

Working in the US on an F1 student visa

On-campus employment

Students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week on-campus (paid by UW and/or serving UW students) during the academic term. Hour limit does not apply during winter, summer, and spring breaks. Note: UW limits student employment to 39 hours per week

Curricular Practical Training

Before completion of coursework/graduation

USCIS definition: "Alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school." USCIS regulations state that CPT must be curricular (related to the student's major field of study) and "an integral part of an established curriculum". CPT is allowed for the purpose of training in skills to be used toward completion of a degree. In rare circumstances, this approved internship "training" can be used by someone who is working to start a business with another person or persons. Cannot be a sole proprietor.

Apply directly to ISS. Approval is done by ISS staff and work authorization Form I-20 is issued to student by ISS. Must submit application materials to ISS at least one week before start of internship activity.

Optional Practical Training

Two types:

- Post-completion OPT is 12 months in the 14 months following completion of coursework (graduate students) or graduation (undergraduate or graduate students)
- STEM OPT Extension is 24 months added to the post-completion OPT for students in STEM fields

Post-completion OPT allows the following types of employment:

- Regular paid employment – multiple employers allowed
- Payment by multiple short-term employers ("gigs")
- Work for hire/contractual employment
- Self-employed business owner
- Employed through an agency
- Volunteering or unpaid employment

STEM OPT allows the following types of employment – all employers must be registered with eVerify:

- Regular paid employment – multiple employers allowed
- Payment by multiple short-term employers ("gigs")
- Work for hire/contractual employment

*Does NOT allow self-employment (sole proprietor), working for an agency, or volunteer/unpaid employment.

Must have a bonafide employer/employee relationship, so business owners must have a partner, etc that can sign as their "employer".

Apply to USCIS with the help of ISS staff. Approval is done by USCIS and work authorization documents are issued by USCIS. May apply up to 90 days before completion of coursework/graduation, and up to 60 days after completion/graduation. No employment is allowed between graduation date and start date of OPT. Approval takes approximately 90 days (three months).

UW ISS OPT Info Website: www.uwyo.edu/iss/opt OPT info and application slides, STEM degree list, etc

US Department of Homeland Security STEM OPT Website: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub>