



# EMPLOYING AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

## A GUIDE FOR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS

### WHY HIRE AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT?

- Diversify the workplace
- Leverage multilingual skills
- Gain the ability to work with and within a diverse population
- Interact with bright and highly motivated students skilled in technical fields
- Prosper in cultural connections with other countries
- Enhance globalization efforts

*In addition, there is minimal hiring paperwork required and international students are ideal candidates for short term projects!*

### EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION INFO

UC San Diego International Students & Programs Office (ISPO)  
(858) 534-3730 | [istudents@ucsd.edu](mailto:istudents@ucsd.edu)  
[istudents.ucsd.edu](http://istudents.ucsd.edu)

### JOB POSTING INFO

UC San Diego Career Center  
(858) 534-4472 | [career.ucsd.edu](http://career.ucsd.edu)

The following information is designed to give prospective employers information relating to the hiring of international students in order to encourage them to include these talented graduates in their applicant pool.

### VISA STATUS

International students generally have F-1 student visa status. Some international students have J-1 student visa requirements. The immigration regulations for F-1 and J-1 are different.

### J-1 STUDENTS

J-1 students are eligible to obtain employment authorization using "academic training" (AT) which is employment in their field of study.

**AT - ACADEMIC TRAINING** is available both before graduation and after graduation. Before graduation, AT is allowed part-time during the academic year and full-time during breaks. After graduation, AT is allowed either full-time or part time.

The total amount of time allowed depends on the duration of the exchange program up to 18 months. Students with Ph.D. degrees may be extended for a total of 36 months. Some J-1 students have a two-year home residency requirement that must be either waived or fulfilled before they can pursue some other employment options.

## F-1 STUDENTS

F-1 students are eligible to obtain employment authorization using "practical training" which is employment in their field of study.

**CPT - CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING** is employment authorization before graduation which is issued by the educational institution on the Form I-20 (a U.S. government document which verifies a student's admission into the institution). CPT is generally available to students who have completed one year of study, are registered in a course that will give them credit, and allows part-time employment during the academic year and full-time employment during academic breaks (including summer). Since the authorization is done by the educational institution, CPT is issued according to the institution's ability to approve it.

**OPT - OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING** is employment authorization generally after graduation which is issued by the United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) on an Employment Authorization Document (EAD card).

OPT is generally available to students who have completed a degree program and allows up to 12 months of full-time or part-time employment. A 24-month extension is allowed for students who majored in a Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) field as long as the employer is registered with the E-verify program which requires checking all employees who are hired to see if they have legal status to work. EAD card issuance may take as long as 3 months to be issued by USCIS.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q:** What does an employer need to do to hire an F-1 student on CPT?

**A:** Employers need only prepare a job offer letter.

**Q:** What does an employer need to do to hire an F-1 student on OPT?

**A:** For the first 12 months of initial OPT, the employer does not have any paperwork responsibilities beyond hiring the employee. If the employee then wants to extend the OPT for an additional 24 months (available to STEM majors), the employer is required to complete a Training Plan on form I-983 that is submitted to the school the employee last attended. More information about the I-983 is here: [studyinthestates.dhs.gov/employers-stem-opt-reporting-requirements](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/employers-stem-opt-reporting-requirements).

**Q:** Can I offer a job to an international student who does not have work authorization?

**A:** Yes, a job offer can be made, but the student may not begin working before getting the employment authorization.

**Q:** What if I want to continue to employ international students after his/her OPT expires?

**A:** With some planning ahead, an employer can "sponsor" an international student using the H-1B visa category. The H-1B is a temporary working visa for workers in a "specialty occupation." The job must require at least a bachelor's degree and the employer must pay prevailing wage. Other visas categories may be appropriate as well. Consultation with a qualified immigration attorney is highly recommended.

**Q:** Doesn't an employer have to prove that international students are not taking jobs from a qualified American?

**A:** Not if a person is working with F-1, J-1, or H-1B status. Employers must document that they did not turn down a qualified American applicant for the position only when they wish to hire a foreign citizen on a permanent basis and sponsor them for a "green card" (permanent resident status).

**Q:** Can I hire international students as volunteer interns?

**A:** Normally, if the internship involves no form of compensation and is truly voluntary, the students may volunteer without obtaining employment authorization. If, however, the internship provides a stipend or any compensation, students must obtain employment authorization prior to starting the internship.