

F-1 and J-1 Comparison Chart

	F-1 Student Status	J-1 Exchange Visitor Student Category
Eligibility	All students are eligible for an F-1 visa, as long as they have been admitted to a full-time program of study, meet the English language requirement, and can show proof of funding for at least the first year of study.	Eligible students are those who are supported substantially (at least 51%) through funding from the U.S. government, student's home government, an international organization, the University, and possibly employer sponsorship.
Dependents (Spouse and children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible for an F-2 visa. • May enroll in academic programs for less than a full course of study, and can also engage in part-time study that is recreational in nature. • F-2 children may attend full-time elementary or secondary school: kindergarten – 12th grade. • Not eligible to apply for any work authorization in the U.S. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible for a J-2 visa. • Eligible to study part-time or full-time in the U.S. • May apply to USCIS for work authorization by demonstrating a need for supplemental support for self or children. • Not eligible to obtain work permission in order to support the J-1 student.
Health Insurance	Federal regulations do not require F-1 students and their F-2 dependents to carry Health Insurance but Columbia University requires all international students to enroll in the university's health insurance plan.	J-1 students and their J-2 dependents are required to have comprehensive medical coverage mandated by J regulations. The student medical insurance provided by Columbia University meets all the requirements. J students must arrange health insurance coverage for the gap between arrival and the effective date of their Columbia insurance.
Home Country Residency Requirement	There is no home residency requirement following the completion of program.	<p>The home country residency requirement means that upon completion of the program, <i>some</i> J-1 students and J-2 dependents must reside in their countries of legal permanent residence for a total of 2 years before they are eligible for U.S. work visas (H or L) or an immigrant visa.</p> <p>Applies ONLY to those</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. who receive funding from the U.S. or home country government, OR 2. who are studying in fields which appear under the J-1 Skills List. See http://bit.ly/jskills 3.

<p>On-Campus Employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately eligible for on-campus employment and does not require prior authorization from the ISSO/IAO. • Limited to 20 hours per week during an academic term, but can be full-time during holiday breaks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately eligible for on-campus employment but requires prior authorization from the ISSO/IAO. • Limited to 20 hours per week during an academic term, but can be full-time during holiday breaks. • Must report employment with online form to ISSO to update SEVIS record
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<p>Off-Campus Employment</p>	<p>Curricular Practical Training (CPT):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment pursuant to an internship requirement or internship elective which is an integral part of the established curriculum of your degree program, and is counted towards completion of your degree. Not all programs qualify. • Eligible only after being in valid student status for one academic year. • Requires an employment offer in order to apply. • Requires an application to be submitted to the ISSO/IAO for review and authorization. <p>Optional Practical Training (OPT):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible only after being in valid student status for one academic year. • Eligible to work for up to 12 months per educational level with the possibility of extended OPT time in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). • Employment must be related to the field of study. • Can be used both during and after the program of study. Time used during the program is deducted from time available after graduation. • Requires an application to be submitted to USCIS, where processing can take up to 3 months. • Application fee • Does not require an employment offer in order to apply. 	<p>Academic Training (AT):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment which is considered integral to a student's academic program • Eligible only after being in valid student status for one academic semester. • Can be pursued both during and after the program of study. Time used during the program is deducted from time available after graduation. • Eligible to apply for up to 18 months of AT depending on length of program <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AT authorization cannot exceed the length of the academic program. For example, if you are in a degree program that is completed in two semesters, AT cannot be authorized for more than nine months 2. AT authorization cannot exceed the amount of time spent in J-1 status during the degree program. This applies only to a student who changes from another immigration status to J-1 during the program. 3. AT following a doctoral degree can be extended an additional 18 months, for a total of 36 months (and dependent upon time spent in J-1 status during the program as noted in item 2 above). • Requires an employment offer in order to be eligible. • Requires an application to be submitted to the ISSO for review and authorization. • USCIS not involved, no USCIS application fee, but AT used
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<p>Grace Period</p>	<p>60 day grace period following the completion of program or Optional Practical Training, to depart the U.S.</p>	<p>30 day grace period following the completion of program or Academic Training, to depart the U.S.</p>
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