J Visa Status – Bars to Re-entering the U.S. Following Program Completion

Exchange visitors and their dependents sponsored for J-1 or J-2 visas can be subject to certain “bars” which can prevent re-entry to the U.S. in subsequent J programs. There are two types of bars: the 12-month bar and the 24-month bar.

12-Month Bar
The 12-month bar prevents a J exchange visitor from new program participation as a J-1 research scholar or professor if he or she has been physically present in the US in J-1 or J-2 status for six months or more in the 12-month period immediately preceding the proposed DS-2019 start date. Time spent in the J1 short-term scholar category does not count towards the 12-month bar. The 12-month bar applies to both the J-1 primary and any J-2 dependents. The 12-month bar does not prevent the J-1 or the J-2 from returning to the US in any other visa status. The 12-month bar does not apply to those who are subject to the 24-month bar. In other words, those individuals who are subject to the 24-month bar will not be subject to an additional 12-month bar.

24-Month Bar
The 24-month (two years) bar does not allow for immediate repeat participation in the J professor or research scholar categories for those who complete their program participation. If the professor or research scholar completes a full five years of program participation with one of more sponsors’ or if, before the full five-year period is over, the professor or research scholar completes his or her program, he or she is subject to the 24-month bar. In this case, the continuity of the five-year period is broken, the five-year window is “closed,” the individual is not eligible to access the remaining unused time, and the individual must wait for two years before beginning a new program as a J professor or research scholar. However, he or she may be allowed to enter at an earlier date as a short-term scholar. The 24-month bar applies to both the J1 primary and any J-2 dependents. The 24-month bar does not prevent the J-1 or J-2 from returning to the US in any other visa status.

Please contact immigration@uga.edu if you have further questions regarding J bars to re-entry.