

Employment Options for Penn-sponsored J-1 Students

International Student and Scholar Services

This information sheet provides an introduction to employment issues and options for international students in J-1 status at the University of Pennsylvania.

The most important employment issue to consider is *legal* (or "authorized") versus *illegal* (or "unauthorized") employment. Make sure that any employment you plan to engage in is legal, since illegal employment poses a grave threat to your ability to remain in or return to the United States. Also make sure you have the necessary employment authorization **before** you begin work. Starting work without prior authorization, even if you receive authorization later, constitutes illegal employment, which can have serious consequences. If you have any questions concerning your eligibility or category of employment, please **consult an advisor at International Student and Scholar Services, Office of International Programs (OIP-ISSS) before commencing employment.**

NOTE: If your DS-2019 was not issued by the University of Pennsylvania, contact your program sponsor listed on the DS-2019 for information and approval.

Definition of Employment

Employment is any type of work performed or services provided, usually in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, food or any other benefit. If you receive no pay or other benefit for the work performed and the position is normally an unpaid position, this activity may be considered to be volunteer work.

Eligibility Requirements

Different requirements exist for each type of J-1 employment, but there are basic requirements that must be met for any J-1 employment:

- You must currently be in valid J-1 student status and in good academic standing at the University of Pennsylvania while engaged in a full course of study, except during summer and school holidays.
- A student who is out of status is not eligible for J-1 benefits, including employment.
- Once employment is authorized, you must maintain your eligibility or you will lose your right to continue employment.

Categories of J-1 Student Employment

On-Campus Employment (i.e. Employment by the University of Pennsylvania)

J-1 students are generally permitted to work on the premises of the school that issued their currently valid DS-2019, while attending that school and maintaining their J-1 status. **You must obtain written on-campus employment authorization from an OIP-ISSS advisor prior to commencing employment.**

This work is limited to part time, no more than 20 hours per week, when school is in session. Students may work full-time during holiday and vacation periods. Work on-campus is a benefit of J-1 status and requires written authorization from OIP-ISSS. Please see our website for information and procedures.

On-campus employment is work done on the school's premises for which you receive a paycheck (or other compensation, e.g. room and board) from the University of Pennsylvania. Do not accept any employment without first consulting with an OIP-ISSS advisor if the paycheck will not state the University of Pennsylvania as the employer on the payroll record.

Academic Training

In general, J-1 students are eligible for up to eighteen months of Academic Training employment authorization for off-campus work. The length of Academic Training; however, cannot exceed the length of the J-1 student's academic program. Also, doctoral students who obtain a "postdoctoral training" position may be eligible for up to 36 months of Academic Training. Academic Training provides an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge obtained in an academic program to a practical work experience; must be directly related to your major field of study; and may, in certain circumstances, be full- or part-time. You may apply for Academic Training during your vacation periods, during the academic year, or for when you complete your

studies. ***Academic training can be authorized by OIP-ISSS*** upon the recommendation of your academic advisor or by your J-1 program sponsor if not Penn. For information and instructions, see our website.

Economic Hardship

J-1 students who experience a serious economic hardship due to an unforeseen change in their financial situation may qualify for off-campus employment authorization. Among the changes that may qualify a student for economic hardship authorization include unexpected loss of a scholarship, significant currency devaluation or large business loss by a financial sponsor. For more information, consult an OIP-ISSS advisor.