

GUIDELINES ON START-UPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students who are pursuing start-ups must carefully consider the following guidelines to protect their current and future U.S. Immigration Status.

1.) Students working on a **start-up idea/project** may be permitted without the issuance of [off-campus employment authorization](#), as long as the start-up idea/project is limited as follows:

- Only academic activities for the start-up idea/project are pursued, such as:
 - Development of a business plan
 - Interviewing individuals in the field area you are researching
 - On-campus creation of a basic prototype
 - Research such as background/literature review on the field/business sector
- The start-up idea/project is **NOT** already established and/or pursuing business activities **(in the U.S. or abroad)**
- Only MIT student support funding/scholarship from MIT/MIT Sloan (such as the Sloan Opportunity Scholarship) is being received by the student for participation in the activity, in which case the project will be considered "[on-campus employment](#)."

2.) Students working for an **established startup**, where there is an employer-employee relationship **will require** [F-1 Curricular Practical Training](#) or [J-1 Pre-Completion Academic Training](#) off-campus employment authorization (whether the startup is based/operating in the U.S. or abroad).

3.) [F-1 Optional Practical Training](#) allows for entrepreneurship, as the student can be considered self-employed. Activities beyond those listed in the bullets above are not permitted under F-1 Curricular Practical Training, but may be possible under Pre-Completion F-1 Optional Practical Training or J-1 Pre-Completion Academic Training.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Registering the company/startup under local/state business entities or licensing
- Outreach to venture capital or investors, fundraising or crowdsourcing
- Manufacturing beyond a basic prototype
- Cultivating suppliers or buyers
- Signing contracts for services or sales
- Pursuit by the student of the activities of the startup/company's business.

Students who have any questions about their immigration eligibility and requirements should contact their MBA Program or [ISO Advisor](#).