# Maintaining Status for F-1 and J-1 Students

As an international student at Yale, your objective is the same as that of your domestic peers: getting a Yale degree as you academically and personally grow. However, you also have a few additional requirements mandated by federal regulations that you need to be aware of, and comply with, during your studies. Please remember that as an international student it is your responsibility to ensure you maintain your legal F-1 or J-1 status [1] and avoid any violations.

Below are the key things you need to do to maintain your legal status at Yale. Please note that most rules apply to both F-1 and J-1 students, but there are some additional requirements for the J-1 status. However, do not worry: as long as you maintain focus on your overall objective of getting a degree at Yale, follow a few simple reporting requirements, and let us OISS know immediately when issues arise, you will avoid any problems that might interfere with your academic program and/or immigration status.

If your spouse or dependent children will be accompanying you to the U.S., learn more about the F-2 and J-2 visas [2] here.

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## General Requirements

The following sections provide the information you need to maintain your student status. If you are a newly arrived student, please refer to our page that covers the new arrival requirements for incoming students: Your First Two Weeks [3].

### Report any Address or Phone Changes

All students in current F-1 and J-1 status must maintain the following in their SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) record:

- current U.S. address
- foreign address
- U.S. phone number

OISS reports this information to SEVIS, but you must first update the information in SIS (Student Information System) [4].

Any change in your addresses or phone number must be reported in SIS within 10 days of the change.

Graduated students on F-1 OPT (Optional Practical Training) or J-1 Academic Training need to update their address directly within OISS Connect [5], not in Yale SIS.

## Report Changes to Your Immigration Status or Category

Talk to your OISS Adviser [6] if you are planning to change to another nonimmigrant status or if you become a permanent resident ('green card').

## Make Sure Your Immigration Documents are Accurate and Up-to-Date

In addition to keeping your passport valid, you should also be aware of the expiration date of your status. This is not your visa expiration date in your passport; it is the program end/expected completion date on your I-20 or DS-2019 form.

### Extending Your Status

If you will not complete your academic program by the end date noted on your I-20 or DS-2019, you may be eligible to apply for an extension. Speak to your OISS adviser [6] about your eligibility to extend. If eligible, you will need to provide a letter from your academic adviser and evidence of funding to support tuition and living expenses for the remainder of your studies. Learn more on the Student Extension [7] page. You must complete the extension process prior to the expected completion date on your I-20 or DS-2019.

## Keep Copies/Files of All Immigration-Related Documents

Save each immigration document you are given throughout the duration of your studies. You may need them in the future:

- to document your employment history and your compliance with U.S. immigration regulations
- for future USCIS and/or visa applications

Organizing digital copies of these documents is easy with Google Drive, iCloud, Box.com, or many other electronic options. Please note that the original DS-2019 forms should be saved.

## Leave the U.S. Before the Expiration of your Immigration Status

F-1 and J-1 visa holders will see the notation 'D/S' on their entry stamp and their I-94. D/S stands for 'duration of status' and refers to the expiration date on your immigration document and any applicable grace period at the end of your program. When your I-94 'Admit Until Date' is D/S you can stay in the U.S. for the length of your program as noted by the end date on your immigration document (Form I-20 or DS-2019). Each visa status allows for a grace period at the end of your program. Please see below for details specific to F-1 or J-1 status.

### F-1 Students

F-1 students in 'duration of status' have an additional 60- day grace period to depart the U.S. or transfer to a new program of study, or apply for a change of visa status. The grace period begins on the program end date listed on the I-20 (or if you have graduated, the end date of your OPT/STEM OPT) This additional 60-day period is **NOT** for employment or study. If you travel outside the U.S. during your 60-day grace period, you forfeit the remaining grace period and **may not** re-enter the U.S. under F-1 status.

#### J-1 Students

J-1 Exchange Visitors in 'duration of status' have an additional 30-day grace period to depart the U.S., matriculate to a new program of study, or apply for a change of visa status. The grace period begins on the end date listed on the Form DS-2019. This additional 30-day period is **NOT** for employment or study. If you travel outside the U.S. during your 30-day grace period, you forfeit the remaining grace period and **may not** re-enter the U.S. under J-1 status.

#### Extending Your Status

If you will not complete your academic program by the end date noted on your I-20 or DS-2019, you may be eligible to apply for an extension. Speak to your OISS adviser [6] about your eligibility to extend. If eligible, you will need to provide a letter from your academic adviser and evidence of funding to support tuition and living expenses for the remainder of your studies. Learn more on the Student Extension [7] page. You must complete the extension process prior to the expected completion date on your I-20 or DS-2019.

### Report a Lost or Stolen Passport

If your passport is lost or stolen, be sure to obtain a police report for your records, and notify your home country consulate. You will need to obtain a replacement as soon as possible, and can connect with your OISS adviser [6] about any additional concerns. Replacing a visa requires travel outside the U.S. and an appointment at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad.

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## Study-Related Requirements

Let your OISS adviser know if there are any pertinent changes to your educational status. See the following for examples. Reach out to your OISS adviser [6] if you have any questions.

### Maintain Full-Time Study

You are required to be enrolled full-time every semester, as defined by your program of study at Yale.

#### Undergraduates

Undergraduates must take at least three credits per semester and meet all Yale College requirements for promotion.

#### Graduate and Professional Students

Each program of graduate study defines the combination of course requirements and research that equal full-time study. Check with your program or refer to your school bulletin for more information.

#### Exceptions

For F-1 students, there are a few exceptions to the full-time study rule. [8] You must always obtain advance permission from OISS prior to reducing your course load or dropping any classes. This permission can be granted only for proven medical conditions or certain academic difficulties.

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## Taking a Leave of Absence

If you are considering a leave of absence, you must consult with your OISS adviser [6] before making your final decision. In most instances, you may not remain in the U.S. in J-1 or F-1 student status during a leave of absence, so you will need to either depart the U.S. in a timely manner or decide and make arrangements to obtain another non-immigrant status.

## Doing Study or Research Abroad

If you plan to study or conduct research outside the U.S. for an academic semester or longer (not including summer term), please check with an OISS adviser before you leave [6]. Arrangements will be made to keep you in lawful student status and enrolled in absentia so that you can return to New Haven without delay. Address reporting requirements [4] still apply while you are outside the U.S. and in some cases, a new visa might be required to return.

**Study Abroad Resources**

- Center for International & Professional Experience? [9]
- Yale & The World International Toolkit? [10]
- Yale School of Nursing Office of Global Health [11]

## Changing Degree Program or Level

Notify OISS when changing educational levels at Yale [12] within 60 days of program end date. Submit your letter of admission to new program and evidence of funding to support tuition and living expenses for the first academic year of the new program to OISS [6].

## Transferring to Another U.S. School

If admitted at another college or university, discuss your plans with your OISS adviser [6] to make sure that the required transfer procedure [13] can be accomplished.

F-1 Students: Notify OISS [6] when transferring to another F-1 program within 60 days of Yale program end date.

## Finishing or Ending Degree/Program Earlier than Expected

If you plan to finish your program earlier than expected, be sure to talk to your OISS adviser [6] ahead of time.

## Finishing Degree/Program Later than Expected

If you will not complete your academic program by the end date noted on your I-20 or DS-2019, you may be eligible to apply for an extension. Speak to your OISS adviser [6] about your eligibility to extend. If eligible, you will need to provide a letter from your academic adviser and evidence of funding to support tuition and living expenses for the remainder of your studies. Learn more on the Student Extension [7] page. You must complete the extension process prior to the expected completion date on your I-20 or DS-2019.

Notify OISS [6] if you are approved for an extension of your program to stay beyond the date on your immigration

document.

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## J-1 Specific Requirements

Students with a J-1 visa have some additional requirements. Reach out to your OISS adviser [6] if you have any questions.

### Understand J-1 Status

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program, governed by the U.S. Department of State (DOS), was created in 1961 to "…promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange […]". At Yale, students use the J visa to study for a degree or pursue non-degree studies. The Exchange Visitor program encourages and promotes cross-cultural activities to give participants the opportunity to learn about U.S. society and culture. OISS offers countless opportunities [14] to network and socialize with the Yale community.

To learn more about the J Exchange Visitor Program, please read the U.S. Department of State's Welcome Brochure [15] or J Student page [16]which summarizes many of your rights. At any point prior to coming to Yale, or during your program, you should feel free to contact the DOS using the information below:

- Telephone: (866) 283-9090
- Email: agalert@state.gov

### Maintain Specific Health Insurance Coverage

All J visa holders (including you and each family member) are required to have specific health insurance coverage [17] as determined by the U.S. Department of State.

### English Proficiency

All J-1 Exchange Visitors are required by the Department of State to have sufficient proficiency in the English language to successfully participate in their academic program and to function on a day-to-day basis in the United States. Some international students are native English language speakers or have spent years in study and research using the English language. For those who are still perfecting their English language skills, it is important to recognize that proficiency is a scholarly tool that can ensure higher levels of academic achievement in most fields. In addition, the ability to communicate comfortably in English is essential to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of yourself and your family members.

#### English Proficiency Requirement and Evidence of English Proficiency

Federal regulations require evidence of an assessment of English language proficiency **prior to sponsoring a J-1 Exchange Visitor visa**. [18]

#### English Language Support

There are many resources at Yale and in the New Haven Community for your English language proficiency. See our English Conversation Groups page [19] for more information about Yale and local programs.

### Changing J-1 Categories

The Exchange Visitor Program in the U.S. Department of State may, at its discretion, allow an Exchange Visitor to change the category of exchange participation. However, it is not possible to request a change from the student category to research scholar/professor category. Any change in category must be consistent with and closely related to the participant's original exchange objective. It will be necessary to prove that the requested change is due to unusual or exceptional circumstances. Category change approvals are rare.

Requests for a change in J-1 category, along with supporting justification and documentation, must be submitted to the Exchange Visitor staff at the Department of State by the participant's sponsor.

Contact your OISS adviser [6] for further information.

## Matriculation Requirement

J-1 degree seeking students may advance in degree track by seeing a Matriculation event in their SEVIS record from their OISS adviser. Matriculation may only occur from a lower degree level to a higher degree level. For example, from Bachelor's to Master's or Master's to PhD. Matriculation may not occur to a lower degree level, for example from PhD to Master's. Additionally, Matriculation may not occur from the J-1 Non-Degree Student status to any other degree level (Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD).

Contact your OISS adviser [6] for further information.

## Two-Year Residence Requirement

Some Exchange Visitors are subject to the two-year home country physical presence requirement. It requires you to return home for at least two years after your exchange visitor program ends. This 'two-year residence' requirement may apply to you if you meet one of the following:

- **Receive Funding**: You receive any funding (including nominal travel grants) from your home government or if you are named in a U.S. government grant or fellowship specifically designed for exchange.
- **On the Skills List**: Trained personnel in your field are identified by your home government as being in short supply and your field has consequently been included on the U.S. government's Exchange Visitor's Skills List [20].
- **Graduate Medical Training**: Your J status is sponsored by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates.

If you do not know whether your country and/or field appear on the Exchange Visitor Skills List [21], check the list or ask your OISS adviser [6].

The two-year home country physical presence requirement is explained on the reverse side of the DS-2019 form.

At the conclusion of a J-1 program, the exchange visitor who is subject to this requirement must reside for an aggregate of two years (24 months) in their "home" country (see the 'Waivers of Residency & Advisory Opinions' section below) before being eligible for (1) an immigrant visa or adjustment of status to lawful permanent resident status; (2) an H temporary worker, L intracompany transfer) or (3) K (fiance) visas. Persons subject to the two-year home country residence requirement can return to the U.S. during this period in most other nonimmigrant statuses, including tourist status or on another J visa.

If you are considering applying for a waiver of the two-year home residency, please read the 'Waivers of Residency & Advisory Opinions' section below for guidance. Speak to your OISS adviser [6] before you apply for any Waivers or Advisory Opinions.

## 12- and 24-Month Bars

The 12- and 24-month bars are different from the two-year home country residence requirement. 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 Research Scholar. 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.

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 had J-1 visa sponsorship, then the bars do not apply to you.

### Previous Scholar Visa Status

**For LESS Than 6 Months:**

| If you have or had this J visa category | Wait time for new J-1 Research Scholar/Professor visa |
|---|---|
| J-1 Student Non-Degree | No Wait |
| J-1 Student | No Wait |
| J-1 Research Scholar/Professor Category for any amount of time (one day to five years) | |

| If you have or had this J visa category | Wait time for new J-1 Research Scholar/Professor visa |
|---|---|
| J-1 Short-Term Scholar | 24 Months |
| J-1 Specialist | No Wait |
| | No Wait |

**For MORE Than 6 Months:**

| If you have or had this J visa category | Wait time for new J-1 Research Scholar/Professor visa |
|---|---|
| J-1 Student Non-Degree | |

| If you have or had this J visa category | Wait time for new J-1 Research Scholar/Professor visa |
| --- | --- |
| 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) | 12 Months |
| | 24 Months |

| If you have or had this J visa category | Wait time for new J-1 Research Scholar/Professor visa |
|---|---|
| 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 |

## Waivers of Two-Year Residency Requirement & Advisory Opinions

**Waivers**

Yale sponsored J-1 Exchange Visitors considering an application for a waiver of the two-year home residency requirement must meet with their OISS adviser [22] before beginning the application process, so they can plan the entire process, including possible next steps switching to H-1B status. OISS will not be able to extend J-1 status once a waiver has been received, and/or you may no longer be eligible to transfer to another J-1 sponsor, so the **first step in applying for a waiver is normally to extend your DS-2019 to the end of your appointment.** International travel may also affect your waiver application.

**Waiver applications may take 12 months or longer* to be approved, depending on the circumstances**. There are five bases for a waiver application [23] and not all are available to every J-1 Exchange Visitor. The most frequent basis is being on the Exchange Visitor Skills List [20] for their home country. Most but not all Exchange Visitors will seek a waiver based on a 'No Objection' statement from their home country.

The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs Exchange Visitor website [24] will guide you through the waiver process. The waiver application is a personal application and OISS advisers are not able to advise you on application details. Please review the steps carefully before starting the process.

**Please note:** Once an individual is notified that the U.S. Department of State (DoS) has sent a favorable recommendation that the waiver of the two-year home residency requirement be granted, per DOS the J-1 “exchange visitor is no longer considered eligible for an extension of program beyond the end date shown on the current DS-2019, even though they may not have completed the maximum duration of participation permitted for

the category."

When the Department of State approves your request, a recommendation letter will be sent to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The final waiver, Form I-612, will be mailed to you from USCIS and is required for any change of immigration status application, such as moving to H-1B or U.S. Permanent Residency.

#### Advisory Opinions

An advisory opinion is a request to the Department of State's Waiver Review Division as to whether you are subject to the two-year home residency requirement or not. You should only request an advisory opinion after you have discussed your J status with your OISS adviser [25].

The Advisory Opinion request [26] should include a cover letter explaining why they believe they are not subject to the two-year home residency requirement, legible copies of all DS-2019 or IAP-66 forms, copies of all J-1 visa stamps from U.S. embassies (except for Canadian citizens) and in some cases evidence of funding received during their J-1 visa. This process may take 3 to 4 months.

**Processing times may vary and change at any time.*

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## Travel-Related Requirements

### Travel with the Appropriate Documents & Travel Signature

It is important that your travel documents are up-to-date to avoid any problems when you are returning to the U.S. Check our travel pages for F-1 and J-1 students [27] well in advance of a planned trip.

#### Travel Signature

Make sure your document has a valid travel signature. This will be on page 2 of your I-20 or on page 1 of your DS-2019. Travel signatures are valid for one year and good for multiple entries. Only Yale-sponsored visas will have Yale travel signatures. If your F or J visa is sponsored by a third party, your travel signature will be obtained through your visa sponsor.

##### Obtaining a New Travel Signature

- F-1 Students: please contact your designated OISS adviser and they will electronically send you a new I-20 with a travel signature.
- J-1 Students: please contact your designated OISS adviser and they will electronically send you a new DS-2019 with a travel signature.

### Keep Your Passport Valid for Up to 6 Months into the Future

Passports can be renewed by your consulate in New York, Boston, or DC. Find information about the nearest consulate [28] here. Your passport should be valid for a minimum of six months into the future. Some countries have an agreement with the U.S. that automatically extends passport validity for 6 months [29], for U.S. entry purposes only.

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## Employment and Tax-Related Requirements

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### Obtain Proper Employment Authorization and Understand Employment Restrictions

Work only with permission and within hourly limits. The F-1 regulations allow on-campus employment under a few specific circumstances and with some limitations. J-1 regulations require prior authorization for both on and off-campus work. Before accepting an offer of employment, check with OISS well in advance to make sure the employment is allowable. Off-campus employment requires special authorization from either OISS or USCIS and the approval process may be lengthy. Working without the proper authorization is considered a serious violation of your student immigration status. See our Employment pages for F-1 [30] or J-1 [31] students, or contact your OISS adviser [6] to learn more about employment.

### Comply with U.S. Tax Filing Requirements

EVERYONE must file taxes in the U.S., even if you had no U.S. income. Learn more on our U.S. Taxes page [32].

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## Other Requirements

### Do not Apply for or Accept Government/Public Assistance

When applying for a nonimmigrant visa, applicants have to document that they have the financial resources to support themselves and any family members with them. Accepting taxpayer-funded public benefits can jeopardize your legal status and future visa applications, change of status applications and admission to the U.S. if it is determined that you could become a public burden. Public benefits that count towards the "public charge inadmissibility" rule broadly include any Federal, State, or local cash assistance for income maintenance, SNAP (commonly known as food stamps), certain government housing programs, and Medicaid. Refer to our Accepting Public Assistance page [33] or USCIS Public Charge Resources [34] for additional information.

### Follow U.S. Laws and Yale Policies

Comply with Yale's academic and conduct policies and all U.S. federal and state laws. Violating a Yale policy or U.S. law may have negative consequences for your U.S. immigration status. Learn more on our Legal Considerations [35] page.

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## Consequences of Not Maintaining Your Status

If you do not maintain your immigration status, your legal permission to remain in the U.S., as well as your ability to return in the future, may be in jeopardy. This goes for your accompanying dependents' statuses as well. If you think you have violated your immigration status, immediately contact your OISS adviser [6] who may be able to help you navigate a status violation. If you have failed to maintain your F-1 student status and wish to return to, or transfer to Yale, you must apply for and be granted reinstatement to F-1 student status [36] by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

**Links**
[1] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/442 [2] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/199 [3] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/4840 [4] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/168 [5] http://connect.oiss.yale.edu [6] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/184 [7] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/645 [8] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/643 [9] https://cipe.yale.edu/ [10] http://world-toolkit.yale.edu/ [11] https://nursing.yale.edu/global-health/office-global-affairs-and-planetary-health [12] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/646 [13] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/5598 [14] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/2912 [15] https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/EVP-Welcome-Brochure-2022.pdf [16] https://j1visa.state.gov/programs/college-and-university-student/ [17] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/5451 [18] https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-22/chapter-I/subchapter-G/part-62/subpart-A/section-62.10 [19] https://oiss.yale.edu/programs-events/english-conversation-groups [20] https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html [21] http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html [22] https://oiss.yale.edu/about/connect-with-oiss [23] https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor/eligibility.html [24] https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor/how-to-apply-waiver.html [25] http://oiss.yale.edu/about/contact-oiss [26] https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/advisory-opinions.html [27] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/5364 [28] https://www.usembassy.gov/ [29] http://www.ustraveldocs.com/ci/9-FAM-41.104-Exhibit-I.pdf [30] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/158 [31] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/446 [32] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/554 [33] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/58 [34] https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-processes-and-procedures/public-charge/public-charge-resources [35] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/5035 [36] https://oiss.yale.edu/node/648