

- Exchange Visitor Program Information on Coronavirus (COVID-19) (<https://j1visa.state.gov/covid-19/>)
- Visa Services Operating Status Update (November 19, 2021) (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/visa-services-operating-status-update.html>)



## Opportunity for Academic Training Extensions for J-1 College and University Students in STEM Fields



The Directorate of Private Sector Exchange (Private Sector) is pleased to announce an initiative for College and University Student-category exchange visitors participating in academic training in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). We introduce this opportunity in response to the recent [Joint Statement of Principles in Support of International Education](https://educationusa.state.gov/sites/default/files/intl_ed_joint_statement.pdf) ([https://educationusa.state.gov/sites/default/files/intl\\_ed\\_joint\\_statement.pdf](https://educationusa.state.gov/sites/default/files/intl_ed_joint_statement.pdf)).

Department-designated sponsors have also expressed an interest in incentivizing more STEM opportunities for international students.

Eligible exchange visitors must be undergraduate and pre-doctoral degree-seeking J-1 College and University students who are pursuing or recently completed STEM-related studies. The maximum total length of their academic training is capped at 36 months (including a single extension); non-degree seeking students are not eligible to apply. The initiative will run for the next two academic years (2021-2022 and 2022-2023) for exchange students who meet the academic training requirements. Sponsors seeking Department approval of STEM academic training extension requests must comply with 22 CFR §62.43(c).

### HOW TO APPLY/REQUEST THIS EXTENSION:

Sponsors may request STEM-related academic training for up to 36 months for College and University students pursuing STEM undergraduate or pre-doctoral degrees and recent graduates who seek to commence academic training no later than 30 days after completion of their STEM-related studies.

Current regulations cap academic training for undergraduate and pre-doctoral candidates at 18 months with the following exception: “[T]he amount of academic training ... [f]or undergraduate and pre-doctoral training, does not exceed 18 months, inclusive of any prior academic training in the United States, or the period of full course of study in the United States, whichever is less; except that additional time for academic training is allowed to the extent necessary for the exchange visitor to satisfy the mandatory requirements of his or her degree program in the United States.” ([22 CFR 62.23](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-22/chapter-1/subchapter-G/part-62/subpart-B/section-62.23))

(<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ecfr.gov%2Fcurrent%2Ftitle-22%2Fchapter-1%2Fsubchapter-G%2Fpart-62%2Fsubpart-B%2Fsection-62.23&data=04%7C01%7CKnochKJ%40state.gov%7Cac276c42587acd08d9957a5066%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637705174829623603%7>) (f)(4)(iii).

Sponsors seeking academic training extensions up to 36 months pursuant to this initiative must comply with the requirements set forth in 22 CFR §62.43 (<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ecfr.gov%2Fcurrent%2Ftitle-22%2Fchapter-1%2Fsubchapter-G%2Fpart-62%2Fsubpart-C%2Fsection-62.43&data=04%7C01%7CKnochKJ%40state.gov%7Cac276c42587acd08d9957a5066%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637705174829633553%7>) (c). They must secure prior written approval by submitting extension requests through the Private Sector’s Office of Designation via [AGexchanges@state.gov](mailto:AGexchanges@state.gov) (<mailto:AGexchanges@state.gov>). As part of the required written justification, sponsors should indicate the STEM field and corresponding Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code relating to the subject-matter of the extension. A complete list of STEM field CIP codes for which exchange students are eligible to apply for this academic training extension is included in the Department of Homeland Security’s STEM Designated Degree Program List at the following address: <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/stem-list.pdf> (<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ice.gov%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fdocuments%2Fstem-list.pdf&data=04%7C01%7CKnochKJ%40state.gov%7Cac276c42587acd08d9957a5066%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637705174829633553%7>)

While participating in these extensions, exchange students must continue to meet the requirements of 22 CFR §62.23(f), including but not limited to, being primarily in the United States to study, pursuing training that is directly related to their major field of study, and either engaging in a full course of study or commencing with their academic training within 30 days after completion of their related studies.

Private Sector may, at its discretion, conduct a site visit to ensure that program requirements are being met, including that the host possesses and maintains the ability, personnel, and resources to provide structured and guided work-based training experiences that achieve a program’s stated goals and objectives as required by 22 CFR. §62.23(f)(6).

Please submit any questions to the following email address: [AGexchanges@state.gov](mailto:AGexchanges@state.gov) (<mailto:AGexchanges@state.gov>).