Immigration Policies & Procedures

Employment

Note: It is recommended that international students do not work during their first semester in the U.S., because they will need to focus on their studies and their adjustment to a new country.

On-campus work
International students are allowed to work on campus, up to 20 hours per week, during the school term and up to 40 hours per week between terms. No authorization is needed for on-campus work.

Students wishing to work on-campus may contact a department directly to ask about openings, can check the job listing in the Student Employment Office, or check with the Associated Students Human Resources Office for job opening. International students are not eligible for the “Work-Study” program.

Off-campus work
International students are generally not allowed to work off-campus. They may do so only in three specific cases:

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) - Students may do paid work off campus if enrolled in an internship or independent study course in their major. Students must complete an application form in the OIE. They may not begin working until they receive authorization from the International Student Advisor.

Optional Practical Training (OPT) – International students with F-1 visas have the right to apply for 12 months of work authorization in the United States following the completion of their coursework. OPT employment must be related to the student’s field of study. Although there is an application process, the authorization is routinely granted and most international students choose to take advantage of the opportunity*. The International Student Advisors assist students in making the application to United States Customs and Immigrations Services (USCIS) which can take up to 90 days.
**Severe Economic Hardship** – With the International Student Advisor’s assistance, a student may apply to USCIS for permission to work off campus based on severe economic hardship. The student must have been in the U.S. for at least one academic year and must demonstrate that the reason for the current hardship was unforeseeable – fluctuations in funding, loss of scholarship, currency changes, medical bills, etc.

*17 month extensions of OPT may be available to students majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering or Math. For details, speak with an International Student Advisor or attend an OPT workshop.*

**Social Security Number (SSN):**

Location of the Social Security Administration (SSA) Office: 1370 East Lassen Ave, Chico

This nine-digit number is on a card issued by the SSA and is used by U.S. residents when paying taxes, taking loans, opening bank accounts, or in other financial transactions. **Social Security Numbers are only available to international students for the purpose of employment in the U.S.** You must present evidence of your eligibility to work in the United States before a number will be issued to you. Your SSN is good for life, so if you obtained a SSN in the past, you do not need to reapply.

Once you are offered an on campus job, bring your job offer letter to the International Student Advisors in Student Services Center, Room 440. They will write you another letter which states that you are an international student in good standing with the University. Take both letters to the SSA office along with your passport, visa, and I-20, and apply for a Social Security card. It will take approximately two weeks to receive your SSN.

Your SSN should be kept private. Memorize the number and keep the card in a safe place at home.

**If you are not employed in the U.S., the SSA Office will provide you a letter stating you are not eligible for a SSN. This letter is useful when applying for a California Driver’s License or ID Card.**