue to declare non-resident status for tax purposes. See Internal Revenue Service Publication 519, "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens."

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 will be subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes, and employers are required by law to withhold those taxes from your paychecks. By April 15 of each year you must file a federal income tax return covering the prior calendar year to determine whether you owe more taxes or have a refund coming.

IX. Never Work without PRIOR Authorization

As a J-1 student, you may be eligible for employment opportunities in the United States, but employment without proper authorization is a serious violation of your status. Remember that before you start any kind of employment, you must first consult your J-1 Responsible Officer, whose written approval is necessary in advance.

SAMPLE EMPLOYER’S LETTER FOR J-1 “ACADEMIC TRAINING”

Friendly Employer, Inc.
1234 Greatview Drive
Pleasant City, MS 54321
(101) 555-1234

[Date]

Ms. Student
123 Ezra Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853

Dear Ms. Student:

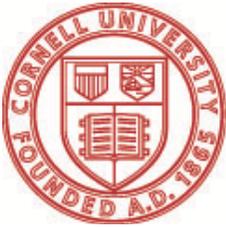
This is to confirm that Friendly Employer, Inc. is offering you employment as an industrial engineer for 18 months starting June 1, 2008. This employment will serve as “academic training” following your Master of Science program in Engineering at Cornell University.

The objectives of your training will be oversight of the design and implementation of our new product line. The location will be the company headquarters in Pleasant City. Your training supervisor will be Ms. Jean Doe, Vice President for Operations. Her address and telephone number appear above on the letterhead. You will be expected to work full time and will be paid an annual salary of \$175,000.

Welcome to Friendly Employer, Inc.

Sincerely,

Joan Smith
Director of Personnel



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Cornell University Academic Advisor's Recommendation Form
For J-1 Student "Academic Training" Work Authorization

This form provides the information required to grant work authorization to a J-1 international student. The student's academic advisor should complete this entire form and sign where indicated. Questions can be directed to the International Students and Scholars Office, B-50 Caldwell Hall, 255-5243.

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

STUDENT'S FIELD OF STUDY: _____

PROGRAM COMPLETION DATE: _____

Date listed above **Thesis defense date**
is (check one): **Graduation (degree conferral) date**
 Last day as registered student
 Other (explain): _____

1. Description of the academic training:

Employer: _____

Employment Address: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____ Supervisor's Email or Phone#: _____

Your Job Title: _____

Number of Hours per week: _____ Dates of training: From _____ to _____

2. How does the training relate to the your field of study?

3. Advisor Certification:

As the student's academic advisor, I certify that the above employment is related to the student's field of study. I recommend that you authorize this student's proposed J-1 "academic training."

_____ Date: _____
(signature of academic advisor or dean)

Print Name: _____ Title: _____