



# U.S. EMPLOYERS GUIDE TO HIRING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Did you know, to hire an international student for either a summer internship or a full-time position, **all an employer needs to do is extend an offer letter to the student they want to hire?** In most cases, it is the student's responsibility to handle the rest!



## Categories for hiring international students:

### Hiring for internships

- Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

### Hiring for full-time positions

- Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- H-1B Non-Immigrant Visa

### Additional visa options for long-term hiring

- H-1B1: for citizens of Singapore and Chile
- TN: for citizens of Canada or Mexico
- E-3: for citizens of Australia
- O-1: for individuals with extraordinary ability

## WHY HIRE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

- International students have ambition and drive, plus they have learned to be both flexible and adaptable.
- Having handled many cross-cultural situations, they bring a global perspective to your organization.
- Due to their employment status, your organization gains employees who bring longevity and commitment.

Most international students come to the U.S. on an F-1 or J-1 non-immigrant visa. Each status has a different set of regulatory requirements for employment.

Some of the F-1 requirements are outlined in this document. However, if you need additional information regarding F-1 or J-1 requirements, please contact:

**International Students and Scholars**  
309 Wes Watkins Center, OSU  
405-744-5459  
[iss.okstate.edu](http://iss.okstate.edu)

# U.S. Employer's Guide to Hiring International Students

## Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Hiring F-1 students for a paid or unpaid internship/co-op

CPT is an academic learning experience, which allows a student to apply theoretical classroom knowledge to a work environment. It is required to be an "integral part" of a student's course of study.

### Student Eligibility

- Student must be in valid F-1 status and have been enrolled in a degree-seeking status for at least one academic year
- Experience must be directly related to student's major

### Duration

- Students must apply each semester they want to engage in CPT

### Student Role

- Students must apply for CPT with ISS and receive CPT authorization prior to beginning work

### Cost and Processing Time

- There is no cost to employers!
- Processing typically takes two weeks

### Employer Role

- Provide student a job offer letter on letterhead and use the CPT I-20 to complete an I-9 for the student, if paid

## Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Hiring F-1 students after degree completion

OPT allows international students to accept paid work and gain experience in their field of study. Students are eligible for 12-36 months of employment after graduation.

### Student Eligibility

- Student must be in valid F-1 status and have been enrolled in a degree-seeking status for at least one academic year
- Experience must be directly related to student's major

### Duration

- OPT is issued for up to 12 months
- Eligibility for 24 additional months is available for students who graduated in a STEM degree program

### Student Role

- Students must apply for OPT with USCIS and receive an EAD card prior to beginning work

### Cost and Processing Time

- There is no cost to employers!
- Processing typically takes two-four months

### Employer Role

- Verify the student possesses an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card

To continue employment beyond OPT the most common option is for the employer to sponsor the student as an H-1B "temporary worker."

## H-1B Temporary Worker (for up-to six years)

The H-1B is a non-immigrant visa that allows U.S. employers to employ foreign guest workers in specialty occupations requiring at least a bachelor's degree in that specialty. Applications for H-1B status can be submitted to USCIS by an employer on behalf of an international employee. There is a quota (or cap) on the number of H-1Bs granted each year.

### Duration

- Granted for up to six years with a renewal requirement at the end of the first three years

### Special Cases

- Non-profit research and institutions of higher education are not subject to the H-1B quota and can file H-1B applications anytime

### Cost and Processing Time

- Costs will include attorney fees and USCIS fees
- Registrations must be submitted on March 1 to USCIS
- May take two-six months to process

### Employer Role

- The employer, with a qualified immigration attorney, prepares and files the H-1B petition