

# EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS FOR F-1 Students

Presented by:  
Javier Alcalá, Immigration Technician,  
Int'l Student Program

# Terms to Know



- **ISP: International Student Program**
- **DSO: Designated School Official**  
**Janelle G. Leighton, PDSO (Principal Designated School Official)**  
**Shirley Donnelly, Dean of Admissions (Admission & Records)**  
**Javier Alcala, Immigration Technician**
- **EAD: Employment Authorization Document (OPT card)**
- **OPT: Optional Practical Training**
- **SEP: Student Educational Plan (Given by academic counselor)**
- **I-94: White card stapled into your passport at time of arrival (admission number printed on card)**
- **I-765: Application for Employment Authorization**
- **I-20: Certificate of Eligibility to study in the U.S.**

# Employment Options for International Students

- On-Campus Employment
- Curricular Practical Training
- Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training
- Post-Completion Optional Practical Training
- Employment Based on Severe Economic Hardship

# On-Campus Employment Process and Procedure

- Eligibility **When Can I work?**
- Job Search **Where can I find work?**
- Document Requirements **What do I need?**



# On-Campus Employment

## ELIGIBILITY

- Must complete one semester of full-time enrollment
- G.P.A. and grades are subject to review

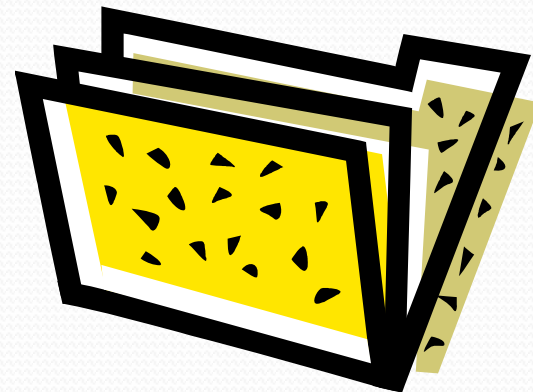


## JOB SEARCH

- Contact departments on campus that you are interested in finding work
- Ask ISP staff if departments are looking for employees
- Visit the Employment Services Job Board

# Documents Required for On-Campus Employment

- Hiring letter from your on-campus employer (must be on GWC letterhead)
- I-20 stamped on page 3 and authorized by ISP
- Social Security status/employment letter from ISP  
(Please allow 3 days to process ISP letter and I-20)



# On-Campus Employment (continued)

- No fees or documents required to mail to Department of Homeland Security
- No OPT time is taken away
- Employment can be in any department and does not have to be in your major
- Part-time employment during Spring and Fall semesters and full-time or part-time employment during official school breaks

# CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

- Must be in lawful F-1 status for two consecutive semesters
- Based on an internship or cooperative work experience course
- Proof of course requirement must be authorized by International Student Counselor and noted in your Student Educational Plan
- Name and address of company must be provided for I-20 endorsement
- No mailing or EAD is required
- Employment is limited to dates of term or semester
- No OPT time is taken away





# Economic Hardship

- Economic Hardship employment is a case-by-case authorization which requires a meeting with the ISP supervisor.

# Optional Practical Training Process & Procedures

- Eligibility
- Preparing ahead
- Document Requirements



# Optional Practical Training (OPT) Eligibility



- Student must be in lawful status as a full-time student for one full academic year (two consecutive semesters)
- Employment **must** be directly related to field of study/major
- Student must apply prior to the 60-day grace period end date (Must mail documents 90 days prior to intended OPT start date for full benefit)



# OPT Guidelines

- Employment may occur pre or post program completion
- Employment must be part-time (maximum 20 hours/week) during studies or full-time (40 hours/week) during official school breaks. Post-completion OPT must be full-time
- No job offer is required
- Employment is limited to a maximum of 12 months within the 14-month period following the completion of studies
- Pre-completion OPT is deducted from overall 12-month OPT period at 50% if employment was part-time and 100% if employment was full-time

# Pre-completion OPT




- **Attend OPT Workshop**
- **Must be in lawful F-1 status for two consecutive semesters**
- **Plan ahead 3-4 months prior to intended employment start date**
- **Make an appointment to meet with the ISP Immigration Technician**
- **Prepare all the requested documents and make final appointment with Immigration Technician**

## Preparing for the OPT Application Process

- **Attend OPT Workshop**
- **Plan ahead by 3-4 months prior to intended start date for full benefit**
- **Absolute latest filing date no later than 60 days from program completion-see section 5 on form I-20 (Application must be on desk of USCIS officer within 60-day grace period) POST OFFICE MAIL DATE NOT VALID AS PROOF**
- **Make an appointment with your international student academic counselor. (Obtain your Education Plan verifying that you are either currently in your last semester and completing your program of study or that you are following the academic plan/major for your studies for Pre-OPT.) NO WALK-IN/DROP-IN!**
- **Make an appointment to meet with the ISP Immigration Technician (Bring Student Educational Plan)**
- **Prepare all the requested documents and make final appointment with Immigration Technician**

# Types of employment allowed on regular pre- and post-completion OPT

- **All OPT employment, including post-completion OPT, must be in a job that is related to the student's degree program.**
- **Paid employment**. Students may work part time (at least 20 hours per week when on post-completion OPT) or full time.
- **Multiple employers**. Students may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to the student's degree program and for pre-completion OPT cannot exceed the allowed per week cumulative hours.
- **Short-term multiple employers (performing artists)**. Students, such as musicians and other performing artists may work for multiple short term employers (gigs). The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing a list of all gigs.

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- **Work for hire**. This is also commonly referred to as 1099 employment where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods and the name and address of the contracting company.
  - **Self-employed business owner**. Students on OPT may start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, the student must work full time. The student must be able to prove that he or she has the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to the student's degree program.
  - **Employment through an agency**. Students on post-completion OPT must be able to provide evidence showing they worked an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.
  - **Unpaid employment**. Students may work as volunteers or unpaid interns, where this does not violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week for students on post-completion OPT. These students must be able to provide evidence from the employer that the student worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment.

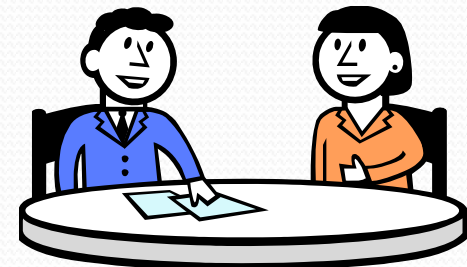
# PHOTOS



- The photo must be in color.
- All photos must meet size and image specifications.
- Photos must be of the applicant only.
- Where more than one photo is required, all photos of the person must be identical.
- The photos must be no more than 30 days old when an application is filed.
- Photos are only required for Post-Completion OPT, Pre-Completion OPT and Economic Hardship

# Important Deadlines

- ☑ **Check ISP workshop dates each semester in your ISP eNews or visit the office**
  
- ☑ **Deadline to see Academic Counselor:  
Spring: March/April Fall: Sept/Oct**
  
- ☑ **Deadline to meet with Immigration Tech.  
Spring: May Fall: December**
  
- ☑ **Last date to submit final documents:  
Spring: May 1 Fall: Nov 15**



# Document Requirements for the OPT Application

- Form I-765 <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765.pdf>
- Form I-538 (In-Office Use Only)
- \$340.00 Money Order or Check payable to “Department of Homeland Security”
- Copies of most recent I-20, I-94 and passport/visa
- Two passport photos (please refer to photo requirement handout)
- SEVIS I-20 (photocopy) with OPT recommendation
- Copies of any previous OPT authorization if applicable



✓  
✓  
IMPORTANT! Documents must be completed before final appointment with Immigration Technician!

Do not show up with incomplete applications, no payment, and/or no photos!





# Important !

- If you transfer to another school your OPT is terminated on your GWC SEVIS transfer release date
- If you re-enroll in a new degree or program at GWC, OPT is terminated on the first day of the semester
- To maintain your SEVIS status, be sure to provide the ISP with copies of approval notice and Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card immediately upon receipt
- After EAD expires you have a 60-day grace period to 1) have your SEVIS (I-20) record electronically transferred to your new school/continue at a new level at GWC; 2) change visa status; or 3) depart the United States
- 90-day limit of unemployment for post-completion practical training
- Please have a valid email address to receive updates and requests from ISP and make sure to check your email

# Important !

- **Travel:** You may travel outside and return to the US to *resume employment* after a temporary absence if less than 5 months. You must have the following: a valid F-1 visa, a valid EAD for OPT, an I-20 endorsed for travel (no older than 6 months), a passport with at least 6 months validity, and a letter from your employer
- You are required to maintain the GWC-approved insurance unless your employer provides proof of coverage
- Once you have secured employment, you ***must*** provide the ISP with the name and address of your employer
- If there is any chance your current address may change during the application process, you should use the GWC address on your application
- You are still required to report any change of name or address and change of employment to the ISP
- Proof of program completion will be required/reviewed for Post OPT



# USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

## Employment Services

Location: Inside the  
Counseling Division

Hours: Monday-Thursday:  
8:00 am-5:00 pm

Friday: 8:00 am-3:00 pm

Phone: 714-895-8711

Closed daily for lunch 12:00-1:00 pm

## Career Center

Location: Inside the  
Counseling Division

Hours: Monday-Thursday:  
8:00 am-7:00 pm

Friday: 8:00 am-3:00 pm

Phone: 714-895-8217

[www.gwc.info/careeremployment](http://www.gwc.info/careeremployment)

# Social Security

Once you have received your EAD card please visit the Social Security office if you do not have a social security card already:

17075 NEWHOPE STREET, SUITE B  
FOUNTAIN VALLEY, CA 92708  
HOURS: 9:00 AM, MON-FRI  
PHONE: 714-966-2466

- Start out going south on GOLDENWEST ST. or GOTHARD ST. (towards EDINGER AVE)
- Turn LEFT on WARNER AVE.
- Turn RIGHT onto NEWHOPE ST. Office is located on the southwest corner of WARNER and NEWHOPE next to Coastline Community College on your right hand side

- Freeway Directions: FROM THE 405 FREEWAY, EXIT ON EUCLID AND TRAVEL NORTH TO WARNER. MAKE RIGHT ON WARNER. RIGHT ON NEWHOPE.

***Make sure to have your valid passport and current I-20 with you.***

# Questions about the Employment Process...



# Thank you for attending...

## EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS for F-1 Students

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