

Employment Options for Students in F-1 Status

Office of International Students and Scholars
Eastern Illinois University

Students in F-1 status may accept employment under certain conditions. This sheet is provided for informational purposes only. If you have questions about or would like to determine your eligibility for F-1 employment, please contact the Office of International Students and Scholars.

On-campus employment: As a student in F-1 status, you may work on-campus up to 20 hours per week during the academic year, and full-time during school vacation periods. (Full-time employment for students is defined as 30 hours a week by the Office of Student Employment at Eastern Illinois University.) Please note that your on-campus employment must stop once you complete your studies.

Off-campus employment (based on economic necessity): On occasion, students in F-1 status experience a sudden and unexpected change in their financial situation which occurred after beginning your studies here. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may authorize off-campus employment to help alleviate the problem. In order to qualify for off-campus work, you must have been in F-1 status for at least nine months. You must also be able to document the nature of your financial problem so that the USCIS can decide if off-campus work permission is warranted. If permission is granted, you may work 20 hours per week during the academic year, and full-time during school vacations. Your total employment from all sources cannot exceed 20 hours during the academic year while school is in session. Please make an appointment with a designated school official if you believe you may meet the requirements to apply for off-campus work permission.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT): Temporary employment for curricular practical training may be authorized under certain circumstances. Such employment must be related to your field of study and also be required for your studies or an integral part of your studies. Training which is **required** by your degree program always meets the requirements for curricular practical training, regardless of whether or not you receive academic credit for your work. Training which is not required by your degree program may meet the requirements for curricular practical training if you receive **academic credit** for the employment experience, and it is an **important or integral part of your studies**. For more information, please visit this link: <http://www.eiu.edu/interntl/Curricular-Practical-Training.pdf>

Optional Practical Training (OPT): Optional Practical Training authorization permits you to take a job that is directly related to your field of studies and commensurate with your educational level. In most cases, you must have been a full-time student for at least nine months prior to applying for practical training permission. You may work with practical training either prior to or after completion of studies. Please make an appointment with a designated school official for further information on practical training guidelines and application procedures. For more information, please visit this link: <http://www.eiu.edu/interntl/Optional-Practical-Training.pdf>