Meet-up Schedule

FEB 1
OPT/CPT PRESENTATION
for F-1 International Students
Laurel Hall Common Room
4-5PM

FEB 8
CAREER FAIR PREP
Do's and Don'ts When Talking to Employers
Career Center Learning Lab, LSC 120
4-5PM

FEB 15
JOB SEARCHING
Which Employers Should I Target?
Career Center Learning Lab, LSC 120
4-5PM

FEB 22
WRITING A STRONG RESUME
A Guide for International Students
Career Center Learning Lab, LSC 120
4-5PM

MAR 8
OPT/CPT/H1B PRESENTATION
Laurel Hall Common Room
12-1:30PM
CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) AND H1-B

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CAREER GROUP
SPRING 2016
Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Definition

Regulation 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f)(10)(i)

(i) Curricular practical training. 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. Curricular practical training is defined to be alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school. Students who have received one year or more of full time curricular practical training are ineligible for post-completion academic training. Exceptions to the one academic year requirement are provided for students enrolled in graduate studies that require immediate participation in curricular practical training. A request for authorization for curricular practical training must be made to the DSO. A student may begin curricular practical training only after receiving his or her Form I-20 with the DSO endorsement.
Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Purpose

- CPT can only be used if it is required or optional employment that is an INTEGRAL part of an established curriculum as listed in the immigration regulations.

- Employment that has a strong and measurable connection to the student’s academic program such as a for-credit internship.

- Must be approved by your International Student Advisor after they review your request to determine if it is part of the curriculum or just employment in your major field of study.

- Employment which is just in your field of study does not qualify for CPT! It must be an established part of your academic curriculum.
General Criteria for F-1 CPT

- Maintaining F-1 status.

- Enrolled full-time in your degree level for at least 1 academic year prior to beginning CPT.

- Graduate students may qualify earlier for CPT only if required by their academic program.

- CPT that is not listed as a degree completion requirement will be limited to 3 terms (including summer) of CPT authorization per degree level by ISSS. Your academic department may have stricter limitations.
  
  The exception to this will be students working on thesis/dissertation research.
Part-Time vs. Full-Time CPT

Part-Time CPT (20 hours per week or less)

- Students must maintain full-time academic enrollment.
- Will not affect eligibility for OPT.

Full-Time CPT (More than 20 hours per week)

- Students are only required to register for the internship course.
- Students who use 12 months of full-time of CPT will lose eligibility for OPT.
CPT Application Packet

- Completed Request for CPT Authorization form.
- Completed & signed CPT Advisor Form (must be signed by both you and your academic advisor).
- Completed Employer Form.
- Completed application should be turned in to ISSS a minimum of 2 weeks prior to desired employment start date.
Request for CPT Authorization Form

- Choose your start and end dates.

  Authorization can only be granted for one semester at a time, with the exception of programs overlapping with winter and summer break.

- Select full-time or part-time CPT.

- Sign to verify that you have read and understand all the instructions on page 2 of the CPT application packet.
CPT Academic Advisor Form

Four Possible Reasons for CPT:

1. The employment is required for the student’s degree.  
   For employment to be required for the degree it must be documented as such in an official university publication.

2. The employment is required to earn internship or independent study credit for which the student will be registered.  
   Students must be registered for the appropriate credit for the Fall and Spring term. CPT that extends through the summer does not require summer enrollment. If CPT is a Summer only experience, the student will need to be registered for the appropriate credit over the summer.
Four Possible Reasons for CPT (continued):

3. The employment will provide research that is necessary for the student’s thesis or dissertation.
   Student must be registered for CR or thesis credit during the Fall and Spring terms.

4. The employment will yield a project for a particular course that is required by the student’s degree program.
   Note: This could include a paid internship that is one of several options required for a specific course.
CPT Academic Advisor Form

- Academic advisor must outline the learning objectives of the employment and explain how the opportunity is an ‘integral part of the student’s established curriculum’.

- Will need to know who will be evaluating the CPT to determine if learning objectives were met.

- Signature is required by the student’s Academic Advisor.
CPT Employer Form

- Job title and duties
- Number of hours per week
- Start and end dates of employment
- Physical address of employment
- Supervisor contact information and signature
STUDENT IMMIGRATION FORMS

F-1 Student Forms

IMMIGRATION DOCUMENT REQUEST FORM
To request an I-20 or DS-2019 please fill out the document above.

FAMILY IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS REQUEST PACKET
Complete this form for all dependents that you wish to join you in the United States.

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENCY/REDUCED CREDIT LOAD FORM
To request a course load reduction below full-time.

F-1 OR J-1 STUDENT PROGRAM EXTENSION PACKET
To request an extension of your current program.

CHANGE OF EDUCATION LEVEL
If you are an international student on an F-1 visa and you intend to change your level of education, you will need to request a new I-20 to reflect your new program. If you are an INTO CSU student seeking a change of level to a CSU degree program, please complete the “CHANGE OF LEVEL—INTO CSU to CSU” form.

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT FORM
To request permission to register for classes at another university while attending CSU.

F-1 CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING PACKET
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F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING PACKET
To request F1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) authorization.

F-1 STEM OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EXTENSION PACKET
To request an extension of Optional Practical Training.

OPT REPORTING FORM
CPT employment and current physical address reporting form.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER REQUEST FORM
To request a Social Security Number.
Additional Considerations

- You may not begin CPT until you have a new I-20 authorizing the CPT employment.
- You may not work before the start date or past the end date listed for your CPT authorization.
- Employment for the primary purpose of gaining work experience and financial remuneration does not qualify for CPT.
ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT CPT?
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING DEFINITION

8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(A)

(ii) Optional practical training –
(A) General. Consistent with the application and approval process in paragraph (f)(11) of this section, a student may apply to USCIS for authorization for temporary employment for optional practical training directly related to the student's major area of study. The student may not begin optional practical training until the date indicated on his or her employment authorization document, Form I-765. A student may be granted authorization to engage in temporary employment for optional practical training.
WHAT IS OPT?

- OPT is temporary employment for practical training in your field of study (the major/program listed on your I-20).
- OPT is a benefit of your F-1 status. It is not a separate status.
- OPT is available at each progressing degree level.
WHAT IS OPT?

- OPT can be approved for up to 12 months of employment authorization.
- OPT requires approval from USCIS.
PRE-COMPLETION VS. POST-COMPLETION OPT

Pre-Completion OPT
- Used for employment before your academic program is completed.
- Unemployment is not counted.
- Limited to 20 hours per week during fall and spring semesters.
- Does not qualify for STEM extension.
- May extend I-20 if extra time is needed.
- Pre completion OPT time is subtracted from Post Completion eligibility.

Post-Completion OPT
- Used for employment after academic program is completed.
- Unemployment counts.
- Must work full-time (20 hours per week or more).
- May be able to apply for STEM extension.
- Eligible for cap gap extension.
- Cannot extend I-20 if degree is not completed.
- Graduate students may be able to apply during thesis/dissertation period.
OPT TIMELINE:
EACH BOX REPRESENTS 1 MONTH

90 days before program end date:

Program end date

60 days after program end date:
Application must be received by USCIS

Earliest date to apply for OPT

14 months after program end date:
OPT must be completed, regardless of when it started
SCENARIO 1: YOU WILL GRADUATE MAY 14TH AND WANT TO START WORKING IMMEDIATELY

February 15:
- Can apply
- Should apply

May 14:
- Program ends

May 15:
- OPT starts

May 14:
- OPT ends
SCENARIO 2: YOU WILL GRADUATE MAY 14TH AND WANT SOME TIME TO LOOK FOR A JOB/TRAVEL/RELAX BEFORE YOU START WORKING

February 14: Can apply
Should apply by late April

May 14: Program ends

July 12: Start date

July 11: OPT ends
SCENARIO 3: YOU WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO APPLY

This scenario is allowed, but not recommended, as it will not give you a chance to maximize your OPT benefit.

- May 14: Program ends
- Early July: Apply for OPT
- October 15: OPT approved
- July 11: OPT ends

Choose July 12 as start date
Start working
HOW TO APPLY

• Complete an OPT application packet (available from ISSS website).

• Complete the OPT Application Checklist which includes: the I-765 form; copies of passport, visa, and I-94; new passport sized photos; and the $380 check (or obtain a cashiers check from your bank).

• You do not need a job offer to apply for OPT but can include an offer letter with your application if you have one.

• Submit completed application to ISSS two weeks in advance.
I-765 APPLICATION

- The address given will be where your EAD card will be sent. THE POST OFFICE WILL NOT FORWARD MAIL FROM USCIS!

- If you don’t know where you will be living in 3 months, you can use the ISSS office address.

- Please see the ISSS application packet for more information on how to complete the I-765.
HOW TO NOT SIGN THE I-765
HOW TO CORRECTLY SIGN THE I-765

Signature: Rachel A. Hemperly
Telephone Number: (030) 421-6840
Date: 2/4/11
• Pick up your new OPT endorsed I-20 and application packet when you receive an email stating it is ready.

• Sign and date your new I-20 (original and copy).

• Keep the original I-20 and mail a copy of your I-20, with signature, with the complete OPT application.

• ISSS will prepare the packet for you, but you must mail the application.

• Your OPT application must be received within 30 days of the date your new I-20 was created.

• Your OPT application must be received no later than 60 days after your program end date.
HOW TO CHECK THE STATUS OF YOUR PENDING APPLICATION

• Go to the USCIS.GOV “case status online” website and enter your receipt number.

• It is in your best interest to NOT call USCIS National Customer Service to inquire about your application or to request an expedite. This can actually lengthen your application processing time.
AFTER YOU RECEIVE YOUR EAD CARD

• Send ISSS a copy.

• Do not start work before receiving your EAD or before the start date on the EAD.

• Do not work after the expiration date.
MAINTAINING STATUS DURING OPT

• You must have a job or training opportunity that is directly related to your degree.

• It is up to you to determine if the training is related to your degree. The ISSS Office does not decide if your training is related. You need to feel comfortable justifying the work you are doing if you are ever questioned by an immigration official.

• Students are still required to report their current address as well as their employer’s name and address every 3 months or within 10 days of any change to employment to ISSS.

• There is an OPT reporting form on our website
MAINTAINING STATUS DURING OPT (CONTINUED)

- You are permitted up to 90 days of cumulative unemployment during OPT. This does count weekends and holidays.

- To stop the unemployment clock, you must submit an OPT reporting form to ISSS by email at the beginning of your employment and every 3 months.

- You need to be working full time (at least 20 hours per week) in your field of study in order to stop the unemployment clock. There is not a maximum number of hours you can work.

- Every day without a job reported to SEVIS counts as unemployment. Working less than 20 hours per week also counts toward unemployment.

- On the 91st day of unemployment, you would be out of status and need to depart the USA.
MAINTAIN RECORDS FOR EACH JOB

- Secure a letter from each employer with the following information:
  - Company name and address
  - Job title
  - Supervisor contact information
  - Description of the work and how it is related to your field of study
  - Dates of employment and the number of hours per week

- This is especially important for volunteer work!
WHEN OPT ENDS

- If you change your status prior to the end date on your EAD, please send ISSS copies of your new immigration documents.

- After you complete your OPT, submit a departure form to ISSS.
GRACE PERIOD AFTER OPT

- If you maintain your F-1 status throughout your OPT period, complete your OPT, and do not exceed your unemployment time, you are entitled to a 60 day grace period starting on the employment end date.

- During this time you can receive a new I-20 to begin a new academic program (within 5 months), transfer to a new school, apply for a change of status, or travel and depart the United States.

- During the grace period, no work is allowed.

- If you decide to stop OPT or accumulate 90 days of unemployment, you are not eligible for a grace period.
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ON OPT

• Travel outside of the U.S. while your OPT application is pending is not advised. There is increased risk involved.

• Travel once your OPT is approved is allowed but you must:
  - Carry a letter of employment
  - Carry your EAD card
  - Have a valid F-1 visa and passport
  - Have a current travel signature on your I-20
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ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT OPT?
OPT STEM EXTENSION
STEM EXTENSION

- Current OPT I-20 is based on a qualifying degree in one of the designated STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics).


- STEM OPT Extension requires a second application and fee to USCIS.

- Student’s employer must be registered in the USCIS E-verify program.

- Student may need to prove previous OPT employment with job records/pay stubs/contracts.
STEM EXTENSION

- The 17 month extension application must be filed before the current EAD card expires.

- Students may apply up to 120 days prior to current OPT expiring, and may continue to work up to 180 days past the current EAD card expiration date, as long as the STEM application is listed as pending.

- Contact your advisor 3-4 months in advance if you qualify for a STEM extension.
• Approved OPT STEM extensions will receive an additional 30 days of unemployment. So no more than 120 days of unemployment may be accumulated during entire 29 month period of OPT.

• Employer must report termination or departure to ISSS.
WASHINGTON ALLIANCE OF TECHNOLOGY WORKERS LAWSUIT


- DHS was initially given until February 12, 2016 to correct the mistake and issue a new STEM OPT regulation. That deadline has now been extended to May 10th, 2016.

- As of now, 17 month OPT STEM extension applications are still being processed normally, but this may change.

- Our office will keep students updated on any new information we receive.
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F-1 OPTIMAL PRACTICAL TRAINING PACKET
To request OPT (Optional Practical Training) authorization.

F-1 STEM OPTIMAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EXTENSION PACKET
To request an extension of Optional Practical Training.

OPT REPORTING FORM
OPT employment and current physical address reporting form.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER REQUEST FORM
To request a Social Security Number.
ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STEM EXTENSION?
H-1B OVERVIEW
Temporary worker status

Purpose: To allow U.S. employers to hire foreign nationals in ‘specialty’ occupations

Specialty occupations are positions requiring highly specialized knowledge and a bachelor’s degree or higher in that specific area of study.
HOW IS H-1B STATUS DIFFERENT?

- Your employer must apply for you.
- It must be approved by USCIS.
- It may be initially approved for up to three years, but can be extended.
- Typically, a maximum of six years eligibility.
- It’s job specific! (employer/position/location specific).
- Must be continually employed.
CHALLENGES TO H-1B

- Finding a willing employer
- J-1s may not be eligible (two-year home residency requirement, but waiver possible)
- H-1B cap
  * 65,000 per fiscal year
  * 6,800 set aside for U.S.-Chile/Singapore free trade agreements
  * Advanced Degree Exemption - first 20,000 with a Master’s or higher degree from a U.S. institution don’t count against the cap
- Timing – Cap-subject employers file H-1B petitions based upon the Federal Government’s fiscal year. (Petitions filed in April for an October 1st start date.)
AVOIDING THE H-1B CAP

- Cap-exempt employers:
  - Higher education employers
  - Non-profit organizations related to an institution of higher education
  - Non-profit research organizations
  - Governmental research organizations
The period in which an eligible F-1 student’s status is automatically extended to bridge the gap between the end of F-1 status and the start of H-1B
**H-1B CAP GAP EXAMPLE**

- **Student Graduates**: 05/15/2015
- **Student’s OPT begins**: 06/01/2015
- **Employer files H-1B petition**: 04/01/2016
- **Student’s OPT ends**: 05/31/2016
- **H-1B Start Date**: 10/01/2016
- **Cap Gap**
  - Extends F-1 status
  - Extends OPT work authorization
OPT CAP GAP EXTENSION DATES

- Timely filed H-1B - OPT automatically extended to June 1
- Not receipted - No additional extension – OPT expires on June 1
- H-1B wait-listed – OPT extended to July 28. Student must provide proof of being wait-listed to DSO
- H-1B receipted – Automatic OPT extension to September 30, BUT … if the H-1B petition is denied or withdrawn, OPT automatically ends 10 days after date of denial/withdrawal and 60-day grace period begins
- If H-1B is approved, OPT is automatically extended to September 30.
- If H-1B is still pending on October 1st, no additional extension.
TO QUALIFY FOR THE CAP GAP EXTENSION OF OPT

- The student’s OPT must be coming to an end between April 1 and September 30

  AND

- The student must be the beneficiary of an H-1B petition that:

  * Has been timely filed
  * Requests an employment start date of October 1st
  * Requests a change of status
The OPT cap-gap extension is granted at no additional cost. Students may request a new I-20 noting the extension.

Cap gap extension is terminated if the H-1B petition is rejected, denied, or revoked.

For those on OPT, the 90-day limitation on unemployment continues during the cap gap extension.
ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT H-1B?
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