



Frequently Asked Questions Academic Year 2025-2026

Please note that information provided below is subject to change.

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J-1 Student Visas

What should I know about applying for a J-1 visa for my program at Duke?

- Click **Support from Duke** on <https://globaled.dukeunshan.edu.cn/outbound/programs/duke/> and you will see the US J-1 Visa Guide. You will find detailed information and steps required to complete your visa application in the visa guide.

Are there specific program guidelines that J-1 student visa holders should be aware of?

- J-1 students must pursue the course of study required by their Duke programs or schools and must make satisfactory progress toward a specific educational objective.
- J-1 student visa holders are required to enroll in a full load of Duke courses to maintain visa status (see details in the Academics and Summer Session sections).
- J-1 students are permitted to work on campus only if the employment is part of a scholarship, fellowship, etc. connected to their course of study. No other work is permitted unless specifically authorized in writing by the Duke Visa Services (DVS) in advance. On-campus employment is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full-time during holidays and school vacations.
- Volunteer/unpaid work cannot be assumed to be permitted. Before engaging in any kind of employment (including volunteer, unpaid work), students must first consult their DVS advisors whose written approval is required in advance.
- Remote work for employers located outside of the US is not permitted.
- Academic training is permitted only beginning after your program start date. If you stay within the stipulated time limits, academic training allows you to work part-time while classes are in session and full-time during vacation periods. Certain conditions must be met to qualify for academic Training. Email dkurelations@duke.edu if you are interested in pursuing academic training.
- J-1 visa holders must carry health insurance that meets or exceeds the minimum criteria for the full duration of your time in the US in J-1 visa status. J-1 students are required to be insured by the Duke Student Medical Insurance Plan (SMIP). If you are in the US prior to or after the SMIP coverage period (fall coverage is August through December and spring coverage is January through May), you are responsible for purchasing additional short-term coverage.

Why do DKU students come to Duke on a J-1 visa and not an F-1 visa?

- The DKU@Duke program is a one semester plus an optional summer session visiting student program. Duke is approved by the US Department of Homeland Security to bring all international visiting students in on J-1 student visas.

Why is the J-1 visa better for me than an F-1 visa?

- Both J-1 visas and F-1 visas have their advantages. For a one-semester program, J-1 visas offer students the ability to engage in Academic Training (a form of work authorization for J-1 students) when they study at Duke for a regular semester. For students interested in on-campus employment, they should request on-campus employment authorization from Duke Visa Services. For those seeking eligible off-campus employment, they should apply for Academic Training, a process that will be reviewed by the Duke Office of DKU Relations and Duke Visa Services. F-1 students can only become eligible for OPT or CPT (forms of work authorization for F-1 students) after they complete at least one academic year of study, which, critically, will not happen in the normal DKU@Duke program. Therefore, the J-1 visa is more beneficial in terms of employment opportunities for DKU students when they study at Duke.

Am I subject to the two-year home residency requirement?

- Information about this is provided in the J-1 Visa Guide available to all DKU@Duke students. Spring and Fall students should refer to their respective links. If you cannot find them, feel free to email dkurelations@duke.edu.

Can I still apply for an H1B visa if I am on a J-1 visa?

- Regardless of whether students are subject to the two-year home residency requirement, J-1 status does not make students ineligible for the H1B visa lottery, nor does it reduce the chances of being successfully selected to apply for an H1B visa. The H1B visa lottery treats J-1 students and F-1 students equally. The fact is, US employers are not required (and often are not willing) to sponsor employees for immigration, presenting a hurdle for both J-1 and F-1 students.
- If a J-1 student wishes to apply for an H1B visa without fulfilling the two-year home residency requirement, they must apply for a waiver before applying for the H1B visa. Over the years, we have set up systems informing students of this requirement and of timelines for starting the process, however we cannot be responsible for students' waiver applications, because it is not just an application to the US government, it is an application to the student's home country. Each country has different requirements, processes, and often languages, and some countries specifically require students to apply by themselves.

How do I apply for a waiver of the two-year home residency requirement?

- The two-year home residency requirement poses challenges for students who want to work in the US right after graduating from DKU. This challenge can be resolved by planning to apply for a waiver at the right time. The two-year residency requirement does not prevent students from attending graduate school in the US on an F-1 visa. Information related to the waiver application is provided in the J-1 Visa Guide available to all DKU@Duke students, including the waiver application process and the best time to apply for it.

Tuition and Fees

Will I have to pay tuition and fees if I spend a semester at Duke?

- Students will pay tuition for the Fall and Spring semester to DKU. DKU financial aid and scholarship will be applied.
- Students will pay tuition for Summer Session to Duke. There is no financial aid or other support available for summer.
- All other fees and program costs (such as housing, dining plans, insurance, student fees, etc.) are billed by and paid directly to Duke.
- DKU is not a participating school for Title IV funding (the U.S. Federal Student Aid Program) and therefore DKU students are not able to take out a traditional U.S. student loan. Although Duke University has this designation, it is not applicable to DKU students, even while they study at Duke, because Duke is not their home institution. Study Away students are considered guest students from the perspective of the U.S. Federal Student Aid Program. If you have questions about financial aid, please direct them to the DKU Financial Aid office at international-finaid@dukekunshan.edu.cn or ug-finaid@dukekunshan.edu.cn and someone will be glad to assist you. Kindly note that the Duke Office of Financial Aid is not able to assist DKU students in this matter.

What is the estimated cost for attending a semester at Duke?

- Detailed rates and additional information on student financials can be found at the link below <https://dkurelations.duke.edu/students/dku-students-duke/financials/>.
- Costs will be updated to reflect the latest information available for both summer and fall/spring terms.

If I study at Duke, when are bill payments due to Duke University?

- The general billing schedule is as follows:

	Bill Date	Due Date
Summer 1	Mid-April	Mid-May
Summer 2	Mid-May	Mid-June
Fall	Late June	Early August
Spring	Late November	Early January

For specific deadlines, see <https://finance.duke.edu/bursar/Billing>

Will I have to pay tuition and fees if I enroll in Duke Summer Session?

- Duke tuition and fees apply for participation in Duke Summer Session. For details, see <https://summersession.duke.edu/duke-students/tuition-aid>.

If I pay the \$1,000 non-refundable deposit to enroll in the semester program and then I am unable to obtain a visa, will I receive a refund?

- Students who are not able to secure a Duke-sponsored J-1 visa or who are not able travel to the U.S. due to travel restrictions can request a refund of their deposit. Note that denial of a visa due to insufficient processing time as a result of late application is not grounds for a deposit refund.

Academics

What courses can I take while at Duke?

- All DKU students at Duke must enroll in a full course load (min. 4 Duke credits, equivalent to 16 DKU credits) for the fall/spring semester.
- For Summer enrollment, please see the Summer Session section of this document.
- Please refer to the Advising Guide for Study at Duke (found in DKU OGE website) for detailed guidelines on course selection and enrollment for your program at Duke.
- You are expected to consult with your DKU academic advisor prior to registering for Duke courses. Your advisor will help you select courses that will best serve your academic needs and keep you on track to complete DKU major and degree requirements.
- Your Duke academic advisor and academic dean are also available to guide and support you. You can find their contact information in DukeHub.

Can I opt to receive a S/U grade for a course with a letter grade?

- S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) grading basis at Duke is similar to the CR/NC (Credit/No Credit) grading at DKU.
- For some Duke courses, S/U is used exclusively, and students do not have the option to receive a letter grade.
- To see whether a Duke course is offered with S/U grade or letter grade, check Grading information in DukeHub, under Class Details. If Grading is listed as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, this means the course is offered with S/U grade; if it is Graded, it means the course is offered with letter grade.
- For courses that typically receive a letter grade, you may opt to receive a S/U grade by following [Duke's processes and deadlines](#). Courses taken at Duke on S/U basis will transfer back to DKU and will be recorded using DKU's CR/NC system. **Such courses will be subject to all regulations and limitations stated for the DKU CR/NC policy in the DKU Bulletin, including all restrictions on the number of credits and the type of courses can be taken on this basis.**
- Students declaring S/U at Duke are required to consult their DKU academic advisor to ensure that they will be using a DKU CR/NC option in an appropriate manner. Students who use S/U on a Duke course that cannot be transferred as CR/NC at DKU will not earn credits for the course and may be ineligible to retake it at either institution. More information can be found under the section "Transfer of Work Taken Elsewhere" and the section "Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) Grading System" in the DKU undergraduate Bulletin.

Who provides advising and support while I am at Duke?

- Prior to your arrival at Duke, you will work with your DKU faculty advisor to discuss your course selection.
- You may also consult with Duke's Academic Dean for DKU Students (Liguo Zhang, liguo.zhang@duke.edu), Duke's Director of DKU Student Engagement (Irina Adams, irina.adams@duke.edu), and Senior Program Coordinator for Academic Support (Meiren Chen, meiren.chen@duke.edu). For more information about academic resources available to support you at Duke, please refer to the Advising Guide. Additional resources will also be introduced during your program orientation.
- While your advisors will provide guidance, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are taking an appropriate course load, particularly if you are a J-1 visa holder.

Course Registration

When will I register for Duke courses?

- Once you have completed your program enrollment to study at Duke, you will be given access to DukeHub and will be assigned a specific registration window.
- You will register at the same time as your Duke peers in the same class, based on your assigned registration window.
- For the Fall semester, registration begins in early April. For the Spring semester, registration begins in October. A shopping cart period precedes registration allowing you to view available course and prepare to register.
- For additional details, please refer to: <https://registrar.duke.edu/2025-2026-academic-calendar/> and <https://registrar.duke.edu/registration/about-registration>.

Housing and Residence Life

Where will I live while at Duke?

- During your program at Duke, you will live in Duke residence halls on the Duke campus.
- Housing assignments will be made by Duke Housing and Residence Life (HRL). You will have the opportunity to specify housing and roommate preferences in your application, but we cannot guarantee these will be honored. For the academic year 2025-2026, HRL will determine which dorm buildings will be assigned to DKU students. Housing details will be communicated at a later date.
- For additional details regarding Duke housing, see <https://students.duke.edu/living/housing/housing-assignments/fall-housing/>.

When and how do I sign up for housing?

- HRL develops a housing application timeline for visiting DKU students. You will be invited to apply for housing prior to your program at Duke. For fall semester, the housing application will open for DKU students in June. For spring semester, the housing application will open for DKU students in October.

Can I choose to live with relatives in the area or arrange for my own apartment off campus?

- Living on campus is an essential part of your study at Duke program. For this reason, DKU students are required to sign up for Duke housing.
- Students who require medical accommodations, including single rooms, should work directly with the [Student Disability Access Office](#) (SDAO) to request accommodations.

Will I be able to select a roommate?

- You will be asked to indicate a roommate preference when you complete your housing application. HRL will attempt to assign roommates based on student preferences where possible.

Can I expect to have residential staff and any kind of in-person programming in my residence hall?

- Duke residence halls are staffed by residence coordinators (RCs) as well as undergraduate Resident Advisors (RAs).
- Residential staff offers programming in conjunction with the Duke Office of DKU Relations and other offices within Student Affairs.

When can I move in?

- The move-in and move-out dates for your program at Duke will be communicated once they are set. If you need to arrive in Durham prior to the move-in date, you will have to arrange separate housing. A list of resources is available on the [DKU@Duke Canvas site](#).

Can I bring a car to campus?

- Yes, although parking on campus requires a paid permit that can be expensive and difficult to secure. You can find information about parking, including the application for permits, here: <https://parking.duke.edu/parking>.

Dining Plans

What is a dining plan? Do I have to purchase one?

- All students residing in Duke residence halls are required to purchase a Duke dining plan. Dining plan enrollment is part of the housing application process. When you confirm your housing assignment, you will be prompted to select your dining plan.
- Several Duke dining plans are available, and you should research options before making a selection. For plan profiles and information on making changes to dining plans, visit <https://students.duke.edu/living/dining/>.
- In addition to the traditional dining plans, Food Points and Flexible Spending Accounts are supplementary ways to pay for food. Detailed information can be found via <https://students.duke.edu/living/dining/>.
- Please note that all meals that are part of your plan must be used each day; they do not carry over. If you are unsure what plan to purchase, you can start with a smaller plan and add food points as needed to supplement your plan.

Campus Engagement

What are some opportunities to get involved beyond my classes while at Duke?

- Information about campus engagement and ways to get connected at Duke is shared in your Orientation sessions and posted in the DKU@Duke Canvas site.
- Join student groups: Duke has hundreds of student groups. To find and join a group that matches your interests, go to dukegroups.com and log in with your netID.
- Attend campus events: DODR sends a weekly newsletter featuring a variety of campus events likely to be of interest to DKU students. You can learn about additional events by following student groups or departments social media, checking the Duke event calendar, or visiting dukegroups.com regularly.
- Participate in research:
 - Talk to your Duke Academic Advisor: Academic advisors can provide guidance on finding research opportunities and help you navigate the process.
 - Apply for [Muser](#) Projects: Muser is a platform where faculty and research groups post available projects. It's a great resource to find research positions that match your interests. New project applications are due at the beginning of each semester.
 - Check out Bass Connections projects and courses: [Bass Connections](#) offers interdisciplinary research teams that tackle complex societal problems. New project

- teams are announced at the start of the spring semester for the coming academic year. Check the [Bass Connections FAQ](#) for eligibility and application deadlines.
- Take a course that has an R attribute or [a research-based independent study course](#). Learn more about these options in the Advising Guide.
 - Read the Duke@Duke Newsletter sent by DODR for related trainings and opportunities.
 - Join [Duke Wellness activities](#), [Duke Arts](#) and [DuArts events](#), and watch [music](#) and [theatre performances](#).
 - Participate in sport clubs: Duke has 30+ sport clubs. Check this [webpage](#) for information on how to join a sport club. There are fees for club memberships. Sport Club participants who are registered on [DoSportsEasy](#) are welcome to [apply for financial assistance](#) to help alleviate the cost of dues to participate in a single club.
 - Participate in outdoor adventures: Duke Recreation and Physical Education offers a variety of outdoor trips and activities throughout the semester. These trips are great opportunities to explore new places, stay active, and connect with other students. Check their [website](#) for information on upcoming trips and how to sign up.
 - Utilize campus resources: take advantage of resources such as the Career Center, Academic Resource Center (ARC), Director of Academic Engagement (DAE), and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to support your personal development.
 - Connect with faculty during office hours or outside of class. You can invite professors to a free lunch via the [Flunch Program](#).

What is KSAC?

KSAC, or Kunshan Student Ambassador Council is the Duke-DKU student group dedicated to fostering inter-institutional connections and bridging the gap between Duke University and Duke Kunshan University. It has active members, including Duke and DKU students, on both campuses. Throughout the semester, KSAC organizes events to exchange ideas, share experiences, and connect Duke and DKU students. If you are interested in becoming a KSAC member, email dkurelations@duke.edu.

What are KSOPs?

Kunshan Student Orientation Peers (KSOPs) are Duke and DKU students dedicated to supporting visiting DKU undergraduates during their orientation and acclimation to Duke's campus. They play a critical role in welcoming DKU students and facilitating their success at Duke. If you are interested in becoming a KSOP, email dkurelations@duke.edu for details.

Student Employment

As a visiting DKU student, what kind of employment opportunities am I eligible for?

- If you are a US citizen or permanent resident, there are no restrictions on part-time employment. Please prioritize your course workload and other responsibilities as a student.
- If you are an international student holding a J-1 visa, refer to the section below.

I am a J-1 visa holder. What should I know about employment?

- As a DKU@Duke student, your primary purpose in the US must be to study rather than to be employed. You must pursue the course of study required by your Duke program and make satisfactory progress toward a specific educational objective.
- You are permitted to work on campus, part time, only if the employment is part of a scholarship, fellowship, etc. connected to your course of study. No other work is permitted unless specifically authorized in writing by Duke Visa Services (DVS) in advance. On-campus employment is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full-time during holidays and school vacations. You must complete the initial registration with DVS before receiving on campus employment. After finding an on-campus student employment opportunity, you must apply for [on-campus employment authorization](#).
- Volunteer/unpaid work cannot be assumed to be permitted. Before engaging in any kind of employment (including volunteer, unpaid work), you must first consult your DVS advisor, whose written approval is required in advance.
- [Academic Training](#) is only after your program start date. If you stay within the stipulated time limits, academic training allows you to work part-time while classes are in session and full-time during vacation periods. Certain conditions must be met to qualify for academic training. Email dkurelations@duke.edu if you are interested in pursuing academic training. if you are interested in pursuing academic training.
- Remote work for employers located outside of the US is not permitted.

Am I eligible for work-study at Duke?

- DKU students are not eligible for work-study because DKU, your home institution, is not a participating school for Title IV funding (the U.S. Federal Student Aid Program). However, you can apply for a campus job if it is paid with institutional funds.

How can I find employment opportunities?

- The following resources can help you identify opportunities on campus. The Duke Career Center and your Duke academic advisor can also discuss resources with you.
 - The Duke Student Employment site: <https://duke.studentemployment.ngwebsolutions.com/>
 - [DukeList](#), a centralized listing of campus resources

- Identify places on campus where you might like to work and ask! Consider academic departments, centers, student services departments, shops and restaurants (Duke Recreation and Physical Education, Duke University Libraries, the Nasher Museum of Art).
- Check out flyers, bulletin board posting, “word-of-mouth” advertising, and [The Chronicle](#) classified section
- Network! Talk to friends and upperclassmen
- Duke DVS website provides additional guidance in navigating.

Summer Session and Summer Research

What should I know about Duke Summer Session?

- Please review the Duke Summer Session website (<https://summersession.duke.edu/>) for current information including the Summer Session calendar.
- For in-person courses: If you are a US student, you may enroll in one class or in a full course load during summer sessions. If you are a J-1 visa holder, you must enroll in a full course load of two in-person credits due to visa requirements. A full course load for Summer is defined as 2 course credits per 6-week session.
- For online and hybrid courses: J-1 students physically in the US cannot enroll in online or hybrid summer courses. International students located outside of US can enroll in online courses. There is no restriction for US students to enroll in online or hybrid courses.
- J-1 students at Duke for Fall semesters who wish to pursue in-person coursework during Summer Session may enroll in Summer Session II or both Summer Session I and Summer Session II (you cannot skip Summer II if you wish to participate in Summer I.)
- J-1 students at Duke for Spring semesters who wish to pursue in-person coursework during Summer Session may enroll in Summer Session I OR both Summer Session I and Summer II (you cannot skip Summer I if you wish to participate in Summer II).

When can I start to plan for Summer courses?

- You can start planning in advance based on the projected course list posted on the Summer Session website (<https://summersession.duke.edu/>). The list is updated in January for the following summer. Course registration begins via DukeHub in mid-February.
- Plan to enroll in 2 courses if participating in a 6-week session. A full load is required for J-1 visa holders.

What happens if Summer courses I register for are canceled by Duke University?

- Some Summer courses are offered subject to minimum enrollments and may be cancelled if enrollment limits are not met.

- If a class is cancelled, students will be notified in advance via email and will have the option to select other courses. If one or both of your Summer classes are cancelled, please inform dkurelations@duke.edu at your earliest convenience so we can assist you in substituting courses. Due to the requirement for J-1 visa holders to enroll in a full course load, it's important to be proactive with your Summer enrollment to maintain your visa status. If you fail to meet the course load requirement for maintaining J-1 status, DVS will shorten the program end date on your DS-2019 and you must leave the U.S. immediately. This will affect your J-1 status for the fall semester at Duke if you intended to study at Duke for Fall.

What costs should I expect if I sign up for Duke Summer Session?

- Please review the Tuition and Fees section of this document as well as <https://summersession.duke.edu/duke-students/tuition-aid>. DKU students are responsible for paying tuition and all fees associated with Summer Session directly to Duke.
- During Summer Session, you may elect to live in non-Duke housing off campus if you prefer. If you opt to live in Duke residence halls, housing and dining costs will apply.
- DKU students are billed [Duke tuition](#) for all Duke summer courses they enroll in.

Are there opportunities for DKU students to participate in summer research at Duke?

- You can identify opportunities for summer research via [the Duke Summer Experiences website](#)), via [Muser](#), or individually arrange research opportunities with Duke faculty members. For Spring J-1 visa holders, summer research must be eligible and pre-approved for [Academic Training](#). If you have questions, please contact dkurelations@duke.edu.
- For students studying at Duke in Fall semesters, DODR offers a summer research program during Summer term II. Students with a strong interest in research who are in a position to begin exploring potential Signature Work (SW) pathways, SW project proposal topics, and research methodologies before the beginning of their junior year will be eligible. More details will be provided to students admitted to the Fall cohort each summer.

Health and Safety Information

Do I need to provide a vaccination record?

- All students visiting at Duke are required to provide proof of immunization and complete a TB Screening Questionnaire for evaluation by Duke Student Health. Deadlines will be communicated in advance.
- Visit <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/studenthealth/immunization-compliance>, specifically the information for undergraduates and the FAQs, for additional information. If you are currently at DKU, the Health Clinic may be able to assist you in filling out the required form.
- If you are not in compliance with immunization requirements of the state of North Carolina, you will be able to receive missing vaccinations when you arrive on campus. If you are

enrolled in the Duke SMIP health insurance plan, the cost of immunizations received at Duke is likely to be covered by your plan.

Am I required to buy student health insurance through Duke?

- All students are required to maintain adequate health insurance during their program at Duke. You will either be enrolled in the Duke Student Medical Insurance Plan (SMIP), or you may request a waiver if you already have coverage under another plan that meets Duke's criteria.
- Once enrolled, you are responsible for creating an account with Blue Connect (blueconnectnc.com) for access to your insurance information. You can learn more about how to register for Blue Connect in Canvas.
- Please visit: <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/studenthealth/health-insurance> for more information, including the process for requesting a waiver if eligible.
- Students holding a J-1 visa must carry health insurance that meets or exceeds the minimum criteria for the full duration of their stay in the US in J-1 visa status. J-1 students are required to be insured by the SMIP. If you are in the US prior to or after the SMIP coverage period (fall coverage is August through December and spring coverage is January through May), you are responsible for purchasing additional short-term coverage.
- Students who plan to be at Duke, or international students who plan to stay in the U.S. prior to or after these dates (including those enrolling in summer session), must purchase additional insurance.

Orientation

What can I expect in terms of orientation to Duke?

- Orientation for the DKU@Duke program is mandatory for all students to attend. It consists of online sessions about academic and student life at Duke, which you will complete prior to arrival; and in-person sessions that orient you to Duke, help you get settled, and help you build community. Monitor your email for a full schedule.
- Recordings of orientation sessions, as well as additional resources for visiting DKU students are shared via the [DKU@Duke Canvas Site](#). Once your enrollment in the program is complete, you will receive notifications when resources are posted.

Travel to Duke

What airport should I travel to?

- The airport closest to Duke is Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU). RDU is about a 15-minute drive to the Duke campus in Durham.

- If you are attending the Marine Lab program, there are three smaller airports located within an 85-mile radius of Beaufort, NC: Jacksonville, NC (60 miles), Wilmington NC (85 miles), and, the closest of the three, Coastal Carolina Regional Airport in New Bern, NC (40 miles). From New Bern, you can reach the Marine Lab by taxi, or the Lab may coordinate airport pick-up from this location. The Raleigh Durham Airport (RDU) is 160 miles away from the Duke Marine Lab. If you fly to RDU, plan to coordinate with other students for travel to Beaufort.

Is transportation from the airport to Duke provided?

- Duke does not provide transportation to or from the airport. You will need to make your own arrangements for getting to campus. You may wish to coordinate your arrival with other students in order to share rides to campus.
- Taxi fare from RDU to Duke is about \$40.
- A list of transportation options, including taxis and car services is available in the Resource folder in your DKU@Duke Canvas site.