

Student Visa: F-1 versus J-1

All full time, degree seeking international students are eligible for an F-1 visa. Most University of Michigan international students hold F-1 visa status, however, some students may be eligible for both a J-1 visa and F-1 visa. In this case you may have to choose which one is best for you.

Who is eligible to choose between F-1 and J-1 visa?

To be eligible for a J-1 visa at least 50% of your total financial support must be from a source other than personal or family funds. This financial support may be a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship from an external funding source such as your home government, a corporate sponsor, or the University of Michigan. Students with only personal or family funding are NOT eligible for a J-1 visa.

Basic differences between F-1 and J-1 student visas

	F-1 Visa	J-1 Visa
Source of Funding	Supported by personal/family funds, outside funds, or a combination of both	More than 50% of funding is from an outside source such as a scholarship, fellowship, or government sponsorship
Proof of Funding	Student must show U-M and the U.S. consulate proof of sufficient funding for his /her first year of study	Student must show U-M and the U.S. consulate proof of sufficient funding for the entire duration of his/her academic program

Off Campus Employment

Two authorization options:
Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for working off campus during studies. This work authorization is approved one semester at a time.
Optional Practical Training (OPT) for working off campus, usually after the completion of studies. This is a 12 month work authorization. Student in STEM fields may be authorized for an additional 17 months
Both [CPT](#) [1] and [OPT](#) [2] are only available to students who have completed one academic year of full-time enrollment in the U.S. For complete details please visit the employment section of our website.

One authorization option:
[Academic Training \(AT\)](#) [3] for working off campus during studies or after the completion of studies. This work authorization is for up to 18 months or the length of study in the program, whichever is shorter. PhD students may be authorized for an additional 18 months.
The length of approved AT is equal to the length of time spent studying in the U.S. For complete details please visit the employment section of our website.

Dependents

Dependents in F-2 status may study part time and are not eligible for employment.

Dependents in J-2 status may study full time and may apply for employment authorization.

Long Term Implications of a J-1 visa

Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement

J-1 students may be subject to the two-year home country physical presence requirement. This requirement applies to you if:

- You receive any funding (including nominal travel grants) from your home government or an U.S. government agency; or
- Your degree/program of study is on the [Exchange Visitor's Skills List](#) [4]. This is a list of fields with specialized knowledge and skills that are deemed necessary for the development of your home country.

If the J-1 student is subject to the two-year home country physical presence requirement so are his/ her J-2 dependents. More information about two-year home country physical presence requirement and potential waiver is available on the [J-1 Students](#) [5] portion of our website.

12 Month Bar After Previous J-1 Participation

J-1 students who have studied in the U.S. for more than 6 months may not return as a J-1 Research Scholar (another J-1 visa category, often used for post-doctoral research) until at least 12 months have passed. This [12 Month Bar](#) [6] is separate from the two-year home country physical presence requirement listed above. J-2 dependents are also subject to this bar.

Source URL: <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/f1-versus-j1-student-visa>

Links

- [1] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/cpt>
- [2] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/opt>
- [3] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/j1-students/academic-training>
- [4] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html>
- [5] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/j-two-year-requirement>
- [6] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/scholars/j1-scholars/12-and-24-bars>