

# Exchange Visitors: 12 and 24 Mo. Bars on Repeat Participation

**Disclaimer:** KGI OISS has prepared this guide to provide you with general guidance on the 12 and 24 month bars on repeat participation affecting *some* J-1 Exchange Visitors. However, any advice provided to you by our office, as well as the information in this document, should not be construed as legal advice. 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.

## Definition of the Bars

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 chart below summarizes the J-1 categories that contain bars. If you have never before had J-1 visa sponsorship, or had J-1 status in a category not listed, then the bars do not apply to you. If you believe you are subject to one of these bars and have already had a DS-2019 issued, please contact our office immediately.

<b>If previous category was:</b>	<b>And time spent in category was:</b>	<b>Wait time for new J-1 Research Scholar/Professor visa is:</b>
J-1 Research Scholar/Professor	Any amount of time (1 day to 5 years)	24 months
J-1 Student (including non-degree)	More than 6 months	12 months
J-1 Specialist	More than 6 months	12 months
J-1 short term scholar or dependent of short term scholar	Any amount of time (1 day to 6 mo)	No wait
J-2 dependent of Research Scholar/Professor Category	More than 6 months	24 months
J-2 dependent of any other J-1 category	More than 6 months	12 months

## Extending Status

J-1 Research Scholar and Professors are limited to a maximum of 5 continuous years in this category. The total stay in the United States for Exchange Visitors in the “Short-Term Scholar” category is six months. Once status is interrupted, the 12 and 24 month bars begin to apply so it is important to extend your status prior to expiration if you wish to continue participating in the J-1 program. You are eligible to apply for an extension of stay if:

1. You are working toward the objective shown on your most recent DS-2019;
2. You are maintaining your status as a J-1 Exchange Visitor;
3. You can demonstrate adequate funding for the period of the proposed extension; *and*
4. Your extension will not carry you beyond the maximums listed for your category.

If you are now in the United States in your final year in either category, or if in the last year you concluded the maximum period in either category, please contact our office.