What is J-2 Work Permission?
J-2 nonimmigrants (dependents of J-1 nonimmigrants) may apply to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for permission to work. When granted, this permission is valid for on- and off-campus work and may be full or part time. This permission is obtained by mailing certain documents to USCIS. It may take 90 days or more for the application to be processed. If approval is granted, you will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). You must have the EAD before you begin work.

Step 1: Write Letter Requesting Work Permission
How do I start the J-2 Work Permission process?
J-2 dependents requesting work permission must first write a letter addressed to USCIS requesting work permission. This letter must be included with the required documents listed in Step 2 to complete the J-2 Work Permission application. The letter should include the following details:

- Names of the J-1 and J-2 nonimmigrants
- Reasons for employment
- Source and amount of support for the principal J-1
- Specific statement that any income derived from employment will be used to support dependents and not to support the J-1 principal
- Yearly budget (see sample) that shows total income and expenditures for the family

Step 2: Application to USCIS
J-2 dependents are encouraged to make an appointment with an International Student Advisor to review documents for the final J-2 Work Permission application. Applicants must bring the following documents to the appointment:

- Two identical, passport style photographs taken within the past 30 days
- Personal check or money order for $410 payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Completed Form I-765
- Completed Form G-1145
- Letter requesting work permission and budget
- J-1 financial documentation (recommended)
- Photocopy of the following immigration documents:
  - Most recent DS-2019
  - Passport biographical page (and page that shows expiration)
  - U.S. Visa page
  - I-94 record

Step 3: Mailing Application
What steps should I take if I want ISSO to mail the application?
Complete the Document Mailing and Collection e-form found in Cystart.

What steps should I take if I want to mail the final application myself?
• Put the final application together in the order listed above, ensuring the passport photos and check are on top
• Review the final application one last time to ensure there are no errors and all documents are signed
• Send a scanned copy of the completed application to ISSO at isso@iastate.edu
• Include copies of all documents included in the final application as ISSO would need to reference these if USCIS sends a Request for Evidence (RFE) to follow-up on the J-2 Work Permission application
• Mail by Fed Ex to the appropriate address found here

Pending J-2 Work Permission Application

Can I work while my J-2 Work Permission application is pending?
No, J-2 dependents cannot work until they possess an EAD from USCIS.

How will I know if USCIS has received my application?
USCIS will send an email and/or text message. USCIS will also send the official I-797 Receipt Notice to the address listed on the Form I-765. It can take approximately 2 weeks to receive the email or text message from the date the OPT application is received. If the applicant has not received an email or text message after 2 weeks, they should first contact their bank to ask if their check for the J-2 Work Permission application fee has been cashed by USCIS. Second, if necessary, contact ISSO by email at isso@iastate.edu.

What if there is an error on my receipt notice?
Contact the ISSO at isso@iastate.edu.

Employment

When can I work?
Dependents cannot work until the start date listed on the EAD card.

What are the limitations for J-2 employment?
J-2 dependents with approved work authorization are permitted to work in any job, full time or part time.

How long is the EAD card valid?
The EAD card is valid for one year and can be renewed by resubmitting a new J-2 Work Permission application to USCIS.

When should I apply for renewal of my EAD?
Dependents wishing to renew their EAD should apply for renewal at least 90 days before the end date on the EAD. If working at ISU, dependents must complete the Form I-9 in ISSO at 3248 Memorial Union.

Disclaimer: This Frequently Asked Questions document is intended for general information and guidance. Please consult with an International Student and Scholar Advisor in the International Students and Scholars Office to discuss your individual request.