



Working in the U.S. as a F-1/J-1 Student

International students, with F-1 or J-1 visa, are allowed to work in United State. Here’s the brief introduction about working in the United States as an F-1 Student.

What Options do I have?

There are different kinds of options. Please see the chart below.

Location	Options	Qualification	Working hour
On campus	Student workers	All students	Part time
	Graduate Assistants	Graduate Students	Part time
	CPT	All students before Graduation	Part time / Full time
Off campus	CPT	All students before Graduation	Part time / Full time
	Pre-Completion OPT	All students before Graduation	Part time
	Post-Completion OPT	All students After Graduation	Full time

Note: Part time job has limit to work maximum 20 hours per week.

Full time job has limit to work maximum 40 hours per week.

What are Student workers and Graduate Assistance and how can I find it?

Student workers and Graduate Assistances (GA) are part time jobs and work with Faculties or Professors on campus.

To find a job on campus, these are a few ways to know about hiring information:

- On Blackboard.
The way to check: My Lewis > Blackboard > My Course > Resource Students: On campus students Employment
- Emails from Human Resource Office from time to time.
- From Professors / Faculties
- Check in with ISS

What are CPT and OPT and how can I find it?

CPT is a short name for Curricular Practical Training. OPT is a short name for Optional Practical Training. If you want to work off campus, you must apply for CPT or OPT. For more details about CPT, Pre-Completion OPT and Post-Completion OPT, please check “Working In The United States As An F-1 Student” section on ISS website via <http://www.lewisu.edu/student-services/iss/index.htm>.

To find a job off campus, these are a few ways to know about hiring information:

- Career Service Office / Website.
Go to Career Service Office and ask for more information. Career Service Office can also help you with your Resume. The Office is located on Benilde Hall.
Check the website for more information. Career Service
Website: <http://www.lewisu.edu/resources/careerservices/index.htm>

What do I have to do when I have a job opportunity?

When you find a job on campus, you have to do:

1. Apply online and get an offer letter from your Employers.
2. Report to Our Office. It is important for you to report to our Office to maintain a legal status once you have a job.
3. Get a Social Security Number. Check the document on our website.
4. Go to Financial Aid for your work contract and package.
5. Start working!

When you want to do CPT, you have to:

1. Get an Offer Letter from the company.
2. Report to Our Office. It is important for you to report to our Office to maintain a legal status once you have a job.
3. Get a Social Security Number. Check for documents on our website.
4. Follow the company's Rules
5. Start working!

When you want to do Pre-Completion/Post-Completion OPT, you have to:

1. Apply for Pre-Completion/Post-Completion OPT and get your EAD card. Check details on Pre-Completion OPT or Post-Completion OPT document on ISS website.
2. Report to Our Office. It is important for you to report to our Office to maintain a legal status once you have a job.
3. Follow the company's Rules
4. Start working!

CPT vs. Pre-Completion OPT vs. Post-Completion OPT

The following table is the main differences between three kinds of training. To know more details, please go to ISS website.

	CPT	Pre-Completion OPT	Post-Completion OPT
Work time?	Part-time or full-time Before Graduation	Part-time Before Graduation	Full-time After Graduation
Approval by?	Approved by ISS	Approved by ISS and USCIS (EAD card required), up to 90 days for approval	Approved by ISS and USCIS (EAD card required), up to 90 days for approval
Fee?	No	Yes, \$410 to USCIS	Yes, \$410 to USCIS
When to apply?	when you have a job and approved by ISS	90 days prior to Pre- Completion OPT start date	90 days prior to Graduation
Class registration?	Yes, enrolled as a full- time student	Yes, enrolled as a full- time student	No
Job offer before application?	Yes	No, but recommend to have one	No
Job Type Requirement?	Integral part of an established curriculum	Directly related to course of study	Directly related to course of study
Start date?	Once approved by ISS and meet the start date	Once approved by USCIS (Received EAD card) and meet the start date on the EAD card	Once approved by USCIS (Received EAD card) and meet the start date on the EAD card
Affect other Eligibility?	Yes, may not do OPT if doing full-time CPT for 365 days	Deducted days at half of the rate from Post- Completion OPT period	
STEM Major Extension?	NO, should apply for post-completion OPT first	No, should apply for post-completion OPT first	Yes, if meet qualifications
Limited Unemployment	No	No	Yes, up to 90 days

Note: I-20 program end date cannot be extended for the purpose of approving CPT or pre-completion OPT. If a student is eligible to graduate/complete coursework, they should apply for post-completion OPT.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?

CPT is employment that is an integral part of your major curriculum and allows you to participate in an internship, practicum or cooperative education program. CPT must be required or, if not required, you must receive course credit. CPT is employer specific and must be done before you graduate.

Do I have to be registered while on CPT?

You must maintain F-1 student status, which generally requires full-time registration. Most students are required to register as full-time students while on CPT. In some cases, graduate students may be considered as full-time students with fewer than 10 credits while on full-time CPT. This includes students registered for Engineering Co-op credits and student registered for thesis or dissertation credits along with their CPT-related credit.

Process to apply CPT?

Once you receive your offer letter from the company. Make an appointment with your advisor. Always your CPT should match your course subjects. Once verified by the advisor, ask him to fill the advisor form which is in our school website. Then make an appointment with your international student services and submit your offer letter and advisor signed form. Then they will approve the CPT. **UNLESS YOUR CPT IS APPROVED PLEASE DON'T GO FOR WORK. BECAUSE THERE WILL BE PROBLEMS FOR YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS.**

Can I change employers or the number of hours I work ?

Since CPT is employer specific you must apply for a new CPT authorization before you work for the new employer. You can change within the limits of part-time or full-time. For example, you may change from 10 hours per week to 15 hours per week without a new authorization. However, if you change from part-time to full-time (or vice versa) you must request a new authorization.

Can I extend my CPT?

You are authorized for specific dates of employment on your I-20. You may not begin before the start date or continue after the end date. You must apply for an extension in sufficient time to allow your ISS adviser to issue a new CPT authorization before you can continue beyond the end date of your current CPT.

For CPT extensions: If the new requested end date is prior to the start of the next academic quarter, ask your academic advisor to email to request the extended CPT end date. Your academic adviser should copy you on the email request so you know ISS received the request. If the new requested end date overlaps with the next academic quarter, you must submit a new online CPT application.

What is Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

OPT is optional for any student who meets the eligibility requirements and you do not need to earn credit. OPT is not employer specific and may be done before or after you graduate.

Can I request OPT if my I-20 is not current?

No

Can I apply for OPT if I am part-time student in my last semester?

Yes, as long as you have petitioned OISS to become a part-time student.

Does CPT or Pre-completion OPT usage affect Post-Completion OPT eligibility?

You may use as much CPT as is required for your degree program. However, if you use a total of 12 months or more of full-time CPT, you are not eligible for Post-Completion OPT. Part-time CPT does not affect Post-Completion OPT in any way.

Pre-Completion OPT and Post-Completion OPT have limitation of total of 12 months. You may work Pre-Completion OPT but the days you work will be deducted at half of the rate from Post-Completion OPT that you can do after graduation. For example, if you do 2 months of Pre-Completion OPT, you can only do Post-Completion OPT for 11 months.

May I participate in CPT while I wait for my OPT to be authorized by USCIS?

No, CPT is only authorized while the student is registered in the course of study listed on I-20.

Do I need a Social Security number and pay the taxes?

Yes, you will need a Social Security number in order to receive payment from your employer. In general, as an F-1 student you will be exempt from Social Security (FICA) taxes for your first five years in the U.S. as long as you continue to declare nonresident status for tax purposes. Unless you qualify under a tax treaty between the U.S. and your home government, your earnings as an F-1 student will be subject to applicable federal, state and local taxes, and employers are required to withhold those taxes from your paychecks. For more information on taxes, consult the Internal Revenue Service.

Will I receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD)?

No. The CPT authorization on page 2 of your I-20 is your proof of employment eligibility and together with your I-94 record may be used to complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 required by your employer. If your employer has questions about documentation required for I-9 purposes, please refer them to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' "I-9 Central" page, including the section about international students with training authorization.

IMPORTANT NOTE: YOUR CPT AND PRE-COMPLETION OPT WORK SHOULD NOT BE THE REASON FOR YOUR COURSE EXTENSION.