

International Students are limited in their ability to work in the United States. Entering the United States in an F-1 visa status means that your primary purpose in being here is to study. Therefore, any work permission which you may receive will be incidental to your participation in your academic program. Employment is automatically terminated when a student fails to maintain status.

It is crucial that you do not violate the terms of your student visa by working illegally. Department of Homeland Security regulations are very clear and strict in this area, and violating any of these regulations could lead to a loss of your visa or a possible visa denial in the future.

Listed below is a summary of 4 different ways you can work legally in the United States

On-Campus

F-1 international students are allowed to work on-campus up to 20 hours per week during the semester, and up to 40 hours per week during school breaks.

You do not need any special permission from the Department of Homeland Security to pursue on-campus jobs. However, international students may only be hired for non-workstudy positions. These positions are not funded by the US government and are therefore open to all students. You may not work in a position which is designated workstudy.

IMPORTANT!!

YOU MAY NOT WORK OFF CAMPUS WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION.

PLEASE READ THIS SECTION VERY CAREFULLY!

Curricular Practical Training

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) allows international students to work off-campus as part of their studio work. Students offered performance or supervised teaching opportunities (NOT private studio teaching), may request permission from their international advisory to pursue the work but must also obtain permission from their studio teacher as a part of their studio instruction during the semester or summer breaks.

For important details about this program, please see the International Student Handbook, the Curricular Practical Training Application Packet in the International Office, and speak with your International Student Advisor.

Optional Practical Training

Optional Practical Training (OPT) allows international students a total of 12 months to work in the United States to gain practical experience in their fields of study at the Conservatory. A job offer is not necessary for OPT approval and students may work for any number of employers at the same time as long as they are all in the field of music, and the total number of hours does not exceed the authorized limit.

Students may apply for part-time OPT during the semester after they have been in status for at least 9 months (or one academic year). Part-time OPT is considered 20 hours per week or less. Students who have not completed their program may only be authorized for part-time OPT. Part-time OPT deducts from the 12 month allotted time at a one-half rate. For instance, a student approved for 6 months of part-time OPT would have only 3 months deducted, leaving that student with 9 months remaining.

Students may apply for full-time OPT during school breaks and after graduation. Most students choose to save their 12 months of OPT for after graduation so that they can extend their stay in the US for an additional year. Please note that there are special considerations to keep in mind when applying for a visa renewal on OPT. Please contact your international advisor to discuss your specific case.

Optional Practical Training is recommended by your International Student Advisor, but can only be authorized by the Department of Homeland Security. Applications are processed at the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service Center,

and can take from 8-11 weeks for approval. Please plan accordingly, as you may NOT work until you have received approval.

Students may apply for an additional 12-month period of OPT if they complete a second advanced degree in the US (i.e., 12 months of OPT for a Bachelor's degree, and then 12 months of OPT for a Master's degree).

For more important information about this program, please see the Optional Practical Training Application Packet and speak to your international student advisor.

Economic Hardship

Very rarely, the US government will authorize off-campus employment in the event of unforeseen changes in your financial situation due to circumstances outside of your control. Generally, these applications are only approved in such instances as currency devaluations, political unrest in your home country, or a drastic and unforeseen change in your family's employment. Please contact your international student advisor for more information about this application.

Social Security Numbers

The social security number is a government-issued identification number. This number is NOT a work permit. In fact, you are not eligible to apply for a social security number unless you have an offer of employment.

Most employers (including NEC) will not pay you without recording your social security number. If you have a job offer, you should pick up the Social Security Application Packet at the International Student Office, and bring the completed form along with a signed employment offer and a letter of recommendation IN PERSON to the nearest Social Security Office.

Work Visas

Students interested in working in the United States after graduation may be eligible for a work visa. Generally, these visas require an employer sponsor and the assistance of an immigration attorney. Each spring the International Student Office invites an immigration attorney specializing in artists and musicians to provide an information session on work visas and green cards.

Taxes

U.S. law requires that all persons file taxes each and every year, including international students and their dependents. **You must file if you were physically present in the U.S. during 2016, regardless of whether or not you earned income. The tax filing deadline is April 18, 2017.** NEC has purchased **Windstar's Foreign National Tax Resource™** software this year, specifically for our international students. Windstar will help you with Federal and Massachusetts taxes return. You were provided with a Windstar code through your NEC email. Please refer to this email for the code and Windstar's Tax FAQs. **Remember: Your International Advisors are NOT tax experts.**

Tax Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I am an International Student, do I have to file US taxes?

A: Yes, all international students must file taxes even if they did not make money last year.

Q: How do I file my taxes?

A: NEC has purchased tax software just for international students called Windstar. Use the registration guide and access code to prepare and file your taxes.

Q: Can my International Advisor help with tax questions?

A: No, your international advisors are F1 experts, NOT tax experts.

Q: Who can I turn to with tax questions?

A: Please contact Windstar Tax Experts at windstar.fntr@thomsonreuters.com with your questions.

Q: I received a Form MA 1099-HC, what is this?

A: This is proof that you have health insurance. All residents of Massachusetts must have health insurance. You will need this form to file your taxes.

Q: When Must I Complete and Submit my Tax Return?

A: April 18, 2017.

Q: What is a Tax Return?

A: In the US, federal and state income taxes are prepaid by each employer based on the "estimate" of tax liability indicated at the start of employment by the employee on the Form W-4. Since the withholding is only an estimate, employees are given an annual opportunity to reconcile the amount of tax withheld with how much was owed. The name of the form on which the reconciliation is made is called the "tax return". The federal tax return must be submitted to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the state tax return must be submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue and/or the state agency in any other US state where you have received income in a given year. In some cases, the tax return results in a refund because the tax withholding was higher than necessary. In other cases, a taxpayer did not have enough tax withheld throughout the year and may need to send a payment to the IRS with the tax return. Occasionally, the total taxes withheld match the amount due, so no money is due by either the taxpayer or the IRS.

Disclaimer: Information presented within this guide is for general information and is not intended to be, nor should it be construed as, legal tax advice. While NEC International Student Services has arranged for the services of **Windstar's Foreign National Tax Resource™**, international students can choose how they wish to complete and submit tax forms, as it is the individual's responsibility to meet all tax filing obligations. International students are encouraged to follow **Windstar's Foreign National Tax Resource™** instructions to prepare federal and state forms online and/or consult the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS), local and state tax agencies, and tax professionals for advice and guidance regarding their individual tax situations.