



## Employment Frequently Asked Questions

### What are the employment options for F-1 students?

Students have several options for employment: on campus employment, Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT).

### What is On-campus employment?

Students are permitted to work part-time on the premises of the school that issued their currently valid I-20, while they are attending that school and maintaining their F-1 status. This type of employment is "incident to status" and does not require updates to the SEVIS record. However, it does require the DSO to sign the letter of intent from HR acknowledging the employment request.

#### -There are 3 types of on-campus employment:

-Work on the school premises, employed by the I-20 issuing institution: On-campus employment includes work done as a teaching or research assistant as well as jobs in the school library, cafeteria, and administrative offices.

-Work on the school premises, employed by on-campus commercial firms: On-campus also includes employment with "...on-location commercial firms which provide services for students on campus, such as the school bookstore or cafeteria." The nature of the services being provided by an on-location commercial firm is important to consider, with the focus being whether the commercial firm provides *direct student services*. The regulation states that "employment with on-site commercial firms, such as a construction company building a school building, which do not provide direct student services is not deemed on-campus employment.

-Work done at off-campus locations, but treated as on-campus: On-campus" may also include work "at an off-campus location which is educationally affiliated with the school...the educational affiliation must be associated with the school's established curriculum or related to contractually funded research projects at the post-graduate level...[and] be an integral part of the student's educational program.

### Things to Remember:

- May not begin on-campus employment more than 30 days prior to the actual start date of classes.
- On-campus work is limited to no more than 20 total hours per week.
- A student may not engage in on-campus employment during the 60-day grace period following the completion of a course of study, unless the student has been accepted into a new program of study and is enrolled for classes for the next term.
- Student must maintain a valid F-1 status to remain eligible for on-campus employment.
- Border commuter students (Canada or Mexico) are not eligible for on-campus employment.

**Note:** There are special circumstances that allow an F-1 student to seek authorization for off-campus employment (not related to their course of study), such as: economic hardship, an internship with an international organization or based on the Special Student Relief program. Students must schedule a meeting with their Advisor/DSO to review criteria for eligibility and request authorization.

**What is Practical Training?**

Practical training is temporary employment that is authorized by the college or university so that an F-1 student may gain practical experience directly related to their field of study. There are two types of practical training, CPT and OPT.

**What is CPT?**

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an off-campus employment option available to international students on F-1 visa status. According to immigration regulations, the employment may be an internship, cooperative education job, a practicum, or any other work experience that is an integral part of an established curriculum, or for which academic credit is awarded.

**CPT and On-Campus work:**

An F1 student working on campus may participate in CPT. However, the student's total work hours for each type of work may not exceed 20 hours while school is in session. Students may work full time during those periods when school is not in session or during summer semester. If you are authorized for full-time CPT and work 21 hours or more per week, you should not have any additional on-campus employment, while school is in session.

**Refer to the Curricular Practical Training Frequently Asked Questions for eligibility and application requirements.**

**What is OPT?**

Optional Practical Training is another off-campus employment option available to international students on F-1 visa status. Again, the employment must be directly related to the student's major area of study. There are three types of OPT training, pre-completion, post-completion and post-completion STEM.

-Pre-completion OPT: is OPT authorized to be worked before the student's program end date. Students may work up to 20 hours while school is in session. Students who are eligible to register and plan to do so may have approval to work full time when school is not in session. Time spent on Pre-Completion OPT reduces the 12 months of available Post-Completion OPT.

-Post-completion OPT: is OPT authorized to be worked after the student's program end date. Full or part time employment (over 20 hours per week) for up to 12 months at each degree level.

-Post-completion STEM extension: is a special 17 month extension available to certain degree programs (over the initial 12 months). There are specific employer and degree requirements that must be met to qualify for this extension.

**Refer to the Optional Practical Training Frequently Asked Questions for eligibility and application requirements.**

**Note:** Students will need to apply for a social security card (if they don't already have one). Information on the application process can be found in the SS instruction and application FAQs. There is also a link to those resources on the F1 Student Resources page and the Work Authorization page of the DU website.

**Unpaid work or volunteering:**

Traditional volunteer work (e.g. at a soup-kitchen, homeless shelter) does not require CPT approval. However an internship, if it is unpaid, requires CPT authorization.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, volunteering refers to hours of service performed for an organization for “civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered.”

For questions please contact a member of the International Team or email [international@davenport.edu](mailto:international@davenport.edu).