

Note: This information is not legal advice and regulations periodically change. Please consult an ISS advisor.

Brief Overview of Employment Options for International Students

- On Campus Employment - Valid F-1 or J-1, school campus only, 20 hrs. per week during school, full time during breaks
- CPT (Curricular Practical Training) - Valid F-1 status, off campus employment/internship directly related to major
- **OPT (Optional Practical Training)** - Valid F-1 status, 12 months during or after completion of degree; Position must be directly related to major

WHAT IS OPT?

- Optional Practical Training (OPT) allows international students to work off-campus for a job or internship that is directly related to your field of study.
- Length of OPT may vary based on your academic major (1 year OR 1 year plus 2 additional years)
- Allow 3-4 months for processing.

*A useful website to check your EAD status: www.checkuscis.com

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Am I eligible to apply for OPT?

- Currently in valid F1 visa status
- And**
- You have been enrolled full-time for at least 1 academic year
- And**
- You have not exceeded 12 months of full-time CPT
- And**
- You are not in an English Language Program.

2. Do I need to have a job when I apply for OPT?

You do **NOT** need an offer of employment to apply. Your application is simply asking for the chance to be able to work in the U.S.

3. What are the minimum requirements for any work that I do during my OPT?

- All work that you do while on OPT must be:
- Related to your SPU degree (your major, NOT minor);
- And**
- At least 20 hours per week (part-time)

5. Does my employment have to be paid?

No, it can be paid or unpaid/volunteer.

6. Do I have to be working when my OPT starts?

No, you have 90 days of unemployment that you can use throughout your OPT period. This is really common.

7. When should I apply?

- The CCC encourages you to apply around the beginning of your graduation quarter.
- Earliest you can apply: 90 days before the last day of your graduation quarter.

*For example, if you're graduating on 06/08/2020, the earliest day you can apply is 90 days before 06/08/2019, which would be around 03/10/2020.

KEY THINGS TO KNOW

Be aware of illegal questions

Employers can't ask you. In the U.S., it is illegal for employers to ask questions about your immigration status, age, race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or disability (flip over to see more details).

Ensure that you fully understand your work authorization options under your immigration status and respond accurately.

Employers are allowed to ask you:

- ✓ Are you authorized to work in the U.S.?
If you are on CPT or OPT, you can answer "yes".
- ✓ Do you need visa sponsorship?
If you are on CPT or OPT, you **DON'T** need visa sponsorship. **You're authorized to work.**
- ✓ Do you need visa sponsorship in the future/permanently?
This question is about H1B work visa. You answer "yes" if you need visa sponsorship in the future.

Inquiry Area	Illegal Questions	Legal Questions
National Origin/ Citizenship	- Are you a U.S. citizen? - Where were you/your parents born? - What is your "native tongue"?	- Are you authorized to work in the U.S.? - What languages do you read/speak/write fluently? (This question is legal only if this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.)
Race/Color	All questions regarding an individual's race/color will be deemed illegal under state and federal laws.	None!
Citizenship	Generally, an employer should not inquire as to the citizenship of an individual or require that an individual present proof of citizenship prior to the interview.	An employer may inquire as to whether an applicant is authorized to work in the United States