Employment Options for F-1 International Students

On-Campus
Students in F-1 status are permitted to work on-campus up to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full-time during vacation periods. No prior authorization is required from the ISSSO or USCIS. For a list of available on-campus positions, contact St. John’s University Office of Human Resources.

Off-Campus
Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is off-campus employment authorization for work experience that is an integral part of an established curriculum, including: 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. CPT authorization is available to F-1 students who have been enrolled full-time for at least one academic year. You must have a job offer at the time of application.

There are two types of CPT:
1. Required part of program – employment in the field of study is a graduation requirement for all students in the department.
2. Non-required part of program – the practical experience earns academic credit and is directly related to your field of study. You must be registered for the course while engaging in this type of CPT.

Optional Practical Training
Optional Practical Training (OPT) is off-campus employment authorization that allows F-1 students to obtain work experience in their major field of study. F-1 students who have been enrolled full-time for at least one academic year are eligible for 12 months of full-time employment for each level of study (Associates, Bachelors, Masters, PhD). OPT is available to use during your vacation periods, during the academic year, or when you complete your studies.

Students must apply to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for OPT authorization. The application process takes approximately 3-4 months, so it is important to apply at the earliest date possible. You may not begin working until your application has been approved and you receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
**International Organizations**
F-1 students may be eligible to work or intern for a recognized international organization. Students must obtain prior authorization from International Student Services and USCIS before working for an international organization.

**Severe Economic Hardship Employment**
Off-campus employment authorization is available to eligible F-1 students that demonstrate severe economic hardship resulting from one of the following unforeseen circumstances:

- loss of financial aid or on-campus employment without fault on the part of the student
- substantial fluctuations in the value of currency or exchange rate
- inordinate increases in tuition and/or living costs
- unexpected changes in the financial condition of the student’s source of support
- medical bills
- other substantial and unexpected expenses

Students must apply to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for this type of employment authorization.

**Volunteer**
International students may accept volunteer positions at any business or organization. Unpaid work does not require special authorization from the ISSSO or USCIS.

**Find Out More**
Visit the ISSSO to learn more about these employment options and their application procedures.