



MEMORANDUM

To: All VEF Fellows

Cc: VEF Staff

From: Kien Pham, Executive Director

Date: November 30, 2005

Subject: Policy on Academic Training

This is to inform you about our policy on academic training. This memorandum supersedes all previous written or oral communication from VEF on the subject.

VEF encourages its Fellows to develop their professional skills beyond the academic degree program and to expand ties to U.S. experts in their field. Therefore, VEF recommends that Fellows consider pursuing work opportunities available through academic training before returning to Vietnam.

Description: Academic training (AT) is full-time or part-time, paid or unpaid work/training that is directly related to a J-1 student's major field of study. The work is usually performed "off-campus". In some instances, AT authorization must be issued for "on-campus" work when that work, by itself or combined with another job, exceed 20 hours per week during the academic year. AT may involve sequential or simultaneous activities with more than one employer, provided that appropriate authorization for each employment is granted by VEF. All academic training MUST be approved by VEF PRIOR to the employment start date. VEF continues visa sponsorship throughout the AT period.

Time limits: For master's degree Fellows, AT is limited to a maximum total of 18 months and the training period may not exceed the length of time spent in academic studies. For example, if you complete your degree in 12 months, you will only be eligible for 12 months of AT.

For Fellows in a doctoral program, you are eligible for an additional 18 months of AT upon completion of the doctoral degree. This means a total of 36 months, granted in a maximum 18-month interval.

Any AT time used prior to completion of your degree is deducted from the length of time available for AT after completion of your degree. For example, if you already used 10 months of AT during your doctoral study, upon the completion of your doctoral degree, you would be able to apply for an AT period of 18 months. At the end of that 18-month

period, you must re-apply for AT in order to receive your remaining 8 months, for a total of 36 months.

Fellows may engage in AT after completion of studies, as well as before completion of studies (e.g. on- or off-campus during the school year or off-campus during the summer). For AT after completion of your studies, you must commence the activity no later than 30 days after the completion of your degree requirements.

Financial support: VEF expects the host organization for the AT to provide the Fellow with financial and/or in-kind support. VEF does not provide financial support for AT.

Authorization Procedures: To request authorization for AT, you must complete and submit the online “Application for Authorization of Academic Training” at www.vef.gov/veffellows as early as possible before the start date of the AT. Within one month, if approved, you will receive an authorization letter and an updated DS-2019 with information related to your AT. For the online application, you will need to upload:

1. A job offer letter from your prospective employer on company/institution letterhead providing the following: (1) a description of the position and your title; (2) the starting and ending dates of your employment; (3) number of hours per week; (4) amount of financial compensation; (5) the location of the employment, including the company or institution name, street address, city, state, and zip code; and (6) the name, title and contact information of your job supervisor.
2. A letter from your Academic Advisor that: (1) explains how the proposed academic training relates to your major field of study and why it is an integral or critical part of your academic program; (2) sets forth the goals and objectives of your academic training program; (3) describes your academic training program, including the location of the training, the name and address of your training supervisor, your number of working hours per week, and the dates of the training period; and (4) indicates the date you will complete all degree requirements and the degree you will receive. (**NOTE:** The completion date is not the date of the graduation ceremony, but the date that the requirements for the program have been satisfied.)