

August 28, 2013

F-1 student visa holders can work in the US

Question: *"I will be starting a bachelor's degree program in the United States in September. I have already been accepted by a university, received my F-1 student visa and chosen the courses that I will take during the upcoming semester. My aunt is going to help pay for my education, but I also would like to pay for some of my own expenses. Will I be allowed to get a job while I am in the U.S. studying?"*

In most cases, F-1 student visa holders are allowed to work in the United States, as long as they continue to pursue their studies full-time and maintain good grades.

During your first year of studies, you may work part-time on your school's campus if your employment will not displace a U.S. resident from a job. While school is in session, you may work up to 20 hours per week. During breaks between academic terms, you may work full-time as long as you intend to register for classes being offered during the next term. Many international students choose to work in libraries, bookstores, cafeterias, gyms and other establishments at their colleges and universities. You should contact your college or university in order to learn about the specific on-campus employment opportunities that may be available for you.

After you have completed at least one academic year of studies in F-1 status, you may apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for authorization to work in a business that is not directly affiliated with your university. An official from your school must assist you in this process by certifying that you are in good academic standing at your school, so you will need to work closely with your school's officials in order to complete and submit the correct documentation to USCIS. If you receive authorization from USCIS, you may accept a job off campus. You will not be allowed to work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session.

After your academic program concludes, you may **not** continue to work on or off campus unless you have been authorized to participate in an Optional Practical Training program, or unless you obtain an appropriate worker visa. If you choose to pursue an Optional Practical Training program, your school's officials will work with you to acquire the appropriate authorization.