Understanding the 12 and 24 Month Bars

The 12 and 24 month bars are different from the two-year home country residence requirement. Any indication below that there is “no wait” time refers only to the 12 and 24 month bars. It is possible that a J-1 visitor has no wait time related to the 12 and 24 month bars - but is subject to the two year home residency requirement. [1]

The 12 and 24 month rule affects J-1 exchange visitors who have been in the U.S. on a J-1 visa previously, and wish to return, using the J-1 visa. The bars prohibit certain “repeat participation” in the Research Scholar or Professor categories only. Depending on what your previous J category was, you may be subject to a 12 month bar, a 24 month bar or have no bar at all. The following chart shows how long you would have to wait (the 12 or 24 month bar) before you could obtain a new J-1 Research Scholar or Professor visa based on what your previous J status was. If you have never before had J-1 visa sponsorship, then the bars do not apply to you.

### Previous Scholar Visa Status

**For LESS Than 6 Months:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you have or had this J visa category</th>
<th>Wait time for new J-1 Research Scholar/Professor visa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J-1 Student Non-Degree</td>
<td>No Wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-1 Student</td>
<td>No Wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-1 Research Scholar/Professor Category for any amount of time (one day to five years)</td>
<td>24 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-1 Short-Term Scholar</td>
<td>No Wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-1 Specialist</td>
<td>No Wait</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**For MORE Than 6 Months:**

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[1] Two year home residency requirement refers to a requirement that individuals who have been in the U.S. on an exchange visitor visa for two years must return to their home country for at least two years before being eligible to return again on an exchange visitor visa.
If you have or had this J visa category | Wait time for new J-1 Research Scholar/Professor visa
---|---
J-1 Student Non-Degree | 12 Months
J-1 Student | 12 Months
J-1 Specialist | 12 Months
J-1 Research Scholar/Professor Category for any amount of time (one day to five years) | 24 Months
J-2 Dependent of Research Scholar/Professor Category or any amount of time (one day to five years) | 24 Months
J-2 Dependent of any J-1 category *except* Short-Term Scholar | 12 Months

**Source URL:** https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/j-1-scholars/understanding-j-1-status/understanding-the-12-and-24-month-bars

**Links**
[1] https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/maintaining-status-for-f-1-and-j-1-students/two-year-home-country-residenceRequirement