

Graduate Career Services

The Graduate School and Division of Student Affairs

Career Development for International Students

"Must be authorized to work in the United States." You see this on job descriptions, but what does it mean? For U.S. citizens it means nothing, since you are automatically authorized. But for international students on F-1 or J-1 visas, it is important to note that there are restrictions on your ability to work during and after completion of your program. Working or accepting employment in the United States without proper authorization is considered a serious violation of immigration status, which can affect your ability to remain in the United States. However, you do have some options, and F-1 or J-1 students considering any type of employment in the United States should consult with International Student and Scholar Affairs (ISSA) prior to beginning work: <http://international.nd.edu/issa/>



Contact ISSA:

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Notre Dame, IN 46556

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Here are some of the employment options available to F-1 students, some of which require work authorization from the U.S. government.

[On-Campus Employment](#)

Students with F-1 visas are permitted to work part time on campus at Notre Dame without additional work authorization. On-campus employment can include teaching, research, and graduate assistantships, as well as working in other offices at Notre Dame where a stipend or paycheck is issued by the University. There is a limit of 20 hours per week for on-campus employment, and certain other restrictions apply.

[Curricular Practical Training](#)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a pre-completion work authorization option for employment that is an "integral part of an established curriculum" or "alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum." It is important to note that not every department will support CPT, and not all internships or jobs will qualify. CPT is used only prior to graduation, and you must be registered for a corresponding internship course in the ND catalogue. It takes only 1-2 business days to be approved.

[Optional Practical Training](#)

F-1 students may be eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT), either before or after completing their degree. ISSA must be involved in the application process, and they have created an informational video for your convenience: <http://ntrda.me/2mn8Sms>.

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OPT generally allows students to work for a total of 12 months, and STEM disciplines may qualify for an extension of up to 24 additional months of employment authorization. Additional eligibility restrictions pertain to the STEM extension.



**Be sure to apply for
OPT at least three
months prior to
starting the work!**

Employment with an International Organization

The International Organization Immunities Act allows international students on F-1 visas to work off campus with a designated international organization. Not all organizations are eligible, and not all positions within such an organization will qualify. It is important to meet with ISSA to review eligibility and begin the application process. More details and a link to resources for identifying eligible organizations can be found at <http://ntrda.me/2ijRauy>.

Severe Economic Hardship Employment

In rare instances, a student studying on an F-1 Visa may experience unexpected financial strain that would require income from an off-campus job in order to retain financial independence. In these cases, the student may work with ISSA to review their eligibility for Severe Economic Hardship Employment. The student must thoroughly document their financial situation and meet with ISSA to discuss their options.

Unpaid Employment

In general, you do not need work authorization to volunteer at a charitable organization, as long as no one else is being paid to do similar work. However, an unpaid internship with a company does require authorization in most cases, and there are strict guidelines that determine whether the unpaid work can be considered employment that would not require authorization. Always check with ISSA before accepting any kind of work, paid or unpaid.

H-1B

After graduation, one option for long-term employment is to be sponsored by an employer for an H-1B visa. Allowing for up to six years of work authorization, most H-1B visas are obtained through a competitive and limited lottery process, and a certain number are reserved for individuals who hold graduate degrees. Universities are not subject to the limited lottery, though, so faculty, research, and administrative positions may have an easier path to H-1B visa approval. See the [Office of General Counsel](#) for additional information.

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Employment Options For Scholars With J-1 Visas

There are many rules and restrictions associated with employment under a J-1 Visa. To avoid a serious violation of immigration status, scholars are highly encouraged to work with ISSA prior to initiating any kind of employment search. All employment activities require ISSA's written employment authorization on form DS-2019 prior to beginning work.



Resources For International Students

Graduate Career Services (GCS)

GCS provides personalized support for career development and job search strategy, including expertise in application documents (resume, cover letter, CV, etc.), networking, business communication, interviews, and more. Are you unfamiliar with the customs, protocols, and expectations of job searching and professionalism in the United States? We can help. Email gradcareers@nd.edu to set up an individual appointment.

International Student and Scholar Affairs (ISSA)

ISSA offers a variety of support services and programs to help international students and scholars make the most out of their time at the University, including providing immigration service, guidance, and support to Notre Dame-sponsored international students, J-1 scholars, and their dependents. ISSA staff members also educate and remind international students about immigration rules, responsibilities, deadlines, and benefits. International students should review the information on the [ISSA webpage](#) well in advance of conducting any level of employment search, and utilize the available services associated with employment authorization for their visa type.

Digital Resources

GoinGlobal

<https://online.goinglobal.com/> - Global career intelligence, including career guides, jobs & internships, visa information, and employer directory.

Myvisajobs

<http://www.myvisajobs.com> - Job postings and information about obtaining a U.S. work visa. Create a profile, upload a resume, explore the employer database, and more.

H1Base

<http://www.h1base.com> - USA immigration, work visa, and employment solutions.