

Internship

Hiring an F-1 International Student for an Internship

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is work authorization that allows F-1 students to accept practical training in their academic field after one year of full-time study. Internship programs are some of the most common types of CPT opportunities for international students. Students can choose to work full or part-time during their internships, depending on the institution's CPT policy. In some cases, graduate students who are required by their academic program to participate in an internship in the first year do not have to complete one full academic year before they are eligible.

Duration: There is no limit, but 12 months of full-time CPT eliminates eligibility for OPT. Part-time CPT employment does not affect eligibility for OPT. Note: Graduate students can accept CPT on Day 1 of their full-time study, if required by their program.

Employer Role: Applying for CPT is solely the responsibility of the student and therefore requires no action on the part of the hiring organization. (The employer usually needs to issue a letter to confirm the internship offer.)

Student Role: After the student has been offered an internship, he or she submits an online application to the sponsoring school providing the internship start and end dates as well as the organization's name and complete physical address. The student also needs to provide the job title and a detailed job description. This process is facilitated by the student's International student services office. In accordance with U.S. immigration regulations, students who engage in part-time or full-time CPT must still be full-time students during the academic year. They do not need to be enrolled full-time during official vacation periods (such as summer).

Cost and Processing Time: There is no cost to the employer. The processing and approval time for CPT is usually within 5-10 working days.

Full Time

Hiring an F-1 International Graduate for a Full-Time Internship or Employment — Initial 12 month OPT

Post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) is work authorization that allows F-1 status students who have graduated to gain practical work experience related to their major field of study.

Duration: 12 months for F-1 students (Please note, any approved pre-completion OPT will be deducted from the 12 months OPT period.)

Employer Role: Applying for OPT is solely the responsibility of the student and therefore requires no action on the part of the hiring organization. OPT can be granted to the student with or without an offer of employment.

Student Role: Obtaining OPT work authorization is a two-step process. First, the F-1 student submits a request for an OPT recommendation which is processed and approved by an international advisor at the student's international services office. Second, the F-1 student mails in her/his completed OPT application, supporting documentation, and required fee to the USCIS to secure OPT work authorization. Once approved, the USCIS issues an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card as proof of work authorization for the 12-month period. The fee is \$410, which is paid by the student. (Fee effective as of 12/2/19)

Cost and Processing Time: There is no cost to the employer. The USCIS processing time for OPT takes an average of 60 days but can take up to 3-4 months during peak OPT processing season (starting in February each year); therefore, students are encouraged to apply as early as 90 days prior to graduation. The new employee must have the EAD card in hand to start work.

Hiring an F-1 STEM Graduate for Practical Training—24 Month STEM OPT

An additional 24 months of OPT work authorization (for a total of 36 months) allows F-1 student status holders who have graduated with an approved degree in Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) to gain extra practical work experience related to their STEM field.

Duration: 24 months for F-1 graduates