The following information is for students in J-1 status under Columbia’s Exchange Visitor Program who are expected to complete an academic program at the end of the spring 2016 term, according to ISSO and SEVIS records. May 18th, 2016 is the official date of completion for J-1 purposes.

Please scroll down for more information about the first 5 topics.

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1. Students in J-1 status who are departing the United States after completing their programs have a 30-day grace period to remain in the U.S. in J-1 status to prepare for departure.  

2. Students who plan to apply for post-completion Academic Training (AT) are requested to do so by Friday, May 6th.

3. Students who need more time to complete their programs and are eligible for an extension of their DS-2019 may apply for an extension any time during the semester, but preferably before May 6th.

4. Students who are going to begin a new program of study at Columbia in fall 2016 should submit a complete application for a new DS-2019 within 30 days of completing the current program.

5. Students who plan to continue studies at another U.S. university should consult with an ISSO advisor to request a "Transfer Out" release date BEFORE completing your current program.


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1. ARE YOU PLANNING TO LEAVE THE UNITED STATES AFTER COMPLETING YOUR PROGRAM? 

If you are planning to depart the U.S. after completing your program, J-1 regulations allow you to remain in the U.S. in J-1 status up to thirty days beyond your completion date. For students who are completing May 18 the grace period will end on June 17.

The grace period does NOT permit you to leave the U.S. and return in J-1 status during this time—it allows you only to remain in the US and prepare for departure. Any time beyond that, even a day, is in violation of your status.

2. ARE YOU PLANNING TO REMAIN IN THE UNITED STATES AND SEEK EMPLOYMENT IN YOUR FIELD OF STUDY?

If you are eligible and would like to gain experience by working in the U.S. that is integral to your program of study, you may apply for authorization to engage in Academic Training (AT). J-1 regulations require you to apply for Academic Training BEFORE the completion of your program. AT is authorized by the ISSO and does not require an application to the immigration agency.
AT is defined as employment integral to your program of study, and must be recommended by your academic adviser. An appropriate job offer is required to apply for and be granted AT authorization. You should prepare your AT application for the ISSO IN ADVANCE of coming to the office.

Note that federal regulations for J-1 AT are very specific. You will need a letter from your academic adviser referencing your specific offer of employment as described in the link for AT below.


Come to the ISSO with your passport, DS-2019 and a print-out of your electronic I-94 arrival record from https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94 to apply for AT by the end of the term.

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3. DO YOU NEED AN EXTENSION TO COMPLETE YOUR PROGRAM OF STUDY?

To be eligible for an extension, you need to have been full-time every semester and have valid academic or health reasons for requiring more time. Note that your School may have limits on the amount of time you may remain an enrolled student. If eligible, a letter from your adviser is required (GSAS students require a letter from the DGS), as well as financial documentation to cover the extended period. Refer to information on extending your stay in J-1 status on the ISSO web site at http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/visa/J-1/J_student_extension.html.

Please apply for the extension of stay by May 6th.

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4. HAVE YOU BEEN ADMITTED TO A NEW PROGRAM OF STUDY AT COLUMBIA?

If so, you will need to get a new DS-2019 for the new program. You will need to provide recent financial documentation to cover the additional period of time. Contact the ISSO about qualifying for a new DS-2019. Your SEVIS record will automatically "time out" after the 30 day grace period UNLESS you apply to the ISSO for an extension for a new program. If you will be starting a new degree program at Columbia, please contact the ISSO to effect the change of level.

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5. ARE YOU PLANNING TO ATTEND ANOTHER SCHOOL IN THE U.S. AFTER COMPLETING YOUR PROGRAM AT COLUMBIA?

If you are admitted to a program of study at another institution and plan to continue in J-1 status to pursue the same original objective, you must inform the ISSO of your intention to transfer within 30 days of completing your program here. We are required to "transfer out" your SEVIS record to the next school within 30 days by entering a "release date" into the system. This will be the date when your SEVIS record becomes accessible to the new school, enabling them to issue a new DS-2019 for you and take over your J-1 Exchange Visitor supervision.

Bring to the ISSO (or email the documents listed below as one pdf file to isso@columbia.edu with the subject heading Transfer-Out Form) evidence of your admission to the other school and consult with an ISSO adviser to establish a release date. If you are leaving the U.S. between schools, you should NOT re-enter the U.S. with Columbia’s DS-2019 when you return.

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