HOW TO WORK IN THE UNITED STATES: FACTS FOR F-1 STUDENTS

Santa Monica College

Sponsored by: International Education Center and Career Services
This PowerPoint addresses:

- What is a Social Security Number?
- Eligibility for a Social Security Number
- Career Services Resources
- Working on-campus as an F-1 visa student
- Working off-campus as an F-1 visa student
- Working off-campus due to financial hardship
What is a Social Security Number?

A Social Security Number (SSN) is required for everyone who works in the U.S. including citizens, permanent residents, and non-residents. Only individuals authorized to work in the U.S. will be issued a Social Security Number. The purpose of a SSN is to track your earnings for tax reasons and Social Security benefits. It is not a work permit and cannot be used for ID purposes. It also does not provide you with any legal rights or easier access to obtaining a Permanent Resident (Green Card).
Who is Eligible for a Social Security Number?

- Social security numbers are only issued to:
  - U.S. citizens
  - Permanent U.S. residents
  - Non-residents who have a valid job offer and/or are eligible for legal employment
Who is Eligible for a Social Security Number?

* F-2 dependents are not eligible for Social Security Numbers.

* For more information about international students and social security numbers, visit the Social Security Government website: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10181.html
Career Services Resources

- Career Services Handout
As an F-1 academic international student, you may work part-time (up to 20 hours per week) on campus as a Student Helper. F-1 students are not eligible for Federal Work Study (FWS); therefore, they cannot apply for Federal Work Study positions.

There are a limited number of jobs on campus. You must be at full-time status (12 Units), in good immigration standing, and taking academic classes (enrolled in at least 12 units every fall and spring semester). Students are eligible up to 30 days before the school start date.

* F-1 Intensive English Program (IEP) students are not eligible to work.
On-Campus Employment

The money earned from a part-time job on campus ($8/hr.) should not be considered a major source of your funding for your tuition and living expenses. Remember, one of your admission requirements was to submit a financial statement showing that you have sufficient funds for your tuition and living expenses per year.
Finding On-Campus Employment

The best place to find a comprehensive list of on-campus Student Helper opportunities is the student employment website:

http://www.smc.edu/EnrollmentDevelopment/StudentEmployment/Pages/Student-Employment-Opportunities.aspx.
Finding On-Campus Employment

Another way to find a job is to search for unadvertised student help openings. One of the best ways to find on-campus employment is to search for offices/departments in which you are interested and approach them to see if they hire student helpers. For a list of SMC departments, visit the **SMC Online Directory**.
On-Campus Employment Job Offer

Instructions to follow if you are offered an on-campus job

1. Bring your SMC Student Employment Application and Contract and/or IEC Employment Verification Forms to the International Education Center (IEC). These forms will be available from the department to which you are applying for a job. Typical processing time is up to 5 business days.

2. Request a Social Security Letter from the IEC for you to bring to the Social Security Office. Please allow 5 business days during non-peak times and at least 10 days during peak times.

On-Campus Employment Job Offer

Instructions to follow if you are offered an on-campus job (cont.)

4. Bring your original 1-20, valid Passport and Visa, 1-94 card, SMC Social Security Letter, and Completed Application Form SS-5 to the Social Security Office. (No photocopies of immigration documents will be accepted). It is also a good idea to bring your SMC Employment Application and Contract and/or IEC Employment Verification Forms to the Social Security Office.
Off-Campus Employment

Students who have completed at least two consecutive full-time academic semesters (not including IEP enrollment), are maintaining a 2.0 GPA, and are in good immigration standing may be eligible for Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT), or off-campus employment for financial hardship (work permit).

To see if you are eligible and/or to apply for off-campus employment, please visit IEC and ask to schedule an appointment with an immigration specialist.
Interested in CPT? (Internship Class)

Six Steps to Receive Authorization for CPT

1. Schedule an appointment with the immigration specialist in IEC to discuss CPT eligibility
2. Receive a Letter of Eligibility from the Immigration Specialist in IEC
3. Find an internship
4. Attend an internship orientation sponsored by Career Services Center and bring your Letter of Eligibility.
5. Complete the required forms and obtain all required signatures.
6. Make an appointment with the immigration specialist in IEC to receive CPT authorization and CPT I-20
Curricular Practical Training - Job Offer

Instructions to follow after receiving authorization for CPT

1. If you obtained a paid internship, complete the Application for a Social Security Card – Form SS-5. The form is available on the U.S. Social Security Administration website: www.ssa.gov/pubs/10181.html. If internship is unpaid, a SSN may not be needed.

2. Bring the following documents to the Social Security Office
   - Valid Passport and F-1 Visa
   - I-94
   - CPT I-20 form with the employment page completed and signed by the immigration specialist at IEC
   - Completed Form SS-5

* No photocopies of immigration documents will be accepted)
Interested in OPT?

Pre vs. Post OPT

- Pre Completion OPT
  Allows you to work part-time (up to 20 hours per week) while you are studying full-time.

- Post Completion OPT
  Allows you to work full-time (20 hours per week or more) for 1 year after you have completed an Associate degree. You do not need to take any classes during your Post-Completion OPT period.
Interested in Post-Completion OPT?

Seven Steps to Receive Authorization for Post-Completion OPT

1. Complete Section One of the [OPT Request Form](#) and take the form to International Education – Counseling. An International Academic Counselor must complete and sign Section Two of the form.

2. Prepare your [OPT Application Packet](#) – make sure to complete all steps.

3. After completing the OPT Application packet, schedule an OPT appointment with the immigration specialist in the IEC.

4. Bring your [OPT Request Form](#), [OPT Application Packet](#), and all immigration documents to your appointment with the immigration specialist in IEC.

5. Receive OPT I-20

6. Mail completed OPT Application Packet to USCIS

7. Wait 60-90 days to receive Employment Authorization Document (EAD card)
Instructions to follow after receiving authorization for OPT

1. Once you have secured employment, complete the Application for a Social Security Card – Form SS-5. This form is available on the U.S. Social Security Administration website: www.ssa.gov/pubs/10181.html.

2. Bring the following documents to the Social Security Office

- Valid Passport and F-1 Visa
- I-94
- Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card
- OPT I-20 form with the employment page completed and signed by the immigration specialist at IEC
- Completed Form SS-5

* No photocopies of immigration documents will be accepted.
Off-campus Employment for Economic Hardship

If you are an F-1 student who is experiencing unforeseen financial hardship while studying in the U.S., under certain conditions, you may receive authorization to work off-campus. Work permits based on financial hardship allow students to work part-time during the semesters, or full-time during the breaks, at any kind of job.

* The job does not need to be related to the student’s major. These work permits are granted for one year at a time, and are renewable.
Eligibility for Off-campus Employment for Economic Hardship

Students who are interested in working off-campus due to economic hardship must have completed at least one calendar year at Santa Monica College, including at least two full-time consecutive academic semesters. You must be enrolled full-time, and you must prove that you have financial hardship. You must also be capable of maintaining your full-time F-1 status while working off-campus due to economic hardship.

* To prove your financial hardship, you must show that something has changed in your financial situation since you began your studies at SMC.
Applying for Off-campus Employment for Economic Hardship


1. Schedule an appointment with the immigration specialist in IEC to discuss off-campus employment for economic hardship and eligibility

2. Write a letter explaining your hardship

3. Provide supporting documentation that show your economic hardship was unexpected and beyond your control

4. Mail application materials and fee to USCIS

5. Wait 60-90 days to receive Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card
Closing

- Upcoming Workshops

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- Questions from the Audience