



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

University Center for International Studies
University of Pittsburgh

Guidelines on On-Campus Employment for F-1/J-1 Visa Holders

[U.S. government regulations](#) require that F-1 / J-1 students' primary purpose is education. This document summarizes the federal government's regulations about on-campus work. OIS staff are required to report infractions of the on-campus employment rules. International students who are found to violate these rules may lose their student status and have their visa revoked.

On-campus Employment Rules:

- Allowable working hours for hourly student employees:
 - *no more than 20 hours* per week during the fall and spring semesters.
 - *more than 20 hours* per week during official breaks in the academic calendar, such as winter and summer break.
- Locations (on Pitt premises):
 - Pitt departments and offices, such as the University Library System, and Pitt IT.
 - For a company that contracts with Pitt to provide service directly to students.
 - Examples: [Pitt Eats](#) and the [University Store on Fifth](#). (See page 2 for FAQs.)
- Start / end dates:
 - Cannot begin work earlier than 30 days before the start date listed on I-20 or DS-2019.
 - There are exceptions for transfer students and [Change of Degree Level](#) students.
 - *All* students must stop on-campus employment when they complete or withdraw from their program of study, or when their I-20 ends, whichever comes first.

Graduate Students on Academic Appointments:

Graduate students at Pitt are often supported via academic appointments (e.g. as teaching assistants - TAs, teaching fellows - TFs, graduate student assistants - GSAs, graduate student researchers - GSRs, pre-doctoral fellows, and certificate trainees) that offset the costs of tuition and fees, and provide a stipend. The purpose of these academic appointments is to facilitate the student's educational goals and progress in their degree program.

Students supported on academic appointments are assigned duties related to their academic program such as teaching and research. These assignments may overlap with or go beyond requirements of their degree program. The time spent on duties associated with these appointments that go beyond program requirements is regulated in the same way that employment is regulated as described above. That is, a GSR can be expected to perform research for no more than 20 hours per week as a condition of that appointment. Note that research or other expectations related to progress in their academic program is not subject to such limitations. Guidelines for all academic appointments and examples of specific situations appear on the Office of the Provost—Graduate Studies [webpage](#).

The following examples are guidelines which OIS staff will follow in determining whether or not a student has violated the on-campus employment regulations.

Examples of Academic Appointment Scenarios and on-campus employment:

- A GSR is assigned to conduct research which supports a faculty member's project. If the research does not benefit the GSR's education, is not for credit, and is not related to progress on an academic requirement or program milestone then the assignment must be limited to no more than 20 hours per week.
- A GSR is assigned to work on a grant-funded project to perform research which will be directly used for her dissertation or other program milestones or for which the student receives academic credit. The research is considered to be required to fulfill the academic requirements.
- The GSR is enrolled in a course which requires research as an academic component of that course. Research can be conducted to fulfill that coursework.

FAQs about on-campus employment:

- **How do I find an on-campus job?**
 - Use Pitt's [Talent Center](#) to search for positions.
- **How do I apply for a Social Security Number?**
 - Refer to OIS' [Social Security Number Information](#) Fact Sheet and [online tutorial video](#).
- **Can I participate in on-campus employment and [Curricular Practical Training](#) at the same time?**
 - Yes, the cumulative total of on-campus and CPT hours could be more than 20 hours per week.
 - However, you cannot exceed the specific hourly limits on your on-campus employment authorization, AND you cannot exceed the hourly limits on your CPT authorization.
- **Is UPMC considered "on-campus"?**
 - No. Given the relationship between UPMC and Pitt, it can be difficult at first to determine if a position is with UPMC or Pitt.
 - When in doubt, ask "Who will pay me?"
 - If Pitt will pay you, then the position is "on-campus".
 - If Pitt will not pay you, you will most likely need off-campus authorization (CPT, OPT) before you begin to participate.
 - Contact your [OIS Immigration Specialist](#) with questions.
- **Can you provide some examples of situations of a location that "contracts with Pitt to provide services directly to students?"**
 - Panera Bread:
 - OKAY: location in [Scaife Hall](#), since it is managed by Pitt Eats and provides services directly to students.
 - NOT OKAY: location on Forbes Avenue, because it is not operated by Pitt Eats.
 - Chick-fil-A:
 - OKAY: location at [Petersen Events Center Food Court](#), since it is managed by Pitt Eats and provides services directly to students.
 - NOT OKAY: location at the Waterfront, because it is not operated by Pitt Eats.
- **I am a J-1 visa holder. Are there any steps that I need to take?**
 - Yes! J-1 students need specific authorization from OIS whenever they participate in on-campus work.
 - To request authorization, log into [My OIS](#), go to the "J-1 Students" section, and submit the "On Campus Employment Authorization" e-form.
- **I want to continue working at Pitt after I graduate. What do I need to do?**
 - Students who wish to continue working at Pitt after graduation, must apply for [Optional Practical Training](#) or [Academic Training](#).
 - If you will begin a new academic program at Pitt within 5 months of completing your current program, you can work on-campus via the [Change of Degree Level](#) process.
- **Can I work on-campus remotely *from outside of the U.S.*?**
 - No, you cannot work outside of the United States unless:
 - You receive permission from the department that has hired you, AND;
 - Your department receives permission from Pitt's [Global Operations Support](#).
 - **Note:** your department should contact Global Operations Support directly.

Contact your [OIS Immigration Specialist](#) if you have questions about on-campus employment.