F-1 Employment

Below is a brief summary of the different types of on-campus and off-campus work for which you may qualify. Remember, you need to obtain written authorization before starting any type of compensated employment in the U.S. Beginning to work without authorization from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) is a serious violation of your F-1 status.

Here is the list of employment, which you are eligible if you obtain written authorization.

**On-Campus Employment at the College of Charleston**

Eligibility:

1. F-1 student at the College of Charleston
2. In good academic standing

Hours Per Week:

1. 20 hours during academic year
2. No limit during vacation periods

**Off-Campus Employment**

Curricular Practical Training

Eligibility:

1. Register for internship for academic credit
2. Work is part of academic program
3. Need to have an internship job offer
4. Have been in F-1 status for at least 2 semesters (not including summer)

Hours Per Week:

1. Part-time: 20 hours or less
2. Full-time: No limit

Application processing time:

Requires 3-5 business days for CIE to process.

Students granted one year of full-time Curricular Training (CPT) will be ineligible for post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT).

**Optional Practical Training Pre-Completion of Studies**
Eligibility:

1. Work must be related to field of study
2. Job offer not required
3. Have been in F-1 status for at least 2 semesters (not including summer)

Hours Per Week

1. 20 hours during academic year
2. No limit during vacation periods and after the completion of all course work for master’s and Ph.D students.

Application processing time:

Requires 3-5 business days for CIE to process, plus 2-3 months for USCIS to process.

Any time used in pre-completion OPT will be subtracted from the 12-month allocation for post-completion OPT. Part-time OPT will be subtracted as half the time.

Optional Practical Training Post-Completion of Studies

Eligibility

1. Work must be related to field of study
2. Job offer not required to apply
3. Have been in F-1 status for at least 2 semesters (not including summer)

Hours Per Week

1. Full time only: No limit

Application processing time:

Requires 3-5 business days for CIE to process, plus 2-3 months for USCIS to process.

Students become eligible to apply for an additional 12 months of OPT per higher level of degree study completed.

Example: A student completes a Bachelor’s degree and gets 12 months of OPT. S/He then completes a Master’s degree and is eligible to get an additional 12 months of OPT because it is a higher degree level. The same student then completes a PhD and is eligible for another round of 12 month OPT.

Employment with an International Organization

Eligibility

Note: College of Charleston provides this information as a guide. Please learn about current F-1 employment rules at http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis in their “working in the United States” section for “students and exchange visitors.”
1. Job offer from recognized International Organization
2. Currently in F-1 status

Hours Per Week

1. No limit

Application processing time:

Requires 3-5 business days for CIE to process, plus 2-3 months for USCIS to process

**Severe Financial Hardship**

Eligibility

1. Must have explored all other options for employment
2. Financial need must be unforeseen, due to a change in circumstances
3. Approval of CIE office

Hours Per Week

1. 20 hours during academic year
2. No limit during vacation periods

Application processing time:

Requires 3-5 business days for CIE to process, plus 2-3 months for USCIS to process