

○ **F-1 Student Employment Option**

The most important employment issue to consider is legal (“authorized”) versus illegal (“unauthorized”) employment. Please make sure you have the necessary employment authorization before begin work. Starting work without authorization constitutes illegal employment. If you have any questions concerning your eligibility or category of employment, please consult your International Student Service before commencing employment

Definition of Employment

Employment is any type of work performed or services provided in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, food, room or any other benefits. If you do volunteer work you should not receive pay or any other benefits.

Eligibility Requirements

Different requirement exist for each type of F-1 employment, but there are basic requirements which must be met for any F-1 employment.

You are eligible for F-1 student employment if:

- Have been in valid F-1 student status for at least one full academic year;
- Have a grade point average of 2.0 or greater;
- Are currently in valid F-1 status;
- Your passport is valid;
- You have been authorized by the USCIS and US DHS to attend Essex;
- You continuously pursue a full course of study.

Category of F-1 Student Employment

On Campus

F-1 students are generally permitted to work on campus of the school that issue their currently valid I-20, while attending that school and maintaining their F-1 status. This work is part time when school is in session or full time during vacation period. Work on campus is a benefit of F-1 status and no additional authorization from USCIS is necessary.

Off Campus

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Optional Practical Training

Internship with an International Organization

Economic Hardship

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

An F-1 student may be eligible for CPT authorization to work experience that is required or an integral component of the program of study. CPT employment may include internship (paid or unpaid), student teaching, cooperative education program and practical experience as part of the student academic program. Student authorized for CPT will receive a new SEVIS Form I-20 with the CPT notation. This work authorization is valid only for the specific employer, location, time period for which is approved by DSO's and it is indicated on page 3 of your Form I-20.

The US Department of Homeland Security regulation states that CPT must be "an integral part of an established curriculum".

Eligibility

The student must have been lawfully enrolled on a full time bases for one academic year before applying for CPT. It is available ONLY while student is in valid F-1 status.

Criteria

CPT will be authorized by DSO only if the proposed employment meets one of two conditions below:

- The training is part of the student academic program or
- The training employment will result in the awarding of academic credits.

Part Time/Full Time CPT

During the school year while classes are in session student can engage in CPT on part time base.

Full time CPT allows student to work more than 20 hours per week. If student participate in 12 month or more of full-time CPT will not be eligible for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT).

Application process and Documentation Required

Make an appointment with the International Student Advisor.

Bring following document with you:

- Copy of your official letter on company letterhead that is sign by you're the prospective employer. The letter should include the employer's name, full address, date of employments and duties;
- A CPT recommendation Form completed by your academic advisor;
- Copy of Essex County College Cooperative Education Agreement;
- Copies of your current immigration documents: passport {biographical data page, Form I-94, Form i-20 (s)}.

Optional Practical Training

Pre/Post Completion Optional Practical Training

Optional Practical training (OPT) is practical work experience that is directly related to your field of study and commensurate with your level of study.

You are entitled to a maximum of 12 months of full-time Optional Practical Training per each level of your academic career. Part-time Optional Practical Training counts at 50%. For example, 6 months of part-time Optional Practical Training counts as only 3 of the 12 months to which you are limited. That means you will receive a new 12 months of OPT for each degree you pursue.

Application Process

Download forms from USCIS web page and complete them in full:

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

***Complete items 1 through 16.**

For Pre-Completion OPT be sure to write “(c) (3) (A)” in item 16

For Post-Completion OPT be sure to write “(c) (3) (B)” in item 16

Don't forget to sign!

Make an appointment with the International Student Advisor.

Bring the following to the appointment:

- Completed Form I-765;
- Be sure to certify the form by signing, dating and entering your present telephone number;
- Copy Form I-94, passport identification pages and visa,
(You can find information regarding your Form I-94 by accessing Customer and Border Protection arrival/departure web page at: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/request.html>);
- Photocopy of all Form I-20 ,all sides;
- Two photos (“passport style” -refer to Form I-765 for details)) in an envelope which can be attached to the application;
- Application fee of **\$410.00**, check or money order payable to US Department of Homeland Security, (all filings postmarked December 23, 2016, or later must include the new fees or will be rejected);
- Academic Advisor’s letter of support or **graduation audit**;
- If you are applying for renewal of your employment authorization, a photocopy of your previous EAD.

Do not work unless your application has been approved and you have received the EAD. Your authorization is automatically terminated if you graduate or fail to maintain F-1 status.

Students who have an EAD card for post-completion OPT and evidence of either a job or a job offer are allowed to leave and re-enter the U.S. during their OPT period if student has valued F-1 visa in the passport. **Of course, re-entry to the U.S. is never guaranteed.** Students whose EAD card has not yet been issued (OPT application has not yet been approved by USCIS) are allowed to re-enter the U.S. to resume the search for employment. While your OPT application is pending, you are not required to have a job or a job offer for re-entry to the U.S.

If a student who has an EAD card but does not have a job or a job offer leaves the US during the post-completion OPT period, OPT ends.

Border officials might not allow someone in this situation to re-enter the U.S. Thus, students who do not have a U.S. job or a U.S. job offer but who plan to leave and re-enter the U.S. after their EAD card has been issued (their OPT has been approved by USCIS) are taking a risk.

Types of employment allowed during pre- and post- completion OPT

All OPT employment, including post-completion OPT, must be in a job that is related to your degree program.

This employment may include the following (does not apply to students on a [STEM extension](#)):

Paid employment

Students authorized for post-completion OPT may work part time (at least 20 hours per week) or full time.

Multiple employers

Students may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to the student's degree program. Employment during pre-completion OPT cannot exceed the allowed per week cumulative hours.

Short-term multiple employers (performing artists)

Students who are musicians and other performing artists may work for multiple short term employers (gigs). The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing a list of all gigs.

Work for hire

Work for hire means that an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. It is sometimes called "1099 employment" because people who "work for hire" receive Internal Revenue Service Form 1099-MISC – which shows how much money was earned for a particular year – from the contracting company. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods and the name and address of the contracting company.

Self-employed business owner

Students on OPT may start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, the student must work full time. The student must be able to prove that he or she has the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to the student's degree program.

Employment through an agency

Students on post-completion OPT must be able to provide evidence showing they worked an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.

Unpaid employment

Students may work as volunteers or unpaid interns, where this does not violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week for students on post-completion OPT. These students must be able to provide evidence from the employer that the student worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment.

Reporting Employment

Students are required to report employment to the INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR within no more than 80 days after receiving EAC and change in employment as soon as possible.

We recommend that you report changes within 10 business days to avoid situations where a DHS official may determine you to be out of status. To report periods of employment along with employer information please contact INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR or send the e-mail with information to dizdarev@essex.edu .

The following information must be submitted:

Copy of your EAC (front and back)
Employer Name
Employer address
Employer telephone number
Employer e-mail address
Start day of employment
End date (if known) of employment

If your employment information changes, you need to send an update immediately to dizdarev@essex.edu.

For instance, you must include an end date for your current job before adding a new employer start date job. The INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR will enter this data into SEVIS for you.

Periods of Unemployment

Students on post-completion OPT are only allowed a total of 90 days of unemployment.

What counts as “unemployment time?”

- Unemployment time is counted each day during the OPT dates indicated on the EAD.
- Students who have OPT extended due to the cap gap provisions continue to accrue unemployment time and are subject to the 90-day limitation on unemployment.
- If you have a job offer that begins more than 90 days after your OPT begins, you will exceed your allowable unemployment time. Receiving a job offer within the 90 days is not sufficient, you must be employed in one of the employment types listed above.
- If you travel outside of the United States while unemployed, the time spent outside the United States will count as unemployment against the 90 day limit.

Permanently leaving the U.S. without notifying the International Student Advisor will result in the accidental accrual of unemployment. For this reason, you must contact the INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR if you decide to abandon your OPT.

Internship with an International Organization

If an F-1 student is offered employment in the form of an internship by a recognized international organization, student may accept such employment upon receiving employment authorization.

Application Process

Download forms from USCIS web page and complete them in full:

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

***Complete items 1 through 16. Be sure to write “(c) (3) (ii)” in item 16**

Make an appointment with the International Student Advisor.

Bring the following to the appointment:

- Completed Form I-765;
- Be sure to certify the form by signing, dating and entering your present telephone number;
- Copy Form I-94, passport identification pages and visa, (You can find information regarding your Form I-94 by accessing Customer and Border Protection arrival/departure web page at: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html>);
- Photocopy of all Form I-20, all sides;
- Two photos (“passport style” -refer to Form I-765 instruction for details) in an envelope which can be attached to the application;
- Application fee of **\$410.00**, check or money order payable to US Department of Homeland Security, ((all filings postmarked December 23, 2016, or later must include the new fees or will be rejected);
- Photocopies of the biographical pages (including expiration date) of your passport. Letter from recognized international organization offering employment to F-1 student. Examples of recognized international organization include the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, International Monetary Fund's etc;
- If you are applying for renewal of your employment authorization, a photocopy of your previous EAD.

Do not work unless your application has been approved and you have received the EAD. Your authorization is automatically terminated if you graduate or fail to maintain F-1 status.

Economic Hardship

F-1 students who are experiencing severe financial difficulties caused by circumstances beyond their control may qualify for off campus employment. These circumstances may include: unexpected changes in the financial condition of the student's sponsor; unexpected expenses, such as medical bills; illness, death, or business problems experienced by the student's sponsor; natural disaster or other problems where your sponsor lives; drastic currency devaluation or large increases in tuition or fees. Employment is strictly limited to part-time, defined as 20 hours per week while school is in session. Any on-campus employment is included in this total. You may work full-time between semesters when school is not in session.

Employment authorization based on severe economic hardship does not restrict you to a specific job or location.

You may work for as many employers as you wish, as long as the total number of hours does not exceed 20 hours per week while school is in session.

Application Process

Meet with the International Student Advisor. If it is determined that you may be eligible for the authorization, proceed as described above.

Download forms from USCIS web page and complete them in full:

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

***Complete items 1 through 16. Be sure to write "(c) (3) (iii)" item 16**

Make an appointment with the International Student Advisor.

Bring the following to the appointment:

- Completed Form I-765;
 - Be sure to certify the form by signing, dating and entering your present telephone number;
 - Copy Form I-94, passport identification pages and visa, (You can find information regarding your Form I-94 by accessing Customer and Border Protection arrival/departure web page at: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/request.html>);
 - Photocopy of all Form I-20 ,all sides;
 - Two photos ("passport style" -refer to Form I-765 instruction for details) in an envelope which can be attached to the application;
 - Application fee of **\$410.00**, check or money order payable to US Department of Homeland Security, ((all filings postmarked December 23, 2016, or later must include the new fees or will be rejected);
 - Photocopies of the biographical pages (including expiration date) of your passport;
 - If you are applying for renewal of your employment authorization, a photocopy of your previous EAD;
 - **Complete the Attachment to Form I-765.**
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- In addition, you should submit other supporting **EVIDENCE**, if available. Examples of supporting evidence are: newspaper articles, letters from home, official school notices, sworn sponsor affidavits or medical records, etc.
 - If your papers are in order the International Student Advisor will issue I-20 with recommendation for the employment based on economic hardship.
 - **Complete a Statement of Expenses and Available Funds addressed to USCIS, which describes your situation and lists your expenses and available funds.** Although it is important to present your case clearly and thoroughly, do not exaggerate your situation. False or inaccurate statements could damage your case.

STATEMENT OF EXPENSES AND AVAILABLE FUNDS

Name: _____

Address _____

No. Street Name Apt.

City State Zip code

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept my application for employment authorization on grounds of the following severe economic hardship which is beyond my control and is fully unexpected and explained in my attached statement

I have made attempts to secure sufficient employment on-campus and through the pilot program but have so far been unsuccessful.

The following are costs to attend Essex as approved by my DSO and my current financial situation for academic year:

EXPENSES FOR 2016/2017 SCHOOL YEAR STUDENT'S AVAILABLE FUNDS

Tuition	\$ 6,696 .00	personal funds _____
Room &		funds from sponsor #1 _____
Board	\$ 7,800.00	
Books	\$ 1,200.00	funds from sponsor #2 _____

Personal		local sponsor providing
Necessities &		room & board _____
Clothing	\$ 1,200.00	

TOTAL \$	16,896.00	other _____
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DSO Signature

STUDENT'S TOTAL _____

AMOUNT NEEDED: _____