

Information for F and M Visa Holders on Working in the United States



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Employment Eligibility Verification, Form I-9

Federal law requires employers to verify the identity and eligibility of their employees to work in the United States. Employers have to complete Form I-9 documenting that they did this verification. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), manages the requirements of Form I-9. USCIS also operates E-Verify, an electronic system that employers can use in addition to Form I-9 to confirm the eligibility of their employees to work in the United States.

Under federal law, employers must complete Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, within 3 business days of when you begin to work for pay. They must also examine any documents that you provide to show your identity and employment authorization.

A [Form I-9 Employee Information Sheet](#) is available in English and [20 other languages](#).

Common Questions and Answers

If I am a foreign student, can I work? If so, are there any restrictions? Can my dependents work?

Consult with your Designated School Official or Responsible Officer to determine if you are authorized to work and, if so, what restrictions apply to you. For more information, refer to these DHS resources:

- [Employment page for F-1 students](#)
- Working in the United States page on the [Study in the States website](#)
- [Students and Employment](#) page on [uscis.gov](#)
- [I-9 Central](#) and the [Handbook for Employers](#) (Exchange Visitors and Students section)

If I am authorized to work, what documents do I need to show my employer? What if I have a student visa? [Lists of acceptable documents](#) appear on the last page of Form I-9. You may choose which document or documents you wish to present from these lists. Note to student visa holders: Pages 14-21 of the [Handbook for Employers](#) (M-274) and the [Additional Documentation Requirements](#) page on I-9 Central list additional documents that you must present when completing Form I-9.

What if I have not yet received a Social Security number (SSN)?

An SSN is not required for Form I-9. It is required if your employer uses E-Verify, but [E-Verify allows you to work while you wait for an SSN](#).

Do I need to complete Form I-9 if I have an unpaid internship?

In general, unpaid interns do not need to complete Form I-9 unless they will receive something of value (also referred to as “remuneration”) in exchange for their labor or services. For more information, see the [I-9 Central Questions and Answers](#).

Do I have any rights during the Form I-9 process?

Yes. Review the [Employee Rights Toolkit](#).

Where can I find more information?

- [I-9 Central](#)
- [twitter.com/EVerify](#)
- [facebook.com/USCIS](#)
- E-Verify Employee Hotline: 888-897-7781

877-875-6028 (TDD for deaf and hard of hearing)

Form I-9