

# Off-Campus Employment For F-1 Students

October 26, 2018

Presented by

Jung Shin

Immigration Services Adviser

International Center

The University of Akron

# Disclaimer

- The International Center is able to provide you with general guidance. However, any advice provided to you by our office, as well as the information in this presentation, should not be construed as legal advice. Additionally, due to the fluid nature of governmental interpretation, the U.S. government may change its interpretation of these immigration laws/regulations and eligibility requirements for benefits, at any time. We will do our best to provide you with the most current guidance. Each case is fact-specific and it is advised that you contact an experienced immigration attorney if you have questions regarding your situation.

# Overview

- What's New
- Maintaining Status
- Immigration Reminders
- CPT
- OPT
- Resources
- Questions

# What's New

- I-765 Update
  - Include previous SEVIS number, CPT and OPT information
  - Passport photo requirements
- Update from SEVP regarding auto-termination for exceeding unemployment limit
- Unlawful Presence Accrual
- RFE & NOID Policy



# Immigration Reminders

- Change of Address
  - Update your MyAkron account
  - Must be reported within 10 days of change
- Travel Signature
  - Form to request travel signature
  - Allow 3 business days to process

# Maintaining Status

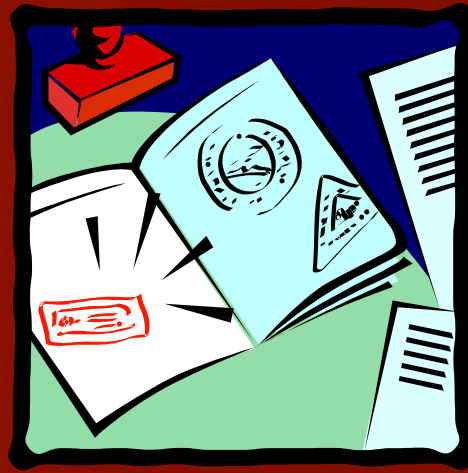
- Enroll full time
- Online/distance learning limit
- Reduced Course Load
  - Academic difficulties – first semester only
  - Medical Reasons – letter from MD, DO, or licensed clinical psychologist
  - Final semester

# Maintaining Status, continued

- Notify our office of changes
  - Change of major
  - Change in level: Bachelors to Masters, etc.
  - Early completion of program
  - Extension of I-20
  - Change of visa status
  - Withdrawal from program

# Off-Campus Employment for F-1 Students

# CPT and OPT



The Basics

# What is CPT?

- Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an integral part of the established curriculum which allows students to engage in training that is required or optional. These include internships, clinicals, co-ops, or practicums.
- CPT is done DURING your degree program (before you graduate)
- You are still an F-1 student while on CPT

# CPT Regulations

- The work experience is an “integral part of the established curriculum”
  - It is required of all students
- OR
- It is optional. If it is optional, then you MUST register for a course that corresponds to the internship/training in the same semester.
- The work is offered through a cooperative agreement between the University and the employer.
  - A job offer letter meets this requirement.

# CPT Regulations, continued

- CPT is only authorized for a specific employer, location, and dates
- It can be part-time (20 hours or less) or full-time (over 20 hours)
- 12 months or more of full-time CPT will make you ineligible for OPT
- Part-time CPT does not impact eligibility for OPT
- You must maintain full-time enrollment while on CPT. What is considered F/T enrollment during CPT varies by program.



# Graduate Students

## ■ Graduate Assistants

- You cannot do CPT during fall or spring if you have a Graduate Assistantship that covers fall and spring.
  - Some exceptions may apply
- If your GA contract does not cover summer, then you may do CPT in summer.

# Eligibility for CPT

- You have been enrolled in your program full-time for one academic year (Fall and Spring)
- You are maintaining valid F-1 status

# Applying for CPT

1. Discuss the internship/training opportunity with your academic advisor or internship coordinator in your department
2. Obtain an offer letter from the employer that lists location, dates, and job description.
3. Complete the CPT application and have advisor or internship coordinator complete and sign.
4. Submit the complete CPT application and job offer letter to our office at least 2 weeks before the start date

## Please note:

- A CPT I-20 must be issued prior to beginning employment; CPT follows the semester dates and is authorized semester by semester

# Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- “Temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major area of study”
- You still have F-1 status on OPT
- A student is eligible for 12 months of OPT at each level of study
  - As long as it is a higher level than before (e.g. Bachelor to Master)
- Must file application with US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and receive your work permit, called an ‘Employment Authorization Document,’ or EAD
- Travel on OPT: not recommended to travel outside US while OPT is pending and even after OPT approved

# Types of OPT

## ■ Pre-Completion

- Up to 20 hours per week during Fall or Spring. Must be enrolled full-time
- May work full time (over 20 hours per week) when classes are not in session

## ■ Post-Completion

- Minimum 20 hours per week
- After completion of degree requirements, usually after graduation
- Thesis/dissertation students are eligible if they have completed all coursework and are only working on thesis/dissertation
- Must end Graduate Assistantship/on-campus employment as of program end date and before the start of OPT.

# OPT – How to Apply

## ■ Application procedures

- Complete our OPT Application to obtain the OPT I-20 needed to file application with USCIS
- Schedule appointment with an immigration advisor:
  - You will receive your OPT I-20 at this appointment
  - Advisor will review documents before you send them to USCIS
- Mail your documents to USCIS – must be received within 30 days of date OPT I-20 was issued.
- Form I-765
  - Can apply for SSN on the I-765
- \$410 filing fee
  - USCIS accepts credit/debit card payment for OPT and STEM OPT
  - Use Form G-1450
  - Submit form along with other documents to USCIS

# OPT – How to Apply, continued

- File application within the application window
  - 90 days before program end date, OR
  - 60 days after program end date
- Expect at least 3 months for processing your application
  - Update our office, USPS, AND USCIS with any changes in address while your application is pending

# OPT Approved!

## ■ Maintain F-1 status

- Find employment related to your major (minimum 20 hours per week)
- Can be paid or unpaid, as long as it does not violate labor laws
- 90 day limit on unemployment time

## ■ Reporting requirements

- Copy of EAD
- OPT Reporting Form
- Change of address - MyAkron
- SEVP Student Portal (optional)



# OPT Approved, continued

- Keep checking UA email for important announcements from International Center

# SEVP Student Portal

- Launched on March 23, 2018
- Allow students on post-completion OPT to report address, telephone numbers, and employment information
- Students on STEM OPT can report address changes and telephone numbers, but can only view employer information

# STEM OPT

## 24 month extension of OPT

- 24-month extension of post-completion OPT available for STEM majors.
- Must file application within last 90 days of post-completion OPT.
- Must be a paid job or job offer
- Employer must be enrolled in E-Verify
- How to apply
  - Complete Form I-983 with employer and submit to our office
  - Submit STEM OPT application and supporting documents to our office
  - We will issue new I-20
  - Submit all required documents to USCIS
- Follow reporting requirements to maintain status (see our STEM OPT Reporting Form)

# Important Forms & Documents

## ■ F-1 Students

- F-1 Handbook
- CPT Application
- Guide for Post-Completion OPT (maintaining F-1 status while on OPT)
- Volunteering and Unpaid Internships
- OPT Application
- OPT Reporting Form
- STEM OPT Packet
- STEM OPT Reporting Form

# Useful Websites

## ■ International Center

- <http://www.uakron.edu/international/current-students>

## ■ OPT

- [USCIS OPT for F-1 Students](#)

## ■ STEM OPT

- [Study in the States](#)
- [USCIS OPT Extension for STEM Students](#)
- [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#)

## ■ SEVP Portal

- <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help>

# Who to contact about CPT/OPT

## ■ Main Contacts:

- Emily Aronson, Assistant Director, Immigration Services
- Jung Shin, Immigration Services Adviser

## ■ Alternate Contact:

- Robyn Brown, Executive Director, Global Engagement

Location: International Center

Buchtel Hall Room 202

Phone: (330) 972-6349

[immigration@uakron.edu](mailto:immigration@uakron.edu)

*Have a successful semester!!!!*

Questions? We're here to help! Contact our office with any questions or concerns you might have!

