



# Cornell University International Students and Scholars Office

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## F-1 Work Authorization

### F-1 Students: Work Authorization Options:

U.S. immigration regulations restrict work authorization for international students. In general there are two types of employment: on-campus and off-campus employment.

**On-Campus Employment:** Enrolled F-1 students may work on the campus of their educational institutions. If you are in F-1 status, when classes are in session or if you are registered with the Graduate School for the summer, you may work **ONLY** 20 hours per week. During your vacation periods (winter breaks and 2-3 weeks at the end of the summer prior to fall registration) you may work full time.

#### Advantages:

- does not need to be related to your field of study
- you may begin working as soon as you are a student

#### Disadvantage:

- limited to on-campus employment opportunities

### Off-campus Employment

After being enrolled for one full academic year, F-1 students are eligible to apply for off-campus employment in the major field. This could be full-time during the summer and the winter semester break, or part-time (limited to 20 hours of total employment per week, including any on-campus work) during the academic year. There are two types of off campus work authorization called "practical training."

#### Curricular Practical Training (CPT):

Curricular practical training allows you to be paid for work in your field of study **BEFORE** you graduate. In addition to requirement that you have been enrolled for a full academic year, the work must either be **REQUIRED** for your degree program or you must receive credit in a course for the work. This employment may be an internship, cooperative education job, a practicum, or any other work experience. Students may work part-time (20 hours per

week or less) during the academic year or full-time during semester breaks.

#### Advantages:

- application is through the ISSO and does not have to be sent to the immigration service
- is not subtracted from your 12-months of optional practical training, unless you work cumulatively full-time 12 months or more

#### Disadvantages:

- you must receive academic credit for your work or it must be required for your degree

Applications are available at the ISSO or on our website:

[www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/f1/curricular.php](http://www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/f1/curricular.php)

#### Optional Practical Training (OPT):

Optional practical training allows you to work in your major area of study and is authorized by the United States Immigration and Citizenship Services (USCIS). After being enrolled for a full academic year, you are eligible to apply for OPT in your field of studies. You may receive one 12-month period of optional practical training for each higher degree you receive (but not cumulatively). It may be used **before or after** completion of studies. Students in certain fields of study may also apply for a 17 month extension of this OPT (see details below).

OPT can be used full-time during the summer and the winter semester break, or part-time (limited to 20 hours of total employment per week, including any on-campus work) during the academic year. However, the time spent with this type of employment authorization before you graduate will be reduced from your 12 months of optional practical training after completion of studies. After graduation, OPT is authorized for full time only (not part time).

#### Advantages:

- does not have to be for-credit nor required for your degree program

- little paperwork for the employer

**Disadvantages:**

- must mail in your application to the USCIS with \$380 fee
- takes about three months to get the approval

Applications are available at the ISSO or on our website:

[www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/f1/opta.php](http://www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/f1/opta.php)

**17-month extension of OPT for students in certain**

**fields:** F-1 students on OPT who have received a degree in the fields referred to as “STEM” fields (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics), will have an opportunity to apply for a one time 17-month extension of their regular 12 month OPT period. Criteria for the 17 month extension are:

- Your employer must be enrolled in the “E-Verify” program (see information links below).
- You must have graduated and be working in one of the “STEM” fields listed below
- You must have maintained status while on OPT

More information and procedures at:

<http://www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/f1/flnewoptreg.php>

**Working for International Organizations:**

F-1 students are also eligible to do an internship with certain international organizations. In order to do this, F-1 students need to apply for an employment authorization document through USCIS.

**Requirements:**

- The employment is for an internship with a recognized international organization and is within the scope of the organization's sponsorship.
- The student has been enrolled for at least one full academic year.
- The employment must be within the field of study
- To apply for EAD send the following to USCIS
- a written certification from the organization stating that the proposed employment is within the scope of the organization's sponsorship
- an I-20 with signature by the ISSO staff within the last 30 days
- a completed Form I-765
- fee of \$380

**Advantages:**

- does not have to be for-credit nor required for your degree program
- does not take away from your 12 months of optional practical training after completion of studies

**Disadvantages:**

- must mail in your application to the USCIS with fee
- It takes at least 3 months to get the approval

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**Remember, NEVER work without PRIOR authorization!**

**Any Questions? Come visit us at the ISSO.**

**ISSO, B-50 Caldwell Hall  
255-5243, FAX: 255-2778**

**Advising Hours:**

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9-12:00; 1:00-4:30; Wednesday 1:00-4:30  
Or on the web at: [www.isso.cornell.edu](http://www.isso.cornell.edu)**