On-Campus Employment For Students In F-1 Status

Purpose

This handout is designed for F-1 students. It should provide you with an understanding of (1) how “on-campus employment” is defined by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), which is different in some important respects from commonly-held definitions, (2) conditions which must exist for employment to be lawful and (3) employment regulations which cover special circumstances. Please consult with staff at International Scholar & Student Services (ISSS) if you have any questions about this topic.

Eligibility Requirements

General. You may work on campus provided (1) you are maintaining F-1 status and (2) you do not work more than a total of 20 hours per week while school is in session. You may be employed full-time (not to exceed 40 hours per week) during holidays and vacation periods, including summer vacations, provided you are eligible and intend to register for the next school term. The 20-hour per week limit on your employment while school is in session applies to all types of on-campus employment discussed in this handout. A 20-hour per week graduate assistantship, for example, would exhaust your academic year on-campus (and off-campus) work eligibility.

Authorization of Eligibility. If a particular on-campus job meets certain requirements which are explained in this handout, work in that job is permissible and is automatically authorized by USINS regulations. However, you should contact your Foreign Student Advisor before beginning any on-campus employment.

Jobs Which Qualify as “On-Campus Employment”

Employment by Your School. On-campus work performed for your school is usually acceptable, whether it is employment in the library, computer center, or the housing office, or work required by a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship.

Other Employment on Your School’s Premises. Work performed on your school’s grounds is “on-campus employment” as long as the employer provides direct services to the students. Employment in your school bookstore or cafeteria, both of which provide direct services to students, is acceptable even if the bookstore or cafeteria is operated by a private, commercial firm. Work for a construction company, which is erecting a campus building, is not acceptable since the construction company does not provide direct student services.

Work Off-Campus Which Qualifies as On-Campus Employment. Immigration regulations allow you to work at an off-campus location provided (1) the location is educationally affiliated to the school, (2) the educational affiliation is associated with your school’s established curriculum or is related to a graduate level research project which your school has contracted to perform, and (3) the work is an integral or important part of your program of study. For example, if your field of study is Marine Biology and your school has an off-campus marine biology research facility, you may work there and that employment will be defined as “on campus”.

Note: You should contact your Foreign Student Advisor before beginning any “on-campus” employment. While employment by your school is clearly explained, the other two types of “on-campus” jobs described above are more difficult to define.

On-Campus Employment, School Transfer and Completion of Study

If you (1) are in lawful F-1 status, (2) have received a Form I-20 from a new school where you wish to continue study and (3) intend to enroll at the new school for the next regular academic term or session, you may continue on-campus employment at your first school until you move to your new school or you may begin employment at your new school immediately even though you may not yet be attending classes at that school. Please note that if you do not intend to continue further study in the U.S., you may not be employed on-campus...
after you have completed your program of study unless you have applied for and been granted written permission to engage in a type of employment the USCIS calls “post-completion or optional practical training”.

**Employment of F-2 Dependents**

Immigration regulations prohibit all employment for F-2 dependents (spouses and children of F-1 students).

**Employment Eligibility Verification**

When you begin work, you and your employer must complete a form entitled “Employment Eligibility Verification” (Form I-9). The I-9 must be updated each time you renew your work permission.

**A Note Of Caution**

While Immigration regulations provide a variety of opportunities for you to be employed during your time in F-1 status, working improperly or without authorization is a serious violation of your status. You should therefore consult with your Foreign Student Advisor before taking up any employment.

**Failure to Comply with Employment Regulations**

It is your responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations which apply to F-1 students. Staff in ISSS have responsibility for advising and counseling you regarding your responsibilities. If you fail to comply with your responsibilities, you may not be eligible for benefits normally granted to F-1 students and, in some situations, you may be subject to deportation.

**Further Information**

Additional information on employment is available from ISSS. Staff in ISSS are pleased to offer information, counseling, and assistance on all federal regulations related to maintaining your student status.

UAB/ISSS-sf
oncampusemploymentF1info-5/24/04
Certification of
On-Campus Employment Eligibility

Student Name: ________________________________________________________
Student Number: ______________________________________________________
Location: _____________________________________________________________

This is to certify that the above-referenced student is eligible to be employed on-
campus.

Limitations of Employment. Employment must not exceed 20 hour per week while
school is in session. If this student is employed elsewhere on-campus or is employed
off-campus with proper authorization, that work must also be counted toward the 20-
hour time limit. Full-time employment is permissible between school terms and during
holidays and vacations, including annual vacations.

Employment Eligibility Verifications. If you employ this student, you and the student
may be required to complete a form entitled “Employment Eligibility Verification” (Form
I-9), which the employer retains.

Maintenance of Lawful Status. In order to preserve on-campus employment eligibility,
F-1 students must maintain their lawful status. Among other requirements, this means
that they must (1) enroll for a full-time course of study during the academic year, (2)
maintain their eligibility to enroll, (3) limit all employment to 20-hours per week while
school is in session and (4) refrain from off-campus employment without authorization.

If you have any questions regarding this student’s eligibility to be employed, please
contact this office.

Signature of Designated School Official: _________________________________
Stacey Fraser, Foreign Student Advisor