

Date: May 21, 2020  
Subject: Trainee and Intern Extensions Beyond the Maximum Duration

Dear Trainee and Intern Sponsors:

The Department of State (Department) appreciates your continued efforts to address the health, safety, and welfare concerns of your exchange visitors during this challenging time. In order to help sponsors manage the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis, this email contains important information regarding an optional, one-time opportunity to seek an extension of program participation beyond the maximum duration for trainees and interns to make up for the time missed on their exchange programs because of the COVID-19 situation.

Due to the extreme challenges that COVID-19 has presented for travel and other aspects of our exchanges, the Department wants to confirm to sponsors and host organizations that it expects to look favorably upon sponsors' requests pursuant to 22 CFR § 62.43(c) to extend the programs for trainees and interns beyond maximum duration for the time lost to COVID-19. Such extensions will allow exchange visitors to complete their programs as described in their Training/Internship Placement Plans (T/IPPs). This initiative recognizes that events due to COVID-19-related issues interrupted training and internship programs.

To pursue extensions beyond maximum duration under 22 CFR § 62.43(c), sponsors must reassess the eligibility of both exchange visitors and their host organizations. To be eligible for the extension, trainees and interns, as well as their host organizations, must be compliant with all Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) regulations and sponsor policies, including 22 CFR § 62.22(b)(ii), which states that "Exchange Visitor Program training and internship programs must not be used as substitutes for ordinary employment or work purposes; nor may they be used under any circumstances to displace American workers."

Once sponsors have determined which interns and trainees wish to complete their programs, they can reach out to sponsors to determine which internships and training programs can resume. All three parties should sign new T/IPPs that reflect extended dates and, if appropriate, changes in phases.

Next, sponsors should submit requests for one-time extensions in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) for all interested and eligible interns and trainees. Sponsors should continue to monitor SEVIS records and apply for extensions prior to exchange visitors' program end dates, if possible. Finally, intern and trainee sponsors must submit an extension request and justification for each exchange visitor to [DesignationIntern@state.gov](mailto:DesignationIntern@state.gov) or [DesignationTrainee@state.gov](mailto:DesignationTrainee@state.gov) by **August 15, 2020**. Extension requests must include updated T/IPPs and a completed "Intern or Trainee extension request" Excel spreadsheet (see attachment). This spreadsheet provides the following information for each exchange visitor: (1) SEVIS identification number, (2) full name (last name, first name), (3) date of birth, (4) country of citizenship, (5) sponsor program number, (6) the requested program end date, and (7) Pay.gov receipt for the \$367 extension fee.

Once the Office of Designation has granted extension requests for one or more eligible exchange visitors, sponsors should reprint Forms DS-2019 for those exchange visitors whose programs are

extended and provide them with updated and signed forms as soon as possible. In addition, sponsors should update the T/PPs in SEVIS to reflect either a new or updated training phase and provide an updated copy to the exchange visitor and the host organization.

The Department is continuing to monitor closely the COVID-19 situation and its effect on the EVP. We will supplement this guidance with additional information and/or will adjust our guidance, as needed.

Once again, thank you for your work, patience, and understanding as we navigate through these unprecedented times together.

Sincerely,

Office of Private Sector Exchange