



Cooperative Education -- Curricular Practical Training

Information for Employers

International students in the U. S. on an F-1 student visa may work off campus with authorization from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) and/or a Designated School Official at their educational institution. One type of work authorization, Curricular Practical Training (CPT), is described briefly below.

CPT is an immigration benefit that allows international students to participate, under certain conditions, in employment that is an integral part of an established curriculum, such as a co-op or “internship”.

International Graduate Student Eligibility

- Have completed at least two academic semesters in F-1 status
- Be in good academic standing, with a GPA of at least 3.0 (B average)
- Have a full-time employment offer, related to the field of study, for one academic term (14-16 weeks during fall and spring semesters or 6-12 weeks during summer)
- Have the approval of the academic advisor
- Have submitted the application before the deadline
 - **Fall or Spring Semester:** Monday, one week before classes begin
 - **Summer:** Applications are accepted until June 30.

Applications require approximately two weeks processing time; international students may not begin employment until their application is approved and a co-op I-20 is issued.

Employer Responsibility

- Provide an employment offer letter listing the dates of employment, job responsibilities, and supervisor’s contact information
- Provide the student with challenging work experience in an area related to the student’s academic field of study. Any subsequent assignment should include work that is progressive in nature.
- Verify Employment Eligibility
 - When the student begins work, an I-9 form must be completed and retained by the employer.
 - The student may work during, but not beyond, the period stipulated on page 3 of his/her I-20 form.
 - The I-9 form must be updated if the period of employment is extended through a subsequent approval.
 - F-1 students who have been in the U.S. for fewer than 5 years usually are exempt from Social Security (FICA) taxes. However, student earnings are subject to applicable federal, state and local taxes. The student is required to file a tax return and should furnish the employer with an address to which the W-2 form may be sent.
- Evaluate the student at the end of each semester or summer term

Thank you for your interest in hiring an international graduate student. If you have questions, contact International Graduate Student Services, 540-231-8486, igss@vt.edu