Online or Distance Education Course Policy for J-1 Students

The regulatory definitions of full course of study and prescribed course of study reference only "classroom" study. The Department of State has verbally communicated to stakeholder groups its interpretation that because of this, classes that are delivered through online and distance education modalities cannot be used to satisfy the full course of study or full-time prescribed course of study requirements for exchange visitors in the J-1 college and university student category.

This is not an absolute prohibition on taking online classes, but rather a determination that such classes cannot be counted toward the full course of study or full-time prescribed course of study requirements. A student who is already fully meeting the in-person classroom study requirements could presumably take an online course in addition to his or her classroom courses.

Source: NAFSA: Association of International Educators