

Which visa should I choose?

UC San Diego Extension International Programs is authorized to issue Form I-20 for F-1 Student Visas and Form DS2019 for J-1 Exchange Visitor Student Visas. To determine which is the appropriate visa for you, refer to the chart below to view eligibility requirements for each type of visa, and to compare the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

Comparing **F-1** and **J-1** Student visa Eligibility Requirements and Benefits

	F-1	J-1
Program of Study	Full-time English language programs, certificate programs, and university credit programs.	Full-time English language programs, certificate programs, and university credit programs.
Funding Source	All sources	51% or more of required funding is from sources other than personal or family. For example: U.S. government, student's home government, an international organization, scholarship, employer, etc.
SEVIS I-901 Mandatory Fee	\$350	\$220
U.S. Entry Grace Period	30 days	30 days
Post-Completion Grace Period	60 days	30 days
Health Insurance	Required	Required
On-Campus Employment	No authorization required	Authorization required

	Optional Practical Training (OPT)	Academic Training (AT)
Off-Campus Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English language programs do not qualify Academic year of study required After completion of program 12 months maximum duration Requires USCIS approval with \$410 application fee and 3-5 month waiting period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English language programs do not qualify No specific duration of study required Duration limited to same as period of study. Example: 12 weeks study = 12 weeks AT Requires recommendation by academic advisor and authorized by school's Responsible Officer – no application, fee or waiting period
Transfer to Other Institutions	Allowed	Allowed only to complete same educational objective.
Study by Dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F-2 limited to part-time Limited to courses that are avocational or recreational in nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> J-2 can be part-time or full-time Can be for ESL, degree or non-degree
Employment for Dependents	F-2 cannot work under any circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions Requires USCIS approval with \$410 application fee and 3-5 month waiting period
Change of Status in U.S.	Possible	Possible if not limited by regulation 212(e)
Two-year Home Residence Requirement (212e)	Not applicable to students in F-1 status	<p>J-1 student and J-2 dependent(s) may be subject depending on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source of funding Home country skills list Medical education or training <p>If subject to the 212(e) home residency requirement, you are required to return to your country of nationality or last legal residence for two years upon completion of J-1 program before being eligible for certain immigration benefits.</p>