

[OPT STUDENT Reporting Requirements](#)

Report all OPT employment through the [SEVP Portal](#)

Below are a few examples of how you can report your employment information. Your description does not need to match any of the sample descriptions below, but it should mention the type of work you are doing and how it relates to your major at CCA.

Remember the work you do must be 21 or more hours a week to be considered full-time for OPT. When making a recommendation for OPT, you should only engage in practical training opportunities directly related to your major area of study.

Types of Employment on Standard 12 Month Post-Completion OPT

- **Paid or Unpaid Training:** Paid employment that is directly related to your major field of study - volunteer, unpaid intern, researcher, community service worker, etc., where this does not violate any labor laws. We would advise that you obtain evidence from your volunteer organization that you performed services at least 20 hours per week.
- **Multiple Employers:** You may work for more than one employer. For active OPT, all jobs combined must total 20 hours per week or more.
- **Short-Term Multiple Employers:** If you hold a job as a musician and other artist, you may work for multiple short term employers (gigs). You should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration. If requested by DHS, you should be prepared to provide evidence showing a list of all gigs.
- **Work for Hire (Contract Work):** You may be engaged in work for hire (commonly referred to as working as a 1099 independent contractor), performing a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. If requested by DHS, you must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods and the name and address of the contracting company.
- **Employment Through an Agency:** If you are employed through an agency, you must be able to provide evidence showing that you are working an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.
- **Self-employed Business Owner:** You may start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, you must be able to prove that you have the proper business licenses and that you are actively engaged in a business related to your degree program.

SAMPLE Reporting OPT Descriptions on the SEVP Portal

- **Full time work example #1:** I work full time as a graphic designer at [name of company], a brand management firm. In my job, I [enter a few examples of your tasks at work]. My work requires an understanding of [enter an example or two of something you learned in your courses], which I studied in-depth at CCA.
- **Full time work example #2:** I work full time as an artist assistant at [name of gallery or business], where I [enter a few examples of your tasks at work]. On a daily basis, I use the knowledge I gained in my [name a class or two] classes that I took as part of my major in [enter major] at CCA.
- **Freelance Work:** I have been hired by [enter employer] to develop VR experiences. On average, I work 25 hours a week. My duties directly utilize the skills and knowledge I acquired from my coursework and degree in [enter major] at CCA
- **Artist Residency:** As an artist-in-residence at [include name of residency], I create works that [enter information about the type of art you create or the type of work that is created for this residency]. Through the residency, I advance my craft and career while creating [enter the type of artwork], utilizing the skills I learned throughout my major in [enter major] at CCA.
- **Fine Art Studio Practice:** As a practicing fine artist in [enter name of your studio, type of design discipline or fine art, examples: illustration, painting, drawing, ceramics, architecture, interior design] studio work for production of artwork, exhibition preparation, gallery shows, commission and retail sale.
- **Design Studio Practice:** As a practicing designer in [enter name of your studio, type of design discipline, examples: industrial, interactive, graphic, architecture, interior] studio work for design and production for clients, projects, presentations, commission and sale.

Know the Difference

Freelance Work is work that is done by someone for different companies at different times rather than work that is done by someone who is permanently employed by one employer. You can do freelance work while you are on OPT, but please make sure to get an offer of work in writing, including the employer name, start and end dates of projects, etc. Save this information for your records. All necessary information will need to be entered into the SEVP Portal. Freelance work does not require a license. We see students do freelance work on OPT very often.

Self Employment is doing work for oneself rather than for an employer. An example is when you are creating something and then decide to sell it later to anyone who wants to buy the work or service. If you are self-employed on OPT, you need to get a business license. This process will take time. We have not seen many students do self-employment for OPT.

STARTING your OWN BUSINESS as an F1 Student

F-1 Students and Entrepreneurship

The U.S. government considers starting your own business in the United States, also known as [entrepreneurship](#), as work. Therefore, if you are an F-1 student who plans to start your own business in the United States, you must qualify and apply for OPT.

The OPT, and thus the business, must relate to your program of study and can occur either before (pre-completion OPT) or after the completion of a program of study (post-completion OPT). Please note, F-1 students in English language training programs are not eligible for OPT.

Please note, you cannot be your own employer for the purpose of the STEM OPT extension.

If you want to start your own business while you study in the United States, speak to your DSO and visit [USCIS' Entrepreneur Visa Guide](#).