12 and 24-Month Bars for J-1 Scholars

12-Month Bar

Exchange Visitors (EVs) who have been in the U.S. in any J visa status (including J-2 status) for any part of the 12-month period preceding the proposed program begin date in the Professor or Research Scholar Category, will not be eligible for those categories.

Note: The 12-month bar does not prevent individuals from returning to the U.S. in any other visa status or in another J visa category such as Short-Term Scholar or Student.

There are three exceptions to the 12-month bar rule:
1. J-1 transfers: EVs who will begin a program by transferring to a new program sponsor.
2. Presence in J status of less than 6 months: EVs whose prior physical presence in J status was less than six months in duration.
3. Presence in J status as a Short-Term Scholar: Time spent in the U.S. as a Short-Term Scholar does not trigger the 12-month bar.

24-Month Bar

EVs who participate in the Professor or Research Scholar category are subject to what is known as the 24-month bar on “repeat participation”. EVs subject to the 24-month bar may not return to the U.S. as a J-1 Scholar in the Professor or Research Scholar Category for a 24-month period. The bar also applies to J-2 dependents.

When a Research Scholar or Professor completes or ends their J-1 program early, the 24-month bar period begins to accrue. The bar is based on participation in the Research Scholar or Professor Category, not the duration spent in the program.

In order for ISSS to properly maintain your SEVIS record and advise on the 24-month bar, ISSS should be notified upon early completion of any program or if there will be an extended period of time spent outside of the U.S. If you will be outside the U.S. for longer than 30 days, please see our Temporary Out of Country Absence Policy Guide for more information or make an appointment with a J-1 Scholar Advisor to discuss your situation.

Note: The 24-month bar does not prevent individuals from returning to the U.S. in another visa status.

24-Month Bar vs. the Two-Year Home Residency Requirement (212e)

The 24-month bar is separate from the two-year home residency requirement, also known as 212(e). 212(e) may apply to visitors in any J visa category, while the 24-month bar only applies to EVs in the Research Scholar or Professor categories and their dependents.

Note: An EV can be subject to one while not being subject to the other, or can be subject to both. For more information on the 212(e), please see our 212(e) Policy Guide.