

Definition of Academic Training (AT) - Employment integral to an exchange visitor's academic program which may occur during and/or after the completion of studies. Such training may include - but is not limited to - internships, practica, and/or field work.

Requirements for Eligibility

- Your Certificate of Eligibility (form DS-2019) must be unexpired.
- You must be in good academic standing.
- You must participate in AT that is directly related to your field of studies.
- You must have a firm offer of employment before completion of studies.
- You must receive written approval, in advance, from your exchange visitor visa supervisor (sponsor).

[Please Note: Minnesota State Mankato's J-1 program for fulltime students (P.1.04472) is supervised by the Kearney Center for International Student Services. If you are under the sponsorship of any other exchange visitor program (ie., IIE, AMIDEAST, etc.), you should contact your program sponsor for AT policies, application forms and instructions.]

Academic Training During a Course of Study - Academic training is normally part-time during the academic year, but can be full-time under some circumstances. When classes are in session, you must maintain full-time registration with the University no matter how many hours a week you devote to AT. During vacation periods, you may engage in AT full- or part-time without being registered. Please note that all AT is counted as full time toward your total length of eligibility, irrespective of the number of hours that you work.

You may engage in AT following one term of full time enrollment at Minnesota State Mankato. AT may not exceed the time earned as a full-time enrollee. For example, a student enrolling in the fall semester would have four months "credit" at its completion. Therefore, he or she could do four months of AT in the spring term.

Time Limitations - For those studying at the undergraduate or pre-doctoral level, AT may be granted for a maximum of 18 months, inclusive of any prior academic training in the U.S. as an exchange visitor, or the period of the full course of study in the U.S., whichever is shorter. Post-completion AT authorization begins when you complete your studies, even if the employment does not begin until a later date. Speak with an adviser if you were in another program of study in the U.S. immediately preceding the current one.

Post-doctoral AT - Can be granted in increments of 18 months with a maximum period of 36 months. A new form DS-2019 will be issued for each 18-month period. **You must apply for and receive the second 18-month period before your work authorization letter and DS-2019 expire.**

Application Procedure

To obtain authorization to engage in AT during the academic year, you must submit the documentation listed below to the Kearney Center at least 10 business days before the anticipated start date. *You must always apply for and receive AT authorization before the completion date noted on part 3 of your DS-2019 or before the completion of your program, whichever is earlier.* Once this form expires, you are no longer considered to be in valid J-1 program status, and will have to apply for reinstatement to J-1 status from the United States Department of State (DOS) which administers the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. Approval for reinstatement is highly uncertain.

To obtain authorization to engage in AT following completion of your program, you must submit the documentation listed below to the Kearney Center up to 60 days before completing your program and before the extension of your DS-2019.

Please note that you must have a firm offer of employment to apply for AT. The regulations state that employment for AT must begin no later than 30 days after completion of studies. However, guidance from the Exchange Visitor Program Services dated 5/6/93 indicates that with a firm offer of employment, one is eligible to apply for AT - the employment itself

may actually begin a bit later. Completion of studies is defined as the date on which all requirements for the program have been met, not when the degree is actually conferred.

You must apply for AT before completion of your program and the expiration of your DS-2019. The Exchange Visitor Program will not allow application to be made during the 30-day grace period you are allowed to stay in the United States upon completion of your program of study.

Submit the following documents to the Kearney Center within the time periods described above:

- A letter of recommendation from your academic department head or academic adviser. The letter must state your degree candidacy and the date you will complete your studies and set forth:
 1. the goals and objectives of the specific training program
 2. 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
 3. how the training relates to your field of study
 4. why it is an integral or critical part of your academic program
- Passport, I-94 card, and DS-2019
- Funding documents

If you need a new DS-2019, you must provide documentation showing that you have sufficient funds for living expenses for the period covered by the new DS-2019. Your salary from your AT employment usually will be sufficient.

Within five working days, the Kearney Center staff will review your application for eligibility, and, if eligible

1. authorize AT by issuing a letter of permission for your employer
2. issue a new DS-2019 covering the authorized period

You may begin AT employment as of the date it is authorized by the Kearney Center staff, provided your permission to stay (I-94 card) and form DS-2019 continue to be valid. You will use the Kearney Center letter, your passport, and forms I-94 and DS-2019 to show your employer that AT has been authorized.

You are considered to be maintaining your J-1 status for 30 days following the expiration date of your Academic Training, which is the time allowed you to either depart from the United States or change to another status, if eligible. Employment, however, is not permitted during this 30-day period. If you want to begin a new full-time program of study at any point during or following authorized academic training, you must follow the procedures for continuation from one educational level to another at MSU, if applicable, or for transfer of schools.

If you leave the U.S. during your authorized period of academic training, you may return for the remainder of the authorized period provided you have the following:

- Valid passport (Canadians may show alternative proof of citizenship.)
- Valid DS-2019 that has been recertified on the back page by the program sponsor
- Letter from your J-1 sponsor authorizing Academic Training
- Letter from your employer that you will continue working there following your trip abroad
- Valid J-1 entry visa (except Canadians, who do not require entry visas)

If you require a new entry visa while on AT, be aware that there is no guarantee that you are eligible for one. You are required to establish non-immigrant intent every time you apply for a non-immigrant visa. Speak with a Kearney Center adviser before planning a trip abroad.

The advisers at the Kearney Center encourage you to contact them if you have questions about the procedures for Academic Training.