

J-1 STUDENT EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Updated November 2007

To engage in *any* type of employment as a J-1 student, you must first obtain written authorization from the Responsible Officer (RO) or an Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) who represents your J-1 sponsor. Your J-1 sponsor is the organization that issues your Form DS-2019. If The University of Iowa is your sponsor, then the OISS advisers are your RO/AROs. If your J-1 sponsor is another institution or agency, OISS advisers have no authority to grant you work permission but they can, if necessary, help you contact your RO.

Definition of “employment”

Employment is any work performed or services provided in exchange for money, tuition, books, supplies, room and board, or *any other benefit or compensation*. Only if you will receive absolutely no benefit or compensation of any kind at any time is an activity considered by the USCIS to be “unpaid volunteering.” Based on input from immigration attorneys, OISS also cautions F-1 students about “volunteering” in a position which would normally be paid; “volunteering” should be restricted to true volunteer activities, for example with social service organizations, religious organizations, non-profit groups, etc. **Unauthorized employment is a serious violation of student status.** Please contact the OISS if you ever have any questions or any doubt about whether you are authorized to accept employment.

1. STUDENT EMPLOYMENT”

You may work up to 20 hours per week during the academic year and full time during the winter break, spring break, and summer as long as your DS-2019 is valid, you have written authorization from OISS, you are in good academic standing, and you are enrolled full time. (Exception: Enrollment is not required during winter break or summer session, but you must be eligible to enroll for the following semester).

“Student employment” includes:

- **Employment required by a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship**
- **On-campus jobs unrelated to study**
- **Off-campus jobs** if “necessary because of serious, urgent, and unforeseen economic circumstances” that arose after you arrived in the United States. For further information, talk to an OISS adviser.

2. ACADEMIC TRAINING

“Academic Training” is employment in the field of your academic program in the United States. The maximum length of time allowed for both pre- and post-completion Academic Training authorization is either 18 months *or* the number of months you are a full-time student, whichever is shorter (*unless* the employment is required in order for you to graduate or you are receiving a Ph.D., in which case you are eligible for 36 months of Academic Training). You are eligible for Academic Training authorization:

- **Before completion of your program of study**--You may work part-time while classes are in session and full-time during vacation periods. Under certain circumstances, you may interrupt study to work full time (e.g., while you are writing your thesis or dissertation).
- **After completion of your program of study**--You may work if you can present your J-1 Responsible Officer with documentation of an offer of appropriate employment and a letter of support from your academic adviser before completing your program.

For more detailed information, see the OISS’s Academic Training packet.