F-1 and J-1 International Students
Frequently Asked Employment Questions

1. Can I work on campus while pursuing a degree?
Yes, international students on F-1 and J-1 visas can work on campus at a Rutgers establishment but cannot work more than a total of 20 hours a week while classes are in session, as per the Academic Calendar. They are also required to be enrolled in classes and remain in good standing. Prior to starting, students employed on the New Brunswick campus must receive an International Payroll Form from Rutgers Global and apply for a Social Security Number. J-1 students may need additional approval.

Other visa holders are encouraged to review their work allowances with an experienced immigration attorney.

If concerned whether a position is considered on campus, please email isss-students@global.rutgers.edu PRIOR to beginning work for clarification.

For more information, check out this Rutgers Global Page on On-Campus Employment: https://global.rutgers.edu/on-campus-employment

2. Can I work off campus part-time while pursuing a degree?
Yes, but F-1 students need a Curricular Practical Training (CPT) I-20 from Rutgers Global before the employment period begins. You also must be overall eligible for the CPT itself, and be registered for the correct CPT related course as determined by your academic unit. All work off-campus must directly relate to your declared major. CPT is authorized per each semester. Students can only start working after receiving the CPT I-20 form.

For further details, consult the Rutgers Global page on CPT: https://global.rutgers.edu/CPT

J-1 students may be eligible for Academic Training. Please read more about this here: https://global.rutgers.edu/international-scholars-students/students/current/employment/J-1

3. Can I work off campus fulltime while pursuing a degree?
CPT is authorized in 2 ways: Part-time CPT and Full-time CPT.

(i) Part-time CPT: Employment for 20 hours or less per week is considered part-time. During fall and spring terms, you must be simultaneously enrolled in classes full-time and be physically present on campus to maintain lawful F-1 status. CPT during the summer may take place away from campus.

(ii) Full-time CPT: Employment for more than 20 hours per week is full-time. Please be aware that 12 months or more of full-time CPT will eliminate your eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT). During fall and spring terms, this is only possible if you have an approved Reduced Course Load (RCL), or are in a graduate program that allows full-time enrollment and full-time CPT (this is rare)
In most cases, students may be authorized—with approval from Rutgers Global—International Student and Scholar Services—for part-time CPT (20 hours per week or less) during the fall and spring semesters. F-1 students may be authorized for full-time CPT (more than 20 hours per week) during the summer and winter break periods.

For a more comprehensive overview, consult the Rutgers Global page on CPT: https://global.rutgers.edu/CPT

4. Can I do an unpaid internship while pursuing a degree?
Generally, interns are considered employees and therefore require the same work authorizations. If an international student finds an unpaid internship which he or she believes does not require work authorization in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, a letter from the employer specifically clarifying this matter must be provided to the student’s international student adviser before starting the position. In most cases, CPT is still required even if the opportunity is “unpaid”.

Volunteering can also be similarly complicated, and it is best to consult Rutgers Global before taking up any volunteering opportunity.

For more information, consult the Rutgers Global page on Unpaid Internships: https://global.rutgers.edu/international-scholars-students/students/current/employment/unpaid

5. I am graduating. What are my next employment options?
F-1 students may be eligible for 12 months of post-completion Optional Training (OPT)
Students that completed certain degrees at Rutgers may be eligible for an additional STEM extension, following the first 12 months of post-completion OPT.

While on your OPT, remember to work closely with your ISSS advisor(s) and pay attention to all deadlines and follow correct processes for filing any required information.

Also remember that while you can and should use your OPT time to the fullest, you must plan ahead for what happens long-term after the OPT (especially if you do not have the STEM extension option).

More information here at the Rutgers Global OPT page: https://global.rutgers.edu/opt

J-1 students can be eligible for Academic Training (AT). It must be directly related to the student’s field of study and authorized by the program sponsor on your DS-2019 and in writing BEFORE a student begins employment. The academic training program needs to be evaluated for effectiveness in achieving its goals and objectives. https://global.rutgers.edu/international-scholars-students/students/current/employment/J-1

6. What comes after OPT?
Students may choose to pursue the H-1B status after the completion of OPT /STEM-OPT/Academic Training.
General Resources for International Students:
1. Rutgers Global: https://global.rutgers.edu
   https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/work/working-in-the-united-states

For International Student Athletes:
1. Rutgers Athletics Compliance: https://uec.rutgers.edu/programs-2/athletics/
2. NIL College Athletes: https://nilcollegeathletes.com

F-1 or J-1 international students may email isss-students@global.rutgers.edu with any Name, Image, Likeness (NIL) work questions.

The Office of Career Exploration and Success created the attached document in partnership with Rutgers Global- International Students and Scholars – Updated: June 2023