

# FOR OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYERS: HIRING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FOR INTERNSHIPS



## **Can I hire international students to intern at my organization?**

Yes! After their first year, international students may be interns so long as 1) the internship is in their major field of study, and 2) they apply for authorization with MSU.

## **Does this have a special name?**

It does – CPT or Curricular Practical Training. “Curricular” because the work is related to what the student studies, and “Practical Training” because the purpose of CPT is to apply the knowledge and skills they are gaining in the classroom.

## **Does this mean I am sponsoring the student? Is there a cost?**

No - the student is on a student visa and does not require “sponsorship” from an employer. There is no cost involved for the employer or student.

## **What do I have to do?**

Employers provide an employment offer letter to the student, with these details:

- Company/Business letterhead
- Full address of employer
- Student job title
- Start and ending dates of employment (the start date must be in the future)
- Wage/salary/remuneration
- Number of hours per week to be worked
- Description of work/duties performed (job description can be included separately)
- Employer signature

## **What does the student do?**

The student submits your employment offer letter to a campus representative to receive employment authorization. This process can take up to 15 days for approval.

## **My company has a policy that says we don't sponsor/won't hire international candidates, but I'd like to consider it. How do I start this conversation?**

We understand that immigration policy can seem quite complicated! However, the only requirement for an employer to hire an international student for an internship is as simple as one sheet of paper, that the student submits themselves.

## **Why should I hire an international student?**

International students are enormously talented. They speak multiple languages, are adaptable collaborators and problem-solvers, and bring a flexible, global perspective to the workplace. We consistently hear from employers who hire international students that they are among their most dedicated and creative employees.

# FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT OFF-CAMPUS INTERNSHIPS?



## **Am I able to intern in the U.S.?**

Yes! International students are eligible to work off-campus as long as 1) they have completed one year as a student in the U.S., 2) the internship is in their major field of study as listed on their immigration document, and 3) receive an authorization from the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS)

## **Does this have a special name?**

It does – [Curricular Practical Training or \(CPT\)](#) is an employment authorization for F-1 students. “Curricular” because the work is related to what the you study, and “Practical Training” because the purpose of CPT is to apply the knowledge and skills you are gaining in the classroom

## **Does this mean I need sponsorship from an employer? Is there a cost?**

No. The CPT program is part of your student visa, and there is no cost to the student or employer

## **An employer asked me “Am I eligible to work in the U.S.?” How do I answer this?**

Your student visa allows you to intern in the U.S.! You can apply for authorization through OISS to intern or work in your field of study. The employer does not need to sponsor the student.

## **An employer asked me “Do you now, or in the future, require sponsorship?” How do I answer this?**

“Yes” - in the future, you would require sponsorship when you are no longer on your student visa.

## **What if the employer says they don’t hire international students?**

Certain employers may have a policy stating they don’t hire international students. Some employers are very rigid on this, and some are more flexible. Be polite – oftentimes, especially with big organizations, the decision on this is out of the hands of who you are speaking with. If they seem somewhat open, you can share the research you have done about their organization and why you would make a wonderful fit.

## **How do I bring up my visa status with a potential employer?**

You don’t need to bring your status up right away. If you can, take time to get to know their organization better, and talk to them about how your skills and experiences would benefit their company. As the process moves along, you can share that you’ll need an employment offer letter from them.

## **I have an internship offer! What do I do?**

Work with your academic/graduate advisor to complete the paperwork in the [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\)](#) packet on the MSU OISS website. Once you have all required documentations (including an employment offer letter from your employer), submit all documents via email to your [OISS advisor](#). Your OISS advisor will review the submitted documents and if appropriate, will authorize the student for CPT.

## **How long does this take?**

It may take OISS 15 business days to review and authorize a student for CPT

## **Can I start working right away?**

No, you must have CPT authorization on your I-20 before you can start working. CPT authorization is granted for one semester at a time, because authorization is tied to enrollment in a specific course. The start and end of the CPT is determined by the semester start and end date as listed on the [MSU Academic Calendar](#). More information on CPT authorization dates can be found in the [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\)](#) Packet.