OPT Workshop

Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS)
Wayne State University

Presenter

Doreen Adams
International Student Advisor
Employment Options for F-1 Students

- Off-Campus
  Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Types of OPT

- Pre-completion
- Post-completion
  - Cap-Gap Extension
  - STEM Extension
Optional Practical Training

- **Pre-completion OPT**
  - A student may apply for pre-completion OPT to work in their field of study if the program doesn’t have an internship coursework.
  - A student can only work 20 hours per week while school is in session; and must be enrolled full time.
  - Over 20 hours a week can be requested for pre-completion OPT during official breaks or spring/summer;
  - After student has completed all coursework required for the degree and while the student is completing a thesis or dissertation. Contact an OISS advisor for more detail and options**(PhD)
  - Students must continue to enroll full time until the completion of course work.

Optional Practical Training

**OPT**

- **General concepts**
  - OPT is defined as employment that is directly related to a student’s field and level of study
  - OPT is an employment opportunity available to an F-1 student who has been lawfully enrolled on a full time basis for at least one full academic year.
  - USCIS must adjudicate all OPT applications before they start working.
  - Processing time can be up to 3 months.
  - Maximum of 12 months of OPT
  - OPT is authorized per educational level- no OPT for second degree at the same level
  - Must not have used more than 12 months of full-time CPT at that degree level
Continued....

- OPT is approved for each educational level and is approved in chronological order of their educational level (Bachelors, Master’s and Ph.D).
- OPT is not eligible when student moves from higher to lower levels of degree program.
- Part-time or full-time during the student’s annual vacation(spring/summer) and if the student intends to register for the next term of the session
- Part-time while school is in session
- Part-time or full-time after completion of graduate course requirements excluding a thesis or dissertation
- Fulltime after completion of the course of study

Optional Practical Training

- Post Completion OPT
  - Application can be made 90 days prior to the completion of study or must be within 60 days of the completion of the degree program.
  - The training must be directly related to the student’s field of study and commensurate with the student’s educational level.
  - No job offer is required.
OPT Application Process

1. Students must initiate the OPT process by completing the OPT application from OISS
2. Requesting an I-20 from OISS recommending them for OPT
3. Students must file an I-765 form with supporting documents to USCIS
4. If approved by USCIS, the student will receive an EAD card and cannot start work until the student receives the card
Cap-Gap Extension

- **Cap-Gap Extension**
  - F-1 students who are beneficiaries of a timely-filed H-1B petition are eligible for either:
    - An extension of their F-1 status and OPT work authorization till 9/30/----- (current year)
  - What is the H-1B cap?
    - The cap is the mandated limit to the number of individuals who may be granted H-1B status during each fiscal year. For FY08, the cap was 65,000 with some exemptions (additional 20,000 for graduate students).
  - What is the F-1/H-1B Cap-Gap?
    - The cap-gap occurs when an F-1 student’s status and work authorization expire in the current fiscal year, before the student can start approved H-1B employment at the beginning of the next fiscal year, October 1. In the past, the student would have to leave the U.S. and return when the H-1B authorization became effective.

FOLLOW THIS LINK: https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf
STEM Extension

• What is the STEM Extension?
  • F-1 students who have completed a bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral degree in a STEM field (science, technology, engineering, or math) may be granted a one-time 24 month extension to OPT
  • This gives U.S. employers two chances to apply for the H-1B process since the extension is long enough to allow for petitions to be filed in two successive fiscal years

STEM Extension: Eligibility

• Must have a bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral degree included in the STEM Designated Degree Program List
• Must be engaged in post-completion OPT based on a designated STEM degree
• Must be employed by an employer that is enrolled in the E-Verify Program
• Must apply before current post-completion OPT expires and the 24 month extension is based on your current degree.
STEM Extension: Types of Allowed Employment

- Students must work at least 20+ hours each week for an E-verify employer in a position directly related to the student’s STEM degree.
- STEM students may work multiple jobs, but all employers must be enrolled in E-Verify.
- Students may switch jobs, but the new employer must also be enrolled in E-Verify.

STEM EXTENSION: PROCESS

- USCIS has implemented a new procedure when applying for the STEM 24 month extension.

- Form I-983 must be completed by student & employer.

- Must be submitted along with other required documents for STEM processing.

- Form I-983 can be downloaded from USCIS website.
OPT ONLINE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- OPT mandatory online reporting is required every 6 months from the start date on the EAD card.
- If you change employers during your OPT, you are required to report changes within 10 days:
  - Employer's & Employee's phone number
  - Employer's & Employee's address
  - Employer's & Employee's email address
  - Employer's & Supervisor's name
OPT STEM ONLINE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Same Rules apply for STEM.
- However, if you change employers during your STEM, you have to submit a new I-983 form to OISS.
  - The evaluation has to be completed on Page 5.
- New company must be e-verified.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- What is my immigration status while I am on OPT?

  - OPT is a benefit of being an F-1 student. Therefore, while you are on OPT you are still an F-1 student and are still subject to the rules and regulations pertaining to your F-1 status. In the eyes of immigration, your intent is to return home after you complete your studies and OPT. You still must have your I-20 signed for travel.
Optional Practical Training
Final Approval

• OPT is recommended by an OISS advisor and approval is granted by United States Immigration and Citizenship Service (USCIS)

For More Information...

• Visit our website at http://www.oiss.wayne.edu
• Meet with an advisor during AOC hours or make an appointment
QUESTIONS.....