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

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

### 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**