



# CPT, OPT and more!

John Prescott

U-M International Center

International Student & Scholar Advisor

# J-1 Employment Before & After Graduation - Academic Training

Definition

Work, training, or experience related to a student's field of study

Timing

Before or after completion of studies

Length

- May not exceed the amount of time spent in the full course of study
- Usual length is 18 months cumulative
- May have extra 18 months if complete PhD

Application Process

- See International Center website
- Final authorization is issued in International Center
- Apply before graduation

Cost

None



# F-1 Employment before Graduation - Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Definition	Temporary off-campus work experience directly related to a student's field of study
Timing	Before completion of studies
Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May not delay completion of studies, full-time enrollment in FA &amp; WI</li><li>• Doing a lot of full-time CPT may interfere with OPT</li></ul>
Application Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Take online CPT course on International Center website</li><li>2. Find opportunity and get offer letter</li><li>3. Gather documentation and register for CPT course</li><li>4. Request CPT authorization from IC - issued in our office (1-2 weeks processing)</li></ol>
Cost	None



# F-1 Employment after Graduation - Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Definition	Temporary employment directly related to a student's field of study
Timing	Typically saved for after completion of studies
Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begins at 12 months</li><li>• May be eligible for Cap Gap or 24-Month extension</li></ul>
Application Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Take online OPT course on International Center website</li><li>2. Gather documentation</li><li>3. Request OPT I-20 from I-Center (1-2 weeks processing)</li><li>4. Mail application to U.S. Government (up to 3 months processing)</li></ol>
Cost	Currently \$410+ incl. fee to U.S. government, photos, shipping



# Post-Completion OPT Timing

1) When will you file your OPT application with USCIS?

*Up to 90 days before I-20 completion date, or  
up to 60 days\* after I-20 completion date*

2) What requested OPT start date will you use?

*As early as 1 day after the I-20 completion date, or  
as late as 59 days after the I-20 completion date*



# 24-Month Extension of OPT

- Check if your current or recent program/major is on the list
  - Find CIP code on your I-20
  - Look up the code at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>
- Ask your (potential!) employer if they participate in the e-Verify system. If yes, then also find out if they have experience with the Form I-983.
  - Sometimes the recruiter, hiring manager, or boss will not know; they may need to check with Human Resources



# Intro to H-1B

- The H-1B immigration status/visa is:
  - For “temporary workers in specialty occupations”
  - Sponsored by the employer - they apply and pay for it
  - Typically what people mean by a “working” or “employment” visa
- There’s a limit (“cap”) on H-1Bs for private business
  - 65,000 regular + 20,000 master’s level or higher/year
  - No “cap” for colleges/universities and some non-profits
- Sponsoring an H-1B is a commitment for the company
  - Must meet many government requirements
  - Lots of paperwork
  - Money: thousands of dollars for attorney and filing fees



# Employment Eligibility ?s

“Are you legally eligible to work in the U.S.?”

- We recommend you answer "yes" if you have authorization, are eligible to apply, or have an application pending.
- Expect to be asked for more detail in an interview.
- Clarify the status of your employment authorization, e.g.
  - I can apply for the CPT authorization from my school once I have a job offer; I can provide my authorization ~2½ weeks later.
  - My OPT application has been pending for 2 months and the reported average processing time is 3 months.



# Employment Eligibility ?s

“Will you now or in the future require visa sponsorship?”

- If you have the intention of working for this company beyond the expiration of your F-1/J-1 student status, you should answer “yes.”
- Even if you don’t intend to work for the company long-term, be aware the employer may have a different perspective. For example, an employer that hires summer interns may have an intention of extending full-time job offers to qualified candidates after graduation. Employers may expect you to answer “yes” because you *would* eventually require visa sponsorship if you *were to* continue employment beyond the expiration of your F-1/J-1 status.



# For More Information

- Visit our web site at: <http://www.internationalcenter.umich.edu>
- Online training workshops on CPT and OPT
- Consult an International Student and Scholar Advisor (ISSA) at the IC with questions



# Change Your Mind Now



- “It’s hard to get employment authorization.”  
It was hard to get to this point. This is not harder.
- “Employers don’t want to hire international students”  
Employers want to hire the right people.
- “International students cost more to hire.”  
Qualified candidates cost more to hire.
- “I have to compete against U.S. candidates.”  
U.S. candidates have to compete against you.

