Employment Options for F-1 Students

International Students & Scholars
Presenters: Heidi Nam & Magid Shirzadegan
Today’s Topics

- Basic Information
- Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- STEM OPT
- H-1B Visa
- Q&A Session
Types of Off-Campus Employment

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- During Program of Study
- Practical learning experience
- Authorization from UCR ISS Int’l Student Advisor

Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- During or After Program of Study
- Practical learning experience
- Authorization from USCIS

Economic Hardship
- Authorization from USCIS
Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?

“An F-1 student may be authorized by the DSO to participate in a curricular practical training program that is an integral part of an established curriculum.” 214.2(f)(10)(i)

Basics on CPT:

- During your program of study
- Gain practical experience in your field of study
- Internship course credit
- Part-Time (20 hrs. or less): During academic term
- Full-Time (more than 20hrs): During school breaks only
CPT Eligibility:

- Must be enrolled in school for one academic year
  - Exception for programs that require immediate participation
- Must be in good academic standing
- Job offer must be directly related to student’s field of study
- Must enroll in internship course
How to Apply for CPT

Approval from Graduate Advisor
- Complete CPT Request Form
- Get approval signature from your Graduate Advisor

Enroll into Internship Course
- Enroll in internship course assigned by Graduate Advisor
- Requirement to do CPT

Submit Documents to ISS
- In person or by email internationalstudents@ucr.edu

Required Documents:
1. CPT Request Form
2. Offer Letter
   - Company Letterhead
   - Start/End Date
   - Job Duties
Proof of CPT Authorization

- Page 2 of Form I-20
- Must have CPT I-20 to begin internship/employment
- CPT Authorization given per quarter
- To continue CPT, must register for internship course and submit documents
Pop Quiz

★ What does CPT stand for?

★ Whose signature do you need to apply for CPT?

★ What kind of course do you need to enroll into to do CPT?

★ (True or False) The job offer does not need to be related to your program of study.

★ During the academic term, can you do full-time or part-time CPT?
Optional Practical Training (OPT)
What is Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

Basics of OPT:

- Gain practical experience in your field of study
- Authorized by USCIS
- Standard OPT: authorized for up to 12 months total
  - Pre-Completion OPT (During Program of Study)
  - Post-Completion OPT (After Program of Study)
- STEM OPT Extension: additional 24 months of OPT
OPT Eligibility:

- Must be enrolled as full-time student for one full academic year
- Job offer must be directly related to student’s field of study
- Only one OPT per degree level
- Must meet with Graduate Advisor before applying
Post-OPT Application Timeline

- **Earliest Date**: Earliest date student may apply
- **Completion Date**: USCIS accepts Post-OPT Application
- **Latest Date**: Latest date that application can be received by USCIS

**Earliest OPT Start Date**: Day after completion date
How to Apply for OPT

1) Internal Process
   - Before sending your application to USCIS

2) External Process
   - After you send your application to USCIS

Final: USCIS Decision
   - USCIS final decision on OPT application
1. INTERNAL PROCESS

- Complete the OPT Request form
- Meet with Graduate Advisor to sign OPT form
- Express mail OPT packet to USCIS - Include check or money order
- Submit OPT Request Form, I-765, photos, and other documents to ISS
- ISS Office notifies student to pick up OPT I-20
- ISS Advisor reviews and recommends OPT (3-5 days)

ISS Office notifies student to pick up OPT I-20
2. EXTERNAL PROCESS

- USCIS receives your application and assigns a case number
- USCIS will send you an I-797 Receipt Notice (usually 14-30 days)
- USCIS will notify you of their final OPT decision (more than 90 days)
- If approved, you will be mailed EAD card and Approval Notice
- SEVP sends you SEVP OPT Portal link by email (soon after EAD is mailed)
- Register for OPT Portal through link to update employer info & personal info
Proof of OPT Authorization

- SEVP OPT Portal
  - Employer information
  - Personal information
- 90-day Unemployment Rule
Pop Quiz

★ What does OPT stand for?

★ How long is USCIS taking to process your OPT application?

★ When can I start working?

★ What information do you need to update through the SEVP OPT Portal?

★ How many days of unemployment is allowed?

★ Can I work on-campus after my completion date while I wait for my OPT approval?
STEM OPT
(Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)
What is STEM OPT?

Basics of STEM OPT:

- Additional 24 months of OPT
- At least a Bachelor’s degree in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) field
- After Post-Completion OPT
- A minimum of 20 hrs per week
- Volunteer work not allowed
STEM OPT Eligibility:

01 Valid Status
- Currently be in valid F-1 status
- Currently be on Post-Completion OPT
- EAD Card unexpired

02 Eligible Degree
- Have a bachelor’s or higher degree in eligible STEM field
- CIP Codes: DHS STEM Designated Degree List
- Within the last 10 years

03 Qualified Employment
- E-Verified Employer
- Paid employment
- At least 20 hours per week
- Must complete I-983 Training Plan with employer
STEM OPT Timeline

36 months of OPT

12
Initial OPT

24
STEM OPT

Unemployment 90 days
60 days
How to apply for STEM OPT

- USCIS must receive STEM OPT application **BEFORE** your EAD card expires
- **Employer must complete a section of the application**
  - *I-983 Training Plan*
- Must file a new application with a new fee
- If application is filed in timely manner, can continue working with receipt notice
STEM OPT Application Process

1. **Complete I-983 Training Plan with employer**
2. **Request STEM OPT I-20 from ISS office**
3. **ISS Advisor reviews and recommends STEM OPT (3-5 days)**
4. **ISS Office notifies student to pick up STEM OPT I-20**
5. **Pick up I-20 and gather rest of documents**
6. **Express mail OPT packet to USCIS - include check or money order**
STEM OPT Application Timeline

- **Earliest Date to Apply for STEM OPT**: 90 Days Before EAD Expires
- **Post OPT End Date**
  - EAD Card Expiration Date
- **USCIS Accepts STEM OPT Extension Application**
- **STEM OPT Extension may begin**
  - If timely filed, may work up to 180 days after EAD expires.

**USCIS must receive STEM OPT application before EAD end date**
Frequently Asked Questions

- What do I do after OPT?
- What & when do I say to my employer about my visa status?
- What is the ideal visa type for long-term employment?
- What resources are available to me?
OPT Reporting Requirements
# OPT Reporting Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Completion OPT</th>
<th>STEM OPT Extension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEVP OPT Portal</td>
<td>SEVP OPT Portal (limited)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Changes in personal information</td>
<td>● Changes in personal information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Changes in employment</td>
<td>● Basic changes in existing employment (i.e. address)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New I-983 Training Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● New role/position in existing employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● New employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validation Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Every 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self- Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● 12 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Final 24 month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H-1B Visa Status
H-1B Temporary Working Visa

● Who is eligible for an H-1B visa?
  - Job position must qualify as a “specialty occupation”
  - Bachelor's or higher degree required for the job
    ■ New H-1B rule: Master’s Degree or higher - greater chances of selection
  - Part-time or Full-time
  - Employer-sponsored

● How soon should I start the application process?
  - 6 months before the start of U.S. federal government's fiscal year (Oct. 1)
  - H-1B cap
  - New H-1B Rule: Electronic Pre-Registration Requirement
H-1B Temporary Working Visa

- Who is eligible for an H-1B visa?
  - Job position must qualify as a “specialty occupation”
  - Bachelor’s or higher degree required for the job
    - New H-1B rule: Master’s Degree or higher - greater chances of selection
  - Part-time or Full-time
  - Employer-sponsored

- How soon should I start the application process?
  - 6 months before the start of U.S. federal government’s fiscal year (Oct. 1)
  - H-1B cap
  - New H-1B Rule: Electronic Pre-Registration Requirement
H-1B issues to consider

- H-1B Cap (65,000)
- Addition 20,000 for employees with an advanced degree (Masters or Ph.D.)
- Using a random/lottery system to select
- 2018 applications ~ 99,000
Who pays the fees?

What if there is a gap between OPT and H1B? “Cap-Gap”

Grace Period:
- Automatic?
- If terminate?
1. Beneficiary
2. Immigration Attorney
3. Employer
4. LCA

STATE/Web-base

Prevailing Wage Determination & Posting

3-4 months

2 weeks

U.S. CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION SERVICES (DHS)
Final Quiz: **True** or **False**

- “I have to have OPT before I apply for a job”
- “I can work on campus 1 term after graduation”
- “OPT jobs must be full-time”
- “When I change my employer, I have to notify UCR”
- I can be a volunteer while on OPT or STEM extension”
- My employer needs to complete a portion of my STEM application
- I can continue to work if I submitted my STEM application to USCIS on time.
- “To get an H-1B, no American citizen could qualify for that job”
- “My employer won't do an H-1B application so I'll apply on my own (or prepare myself and have him sign!”
We’re here to help!

International Students and Scholars (ISS) Office

- Email: INTERNATIONALSTUDENTS@UCR.EDU
- Office Phone: 951-827-4113
- Emergency Phone: 951-206-8810
Thank You!