

F-1/J-1 STUDENT FACT SHEET

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Students in F-1 and J-1 status must be registered as **full-time** students for both the fall and spring semesters
 - Graduate Students Full-Time Status:
 - Minimum Total Credits/Term: **9** credits per semester

Exceptions to Full-Time Study

- Students must contact VIS if they cannot enroll full-time
 - Students need to be approved for a Reduced Course Load (RCL) before making changes to their schedule that drops them below full-time
- F-1 students are allowed to reduce their course load to 6 credits if experiencing academic or medical difficulties
 - An Academic RCL is allowed be used once per degree program for this reason
 - A Medical RCL will be issued on a semester basis and need medical documentation from the treating physician. Student may reduce course load below full-time or to 0 credits for temporary illness/medical condition
- F-1 students are allowed to reduce their course load to at least 1 credit during their last semester of study
 - A Final Semester RCL is allowed if a student needs less than a full course load to graduate

Final Semester of Study

- Students may be eligible to register as part-time students in their last semester of study if less than 9 credits are needed to complete their program
 - If an RCL is approved for this reason, the student **MUST** graduate at the end of the term to avoid jeopardizing their F-1 status.
- If only one course is needed to complete the student's program of study, this course cannot be completed online. Courses must be required for degree completion to be eligible for a RCL
- After speaking to a VIS advisor, the student can complete the 'Reduced Course Load' request in accessVIS
 - An email will be sent to the department for confirmation of remaining degree requirements
 - Course enrollment for the final semester is required for VIS to determine eligibility
- The student's I-20 end date will shorten to the last date of the semester for which the RCL is authorized

ACADEMIC PLANNING & PROGRAM COMPLETION

Making Academic Progress

- Normal Degree Progress
 - Students must enroll in at least **1** course necessary for degree completion each required term (Fall/Spring)
 - Students must maintain full-time enrollment and work towards finishing their degree by the end of the date listed on their I-20/DS-2019
- Students should collaborate with their department to create an academic plan (can be flexible) and understand their requirements

Extension of Stay

- F-1 students are expected to complete their program within the time limits on their Form I-20
- If this is not possible due to academic or medical reasons, students must:
 - Request a program extension at least 15 days before their F-1 program expires
 - Failure to do so is a violation of status
- Eligibility Requirements
 - Continuous maintenance of F-1 status
 - Registration for the upcoming term
 - Financial documentation showing sufficient funds for the period of the extension
 - Compelling academic/medical reason (change of research topic, loss of credits through transfer, unexpected research problems, documented illness)
- Problematic Extension Scenarios
 - **Academic Suspension**
 - **Employment:** Not typically a valid reason unless the internship is necessary to complete degree requirements
 - **Minimum GPA Requirement:** Not meeting the minimum GPA requirement for graduation does not meet the criteria for program extension - student must boost GPA from abroad

Program Completion

- The I-20 must end on the final day of the semester in which the last required course is taken
- F-1 students are not allowed to:
 - Enroll in additional courses in a new term after completing requirements
 - Delay thesis/dissertation submission for immigrant/employment benefits
- VIS will shorten the I-20 to the term of completion (for thesis/dissertation students, this is the term the final document is submitted, unless otherwise requested)

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

On-Campus Employment

- F-1 students can have on-campus employment as long as they adhere to specific conditions/restrictions
 - No authorization from VIS or USCIS required
- Work hours
 - During the Fall and Spring semesters, F-1 students are allowed to work up to **20 hours** per week
 - During official University breaks (summer and January break) students can work a maximum of 29 hours
- Work must provide direct services to SBU Students
 - Typically paid through State, Research Foundation, or ASA funds
- Talk to your International Student Advisor before accepting a position

Off-Campus Activity: Authorization Required

- Participating in off-campus activities, paid or unpaid, (internships, practicums, fieldwork, rotations, or volunteer opportunities) must receive authorization
 - Participating without authorization is in violation of standards and can jeopardize a student's status and future opportunities in the U.S.
- Common Work Authorizations:
 - Curricular Practical Training (CPT): For an internship or placement that is an integral part of an academic program.
 - Optional Practical Training (OPT): To gain practical experience in a student major field of study, not necessarily required for degree completion.
 - STEM OPT Extension: A 24-month extension of employment authorization for eligible students in select STEM fields.

- **For Additional Questions and Information, Please contact (631) 632-2933/vis@stonybrook.edu/Library E5310**
- **If you know your VIS advisor, please reach out to them directly!**

F-1 STUDENTS MUST RECEIVE AUTHORIZATION BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN CPT/OPT

<u>Curricular Practical Training (CPT)</u>	<u>Optional Practical Training (OPT)</u>
<p style="text-align: center;">Eligibility Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must have been enrolled full-time for at least 1 academic year (2 semesters)/will complete 1 academic year at the time CPT will begin Student must be in F-1 status Internship/training experience must be directly related to the student's declared major/second major and part of the program's curriculum Must be enrolled in an approved internship course for each semester they seek authorization (MEC 695) <p style="text-align: center;">CPT Enrollment Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment is required each semester authorization is requested Student must enroll for a minimum of 1-credit The course can be either mandatory for all students in the degree program or an elective, as long as the credits count toward fulfilling a degree requirement <p style="text-align: center;">Application Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission Timeline: Students should submit their CPT Request in accessVIS at least 5-7 business days before their expected employment/internship start date CPT cannot be retroactively authorized <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Last-Minute Requests: If submitting a request close to the employment start date, students are encouraged to notify both their department and VIS to inquire about expedited processing Submission of the CPT request in accessVIS does not authorize the student to begin working Student should not begin training/working (with or without pay) until they receive CPT authorization from VIS in the form of an updated I-20 <p style="text-align: center;">CPT Authorization Request Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Submission: The student will complete the CPT Request in accessVIS and upload an employment offer letter. Department Review: Students are asked to allow 3-5 business days for their department to submit their portion of the request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-completion OPT is employment authorization (for up to 12 months) that allows F-1 students to engage in off-campus employment that is directly related to their program of study after they've completed their degree. Authorized students must work full-time (more than 21 hours per week) to avoid violating limits on unemployment <p style="text-align: center;">Eligibility Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students do NOT need to have a job offer to be eligible for OPT A student must have been a full-time student for at least one academic year in the U.S. Must currently be in F-1 status. Completed all required coursework to graduate. <p style="text-align: center;">Students may request Post Completion OPT based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduation date; Completion of all required coursework, except thesis/dissertation; Defense date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the defense date is used, the student no longer considered a "student" in the eyes of immigration and thus not eligible to work/research on or off campus after the defense date without prior authorization in the form of an EAD from USCIS. This includes employment as a TA/RA/GA positions, and/or research at an affiliated lab (i.e.BNL or Cold Spring Harbor). Verification of the semester the student completed all required coursework, and their scheduled defense/recital date is required for VIS to recommend OPT based on a student's defense date. <p style="text-align: center;">Application Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student must submit the Post-Completion OPT Request in accessVIS to a request an I-20 recommending OPT. Upon issuance, the student will file the I-765 with USCIS. Authorization is granted in the form of an EAD card and can take 3-4 months for USCIS to adjudicate.