



SMU

International Student & Scholar
Services Office (ISSS)

J-2 WORK AUTHORIZATION INFORMATION

Work Permission for J-2 Dependents

This information is for the J-2 dependents of J-1 Exchange Visitors who want to apply for J-2 work authorization.

Conditions you must meet as a J-2 dependent:

- You must hold valid J-2 status and the Exchange Visitor must hold valid J-1 status.
- Your income may not be used to support your J-1 spouse or parent.
- You may only work after you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card from the United States Citizenship & Immigration Service (USCIS) and only during the dates indicated on the EAD card.
- You may work part-time or full-time, at any job, for any employer (except that you may not practice medicine, even if you have a license). There is no legal limit to the amount that you may earn.
- USCIS can authorize J-2 employment for as long as the J-1 Exchange Visitor has permission to stay or for a period of four years, whichever is shorter. Permission to stay expires on the date shown on the DS-2019 form. Please note: USCIS only authorizes periods of work for one year at a time.

How to apply

In most cases, applications for employment authorization for J-2 dependents should be mailed to the USCIS Service Center serving your region. Please schedule an appointment with an International Student Adviser so that they can help you complete all forms properly and included all necessary materials and fees.

What to bring for your appointment

- 3 copies of all DS 2019s for the J2 and J1
- 3 copies of passport pages
- 3 copies of I94 card of J1 and J2 (front and back)
- 3 copies of J1 and J2 visa
- Form I-765 (completed during your appointment). Question 16 on the I-765 should be completed as follows: **(c) (5) ()**
- 3 copies of any previous EAD card (front and back), if applicable
- 2 color passport photos
- A letter from you, the J-2 dependent, to the District Director requesting work permission is required. The point of the letter is not to demonstrate need; it is to show DHS that the J-1 Exchange Visitor has sufficient resources for his or her own expenses and will not depend on your earnings. In the letter you should indicate the sources and amount of the J-1 Exchange Visitor's support and include a short budget or statement of family expenses and show the J-2's reason for wanting to work, which may include earning money for a worthwhile interest or activity such as family travel or recreational or cultural activities. In your letter you must say specifically that income from your earnings will not be used for the J-1 Exchange Visitor's support. We

recommend attaching financial certification as well. The letter must also include the requested employment dates.

- Check made payable to the Department of Homeland Security (check website for exact fee: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm>)

Note: You may also want to include 3 copies of an English translation of your marriage certificate if your names are different.

During the appointment, we will prepare the envelope for you with the mailing address of USCIS. We will give you the envelope with the J-2 work authorization application enclosed ready to be mailed to USCIS. It is then your responsibility to mail the envelope to the Texas Service Center. Do not send it certified or registered mail. Send it regular first class U.S. mail.

It is expected that it will take 2-3 months or longer to process your request. It is best to plan on 90 days. You will receive two Notice of Action forms from the USCIS Texas Service Center. All USCIS forms are mailed to the SMU ISSS Office. The first USCIS notice will inform you that your application is being processed. When your receipt arrives the SMU International Office will contact you. The second notice will actually contain your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card. When your EAD card arrives the SMU International Office will contact you. The card will be mailed directly to the SMU International Office for you to pick up.

Authorization to Work

You can only begin work after you receive the EAD card and only for the dates shown on the card.

When you begin work, your employer will ask you to complete Form I-9 "Employment Eligibility Verification", which requires you to document your work authorization. For Form I-9, your EAD card is acceptable as both proof of your identity and your permission to work.

Unlike J-1 exchange visitors, J-2 dependents are subject to Social Security taxes.

If the J-1 permission to stay (as shown on the DS-2019) expires, so will your EAD card regardless of the expiration date on the EAD card. Additionally, J-2 employment authorization is valid only if the J-1 is maintaining status.

Please note that if you need to renew your J-2 work authorization, it requires a new application to the USCIS Texas Service Center.