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**Sent:** Tuesday, February 16, 2021 7:46 AM  
**Subject:** [issp-partners] Employment Notice to All International Students [OPT filing begins Feb.22]

## EMPLOYMENT NOTICE TO ALL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

**It is the student’s responsibility to obtain proper authorization before engaging in off-grounds employment. Please read below for more information.**

### Applying for F-1 OPT – Spring 2021 (May 23) Graduates

Please prepare many months in advance of your possible employment. **F-1 students graduating Spring 2021 may begin applying for OPT on Monday, February 22, 2021.** Take time to review our [OPT information](#) on our [webpage](#). USCIS can take 3+ months to adjudicate your application.

**\*\*If you are graduating in May 2021, your I-20 should have an end date of May 23, 2021. If not, be sure this is updated and accurately reflected in your OPT I-20. Be certain that all majors and minors appear on the first page of the I-20. Do NOT submit your OPT request to ISO before February 22. When the OPT I-20 is issued, it is valid for 30 days so send the complete OPT application overnight by FedEx or UPS as soon as possible after receipt.**

**OPT Q&A Feb. 19 at 9AM** [Virtual: Register here](#)

### On Grounds Employment

- F-1 and J-1 visa holders may work at the University of Virginia (and only UVA) as a benefit of these legal statuses.
- Students residing outside the United States for the semester cannot work as a Graduate Assistant or Research Assistant.
- On Grounds employment cannot exceed 20 hours per week while school is officially in session under any circumstances. Exceeding the 20 hour rule constitutes a serious violation of status and will result in termination of F/J status.
- J-1 students require [ISO authorization](#) before commencing employment of any kind.
- Graduate students who are receiving full assistantships are considered to be employed at 20 hours per week, and cannot accept additional employment during the Fall and Spring semesters, (nor Summer if it is your first or last semester).
- All other non-immigrants require the issuance of a valid EAD (Employment Authorization Document) through direct application to USCIS to engage in employment anywhere, including UVA.
- You should apply for the [Social Security Number](#) once on grounds employment is secured, if you do not already have the SSN. The SSN is a lifetime number; you only apply once. You should apply no earlier than 30 days prior to the employment and no later than the third day. You will need a [letter of permission from the ISO](#) and your employer.

### Off Grounds Employment

- No** F-1 or J-1 student is permitted to work outside the University of Virginia without the **prior** authorization of the ISO, and in most cases, USCIS (U.S. Immigration).
- Employment outside of UVA can include self-employment; working within the U.S. for a foreign-based entity, internships/externships, as well as unpaid employment.\*
- Unlawful employment will constitute a severe violation of legal status, resulting in potential removal from the U.S. and inadmissibility to re-enter this country in the future.***

### Off Grounds Employment Authorization

- F-1** students should review the sections on CPT and OPT on our website before engaging in off-Grounds employment: [issp.virginia.edu/f-1-employment-rules](http://issp.virginia.edu/f-1-employment-rules)
- J-1** students should review the section on Employment before engaging in either on or off-grounds employment: [issp.virginia.edu/j-1-academic-training-0](http://issp.virginia.edu/j-1-academic-training-0)
- You should apply for the Social Security Number for off grounds employment, if you do not already have the SSN. The SSN is a lifetime number; you only apply once. You should apply no earlier than 30 days prior to the start date of an approved CPT, or the begin date of your OPT EAD card, but no later than the third day of employment. [The application for OPT now carries an application for the SSN so it is a one step process.](#)

### Unpaid Employment

**\*All students interested in unpaid employment, including internships, should carefully read the Fact Sheet we have posted from the U.S. Department of Labor. Being offered a position without compensation does not in itself constitute a lawfully voluntary position. Protect yourselves by determining that the position offered is legitimately unpaid: [Fact Sheet on Unpaid Internships - U.S. Department of Labor](#). You will still require employment authorization to undertake legally unpaid employment.**

**It is wise to consult with the ISO before accepting any form of employment. Protect your legal status!**