

## Working in the US

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### **Am I legally eligible to work in the United States?**

Yes. As long as you maintain your F-1 student status, you are allowed to work in the United States and apply for jobs that require work eligibility. You do not need a Social Security Number (SSN) to apply for a job. You can apply for an SSN after you receive a job offer (see below).

#### **How do I apply for a Social Security Number (SSN)?**

You must have a job offer to apply for a Social Security Number. The first time you get employment in the US you will need to apply for an SSN. To apply, get an employment offer letter from the [Student Employment Services](#) office. If your first employment opportunity is off campus during CPT or OPT (see below), get a job offer letter from your employer. Submit your employment letter along with either the [Social Security Letter Request](#) form or the [Curricular Practical Training Request Form](#) to [gcciso@glendale.edu](mailto:gcciso@glendale.edu). We will provide you with a second letter. You will need to take both letters along with your I-20, passport, and a printout of your [I-94](#) to the [Social Security Office](#) to apply for the number.

#### **I am facing financial hardship after losing my original source of funding. What are my options?**

You can try to find work on campus. If that does not work, and you have been in F-1 status for at least one academic year, you can consider Curricular Practical Training (see below) or applying for [Severe Economic Hardship](#).

### ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

All international students can work on campus as soon as you report to school. This section explains the rules for working on campus.

#### **What qualifies as on-campus employment?**

On-campus employment means a job that is located on the GCC campus and paid by GCC or a school-related department. You can find jobs by working with the [Student Employment Services](#) office. You may apply for any job that does not require federal work-study funds. International students do not qualify for the financial aid work-study program.

#### **What are basic guidelines for on-campus employment?**

International students may work up to 20 hours per week while school is in session. Students may work more during school break periods (winter holidays, spring break, or summer session).

#### **May I have more than one on-campus job?**

Yes, but the total hours from all jobs combined cannot be more than 20 hours per week during the school term.

#### **What if I want/need to change on-campus jobs?**

No problem. F-1 students may change on-campus jobs at any time. No written permission is needed.

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### OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

F-1 students have two types of off-campus employment available: Curricular Practical Training and Optional Practical Training. These employment opportunities are discussed here.

#### *F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT)*

##### **What is F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?**

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is permission that allows you to work off campus in a job directly related to your major. CPT work must be completed before you finish your degree.

##### **What are the eligibility requirements for CPT employment?**

You must be in F-1 status for at least one full academic year (9 months) and must be in good academic standing. Employment must be an integral part of the established curriculum – meaning you must earn units for your participation. The work must be directly related to your major.

##### **How many hours can I work on CPT?**

During the academic term, cannot work more than 20 hours each week. This is separate from your on-campus job hours limit. When school is not in session (i.e. summer) you may work more than 20 hours a week, with permission.

##### **How do I obtain CPT authorization?**

To be approved for CPT, you must first receive a job offer. Once you receive a job offer, you must register for either a required internship course for your major or a general Cooperative Education (COED) Work Experience course. You will complete the [Curricular Practical Training Request form](#) with the professor of that course. Send the completed form to our office at [gcciso@glendale.edu](mailto:gcciso@glendale.edu) at least 3 business days before you want to start working. You will be issued a new I-20 showing CPT authorization to provide to your employer. **You may begin employment only after receiving this I-20. CPT is only valid for the employer and dates listed on your I-20.** If you change jobs or extend your work, you must request new CPT.

##### **What should I do if I quit or complete my internship before the date listed?**

Immediately notify our office at [gcciso@glendale.edu](mailto:gcciso@glendale.edu) to cancel or shorten your authorization dates.

##### **Do I need to apply for CPT for an unpaid internship?**

It's strongly recommended that you get CPT authorization even for an unpaid internship. If the internship does not qualify for CPT, make sure the company follows US Department of Labor rules for unpaid internships; see our [Volunteering vs Unpaid Employment](#) guide. The company should give you written confirmation of this before you accept the position. You should also ask the employer for a letter stating that you will not receive any pay or other benefits. Keep this letter with your permanent records.

#### *F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)*

##### **What is F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) and how can I apply?**

OPT allows you to work for up to one year after graduation to gain practical experience in your field. Please see the detailed [Optional Practical Training: Quick Guide](#) handout for information on this benefit and attend an [OPT Workshop](#) early in your final semester of study.