

# F-1/J-1 Students: Important Information

## Health Insurance Requirement

All international students and their accompanying dependents at U-M are **required to have health insurance coverage that meets U-M standards**. You will be enrolled in an approved insurance program at the check-in program. If your government or program sponsor is providing you with health insurance, you will later have the opportunity to apply for a waiver of the mandatory health insurance. In order for a waiver to be granted, your health insurance coverage must be proven to meet University standards. **Health insurance is not an option - it is a requirement.**

## Travel

When traveling outside the United States, you need to have the proper documents to return. You may need a valid F-1/J-1 visa (the visa in the passport) to re-enter the U.S. (reentry from Canada, Mexico and the adjacent islands may be covered by special regulations). In addition, your I-20/DS-2019 must have a valid travel signature from an IC advisor. The signature is valid for one year following the signature date (or the end date of your current I-20/DS-2019, whichever is sooner). If you are visiting Canada, you may need to apply for a visitor visa to enter Canada.

## Employment

U.S. government regulations require F-1/J-1 students to be here for the primary purpose of attending school. In general, employment in the U.S. is restricted. J-1 students must [obtain employment authorization](#) before working on-campus. Both J-1 and F-1 students are required to receive proper authorization to work off campus. For more information about U.S. government regulations related to F-1 and J-1 student employment, see [Employment Options for F-1 Students](#) and [Employment Options for J-1 Students](#).

## Dependents

Dependents are defined as the spouse and minor children (under 21 years old) of the F-1/J-1 student. The F-2 spouse of an F-1 student may not engage in full-time study, and the F-2 child may only study full-time if the study is in an elementary or secondary school (kindergarten through 12th grade). The F-2 spouse and child may engage in study that is avocational or recreational in nature. F-2 dependents are not allowed to work in the U.S. J-2 dependents are allowed to work. It is not enough to be in J-2 status to be allowed to work, but J-2 status does give the person the right to apply for work authorization from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The J-2 does not have legal permission to work until the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is approved.

## For J-1 Students Only: Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement [212(e)]

Under specific circumstances, a J-1 exchange visitor may incur a "two-year home physical presence requirement." The J-2 dependents are also subject to 212(e) if the J-1 principal participant is subject to that requirement. This means that neither the J-1 nor the J-2 may change immigration status to H, L, or Permanent Residency without first returning to his/her country for 2 years, or obtaining a waiver of this requirement. If 212(e) applies, change of status to another non-immigrant classification (such as F-1) in the U.S. is prohibited. However, the person who is subject to the two-year requirement is allowed to apply for most other types of visas (excluding the ones listed above) from abroad. The notation of 212(e) is usually indicated on the J visa stamp and/or DS-2019. For more information about 212(e), please visit the [U.S. Department of State web site](#).

## Taxes

In general, F-1/J-1 students must file federal tax forms every year they are in the U.S. The deadlines to file the forms are April 15, if U.S. money is earned (this includes money earned from graduate student assistantships), and June 15, if no U.S. money is earned. For more information, go to the IC web site: [www.internationalcenter.umich.edu/](http://www.internationalcenter.umich.edu/) (Home » Resources » Taxes & Social Security).

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