F-1 Student Employment FAQ

On-Campus Employment

When am I eligible for on-campus employment?
F-1 students are eligible for on-campus employment immediately after their start date.

What qualifies as on-campus employment for an F-1 student?
On-campus employment is any employment which is located on and paid by the KGI campus or an educationally affiliated campus, such as any of the members of the Claremont Consortium. F-1 students may not work for a company that contracts for the Claremont Campuses and does not provide student services, such as construction.

What are basic guidelines for on-campus employment?
F-1 students may work up to 20 hours per week while school is in session. Work must be reported to international student counselor and social security must be obtained upon job offer. Must maintain active F-1 status.

May I have more than one on-campus job?
Yes, but the hours combined must not exceed 20 hours during the school term.

How do I get permission to work on campus?
Once you have received a job offer from an on-campus employer, you must schedule time to meet with your international student counselor. F-1 students will need a job offer letter from the employer and a certification letter from the international student counselor in order to obtain a social security number.

What if I want/need to change on-campus jobs?
No problem. Just be sure to notify your International Student counselor and provide a job offer letter with each new on-campus employment.

CPT/Off-Campus Employment

What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?
CPT is a type of work authorization which enables students to engage in off-campus employments that is an integral part of an established curriculum, such as the MBS summer internship. The experience must be undertaken and completed prior to the completion of your degree. Employment must be related to your degree.

Am I legally eligible to work in the United States?
Yes, all F-1 students are legally eligible to work in the United States and may apply to jobs that require legal eligibility to work in the United States, even if you do not have a social security number or CPT approval yet. Once you have obtained a job offer, you may apply for CPT and an SSN.
What are the eligibility requirements for CPT employment?
F-1 student must be enrolled for one full academic year
Must be in good academic standing,
Enrolled in a full course of study or on an academic break such as summer
Employment must be an integral part of the established curriculum and directly related to your degree.

How many hours can I work on CPT?
If you are approved for CPT during the academic term, employment may not exceed 20 hours. During academic breaks when school is not in session, CPT may be full-time.

How do I obtain CPT authorization?
To obtain CPT, you must first receive a job offer. Once you receive a job offer, you may apply for CPT. Contact your international student counselor for an appointment. Bring your current I20, a job offer letter, passport, visa, I-94, and the signed CPT request form. Your international student counselor will issue you a new I20 with CPT authorization.

I’ve been offered a second internship, can I accept it?
CPT is a job-specific authorization. You must request a new CPT authorization from your international counselor for any new internship opportunity.

What should I do if I quit or complete my internship before the original anticipated CPT authorization date?
Notify your international student counselor immediately so that your authorization dates can be amended.

Do I need to apply for CPT for an unpaid internship?
Yes. All internships, even unpaid ones, require CPT authorization.

Post-Completion OPT Employment

What is Post-Completion F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)?
Post-Completion OPT is a type of employment authorization for F-1 students. It is an opportunity to pursue a 12-month period of work experience in your major field of study. The authorization can be used for a paid position located on- or off-campus after completion of course requirements for the degree.

What are the eligibility requirements for OPT?
F-1 student must be enrolled for at least one full academic year and complete with degree requirements by the requested start date of OPT,
Employment directly related to your degree

If I complete one degree program, take 12 months of OPT, and then begin a second course of study, am I eligible for an additional 12 months of OPT?
You are eligible to apply for another 12 months of OPT, only after completing a higher degree. This does not apply to a second master’s degree.

Do I need to have a job to apply for OPT?
You do NOT need to have a job offer before applying for the first 12 months of OPT. OPT is NOT contingent on employment.
How long does it take to get authorization for OPT and when should I apply?
Authorization for OPT is granted by USCIS and can take 2-3 months to obtain. Therefore it is important that you apply 3 months before the date you wish to start working. You may apply for Post Completion OPT up to 90 days before the end date of your I-20 or 60 days beyond the end date of your I-20. You cannot apply more than 120 days before the start date you choose. You must send your application within 30 days of getting the new I-20 from your international student counselor.

Do I need to have a job while I am on OPT?
Yes. The regulations require that you do have employment while on your OPT. You are only allowed to have a total of 90 days of unemployment in your 12 months period of OPT. If you employment changes, you must update the information of your new employer with your international student counselor immediately.

Does the job I have while on OPT have to be paid employment, or can it be unpaid?
The employment does NOT have to be paid. Therefore, a student who is self-employed, interning or volunteering in a position directly related to the academic field would be considered “employed” for the purposes of OPT employment. If you are ‘self-employed,” keep careful records of all the work you do – it must be at least 20 hours per week.

Can I begin working before I receive the Employment Authorization Documents (EAD)?
No. You must have your EAD card to begin work. Working before your OPT has been approved by USCIS constitutes illegal employment that will jeopardize your legal status in the U.S.

How do I apply for OPT?
Please see the OPT application form and OPT checklist at [http://www.kgi.edu/admissions/international-students/online-documents.html](http://www.kgi.edu/admissions/international-students/online-documents.html). Schedule an appointment to see your international student counselor to obtain a new I-20.

**STEM OPT Extension**

What is STEM OPT?
STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The STEM OPT extension is available to students in any of these fields. It grants an F-1 student an additional 17 months of employment authorization in addition to the 12 months of OPT for a total of 29 months of OPT. KGI Master’s students qualify for STEM OPT extension. You will not apply for 29 months up front.

What are the eligibility requirements for STEM OPT Extension?
Your employer must be enrolled in the “E-Verify” program
You must have graduated in and be working in one of the STEM fields
You must have maintained valid F-1 status while on OPT.

When should I apply for STEM OPT Extension?
You may apply for your extension as early as 120 days before your current 12 months of OPT authorization expires.

Do I need to have a job to apply for STEM OPT?
Yes. You must be employed by an E-Verified employer to apply for STEM OPT extension.
What is “E-Verify”?
E-verify is an Internet-based system operated by USCIS in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). E-Verify is currently free to employers and is available in all 50 states. E-Verify provides an automated link to federal databases to help employers determine employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security numbers. More information is available at: www.uscis.gov.

What if I leave or lose my job while on STEM OPT?
If you lose or leave your job, you may seek another E-Verified employer. You are granted an additional 30 days of unemployment in STEM OPT, for a total of 120 days of unemployment during the 29 months of OPT. If your employment changes, you must update the information of your new employer with your international student counselor immediately.

Should I check-in with my international student counselor while on STEM OPT?
Yes. In addition to reporting any changes in residential address or employment, F-1 students on STEM OPT should report to the international student counselor every 6 months.

*For updates and application instructions please visit [http://www.kgi.edu/admissions/international-students/online-documents.html](http://www.kgi.edu/admissions/international-students/online-documents.html) or contact Gladys Calderon, Admissions & International Student Counselor at gladys_calderon@kgi.edu or (909) 607-8586.