

Carnegie Mellon University

Employment Authorization for F-1 & J-1 Students: An Overview



Presentation Outline

- ❖ **Employment vs. Volunteering**
- ❖ **On and Off-Campus Employment**
 - **J-1 students**
 - *Academic Training*
- ❖ **On and Off-Campus Employment**
 - **F-1 Students**
 - *Curricular Practical Training*
 - *Optional Practical Training*
 - Pre-Completion OPT
 - Post- Completion OPT
 - STEM Extension
 - Cap-Gap Extension



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Employment vs. Volunteering



What Is Employment?

Do you need authorization to work off-campus?

Department of Homeland Security defines an employee as “An individual who provides services or labor for an employer for wages or other remuneration”. Remuneration can include housing, food, gifts, etc.

Any off-campus employment for F-1 or J-1 students must be authorized!

8 CFR 214.1(e): "A nonimmigrant who is permitted to engage in employment may engage only in such employment as has been authorized. Any unauthorized employment by a nonimmigrant constitutes a failure to maintain status..."

When Is Authorization Required: Volunteering/Internship?

Volunteering is NOT simply working without getting paid! It is much more complex!

To be considered volunteering, the work performed by the individual must meet the following criteria:

- No compensation or expectation of compensation
- The volunteer cannot displace a genuine employee, and the services provided by the volunteer should not be the same services for which he or she was previously paid and/or expects to be hired and paid for in the future
- Services are performed for a non-profit organization for public service, religious or humanitarian objective, and
- Employees may not volunteer services to **for-profit** private sector employers.

For more information, see [Volunteering - OIE](#)

CPDC: Why does this matter from a Professional Perspective?

- **Experience** on a resume implies employment. If the information you have included in an **experience** section is not in fact employment, then you should rename that section to more accurately reflect the nature of the entry.
- Experiences on a resume should not be misrepresented.
- Common additional sections include Projects, Activities, Volunteer Work, Extracurricular Experience, and Additional Experience.



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J-1 Students: On and Off-Campus Employment Authorization

Important! If CMU did NOT issue your DS-2019 Document, contact your J Program Sponsor for information about employment authorization!

On-Campus

Employment for J-1 Students

- The Office of International Education (OIE) is required to document on-campus student employment for J-1 students in the SEVIS system
- Therefore, if CMU is your J-1 sponsor and you are working on-campus, visit our website and fill out the [J-1 On-Campus Employment Form](#)
- On-Campus is defined as working for CMU or for one of CMU vendors (food service), and can only be 20 hours or less during an academic term (i.e. fall/spring)



Off-Campus: Academic Training



Employment for J-1 Students

What is Academic Training (AT) and who is eligible?

- AT is authorization for work, training, or experience related to a student's field of study
- You must have a job/training offer at the time of application.
- Employment/training takes place with the specific employer(s) noted on the AT authorization
- AT is available both before and after completion of your degree program
- Authorization must be processed **before** your official academic program completion date
- Post-completion AT must begin within the first 30 days after program completion date and must be for a paid position

The form is titled "Academic Training (AT) Form - MUST BE FORM FILLABLE!" and is from the Carnegie Mellon University Office of International Education. It contains various fields for student information, including name, date of birth, current US address, and dates of activity. There are checkboxes for whether the student is currently enrolled and if they have completed the form. The form also includes a section for the training program, with fields for the organization name, supervisor's name, job title, and start/end dates. A note at the bottom states: "If you are currently enrolled in a degree program, you must complete this form before you can apply for AT authorization." The form is partially filled out with handwritten text.

Off-Campus: Academic Training



Employment for J-1 Students

Length of Academic Training (AT)

- For most students: 18 months total (whether before or after completion of studies)
- The total employment/training period may not exceed the amount of time spent in full course of study
e.g., a Master's student who completed a program in 12 months, is only eligible for 12 months of academic training
- PhD students are eligible for 36 months of AT

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Office of International Education
4400 Forbes Ave., Room 5601 • Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Phone: (412) 268-5231 • Email: oi@cmu.edu • Web: www.cmu.edu/oi

Academic Training (AT) Form - MUST BE FORM FILLABLE!

STUDENT AT APPLICANT COMPLETE BELOW:
Complete the following information. The OIE advisor will use the information you provide to recommend your AT.

List Academic Department: _____
Supervisor/Family Name: _____
Date of Birth: _____
Dates of Activity/Employment: _____
Current US Address: _____
AT Start Date: _____
Full or Part Time: _____
Check one: The work WILL or WILL NOT directly relate to my field of study/degree program.
Have you applied for AT before? YES NO
ACADEMIC ADVISOR OF APPLICANT/DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL COMPLETE BELOW:
Please complete the information below and return it to the student so we may process the student's request.
Should you have any questions, call OIE at 412-268-5231.

Name of student: _____
is a CMU J-1 student majoring in _____
and is/was last enrolled _____ (fall/spring/summer YEAR) _____ (fall of study)
They are expected to complete all requirements for the program by _____ and wants to engage in Academic Training.
1. DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM:
Organization Name: _____
Name of Training Supervisor/Employer: _____
Dates of Activity/Employment: _____
Training Supervisor/Employer Address: _____
Start Date: _____
End Date: _____
Student's Job Title: _____
Number of Hours a Week: _____
Hours (per week) at Second Site: _____
Updated 7/2018

Off-Campus: Academic Training



Employment for J-1 Students

Application process for Academic Training:

- Job offer letter required!
- Academic advisor recommendation
- Authorization is issued by OIE
- No fee

For more information about Academic Training:

Go to [OIE web site](#)

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Office of International Education
3600 Forbes Ave., Room 1601 • Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Phone: (412) 268-5231 • Email: oiie@cmu.edu • Web: www.oiie.cmu.edu

Academic Training (AT) Form - MUST BE FORM FILLABLE!

STUDENT AT APPLICANT COMPLETE BELOW:
Complete the following information. The OIE advisor will use the information you provide to recommend your AT.

List Academic Department: _____

Supernum/Family Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Dates of Activity/Employment: _____

Current US Address: _____

AT Start Date: _____

Full or Part Time: _____

Check one: The work WILL or WILL NOT directly relate to my field of study/degree program.

Have you applied for AT before? YES or NO

ACADEMIC ADVISOR OF APPLICANT/DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL COMPLETE BELOW:
Please complete the information below and return it to the student so we may process the student's request.
Should you have any questions, call OIE at 412-268-5231.

Name of student: _____

is a CMU J-1 student majoring in _____

and is/was last enrolled _____

They are expected to complete all requirements for the program by _____

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM:

Organization Name: _____

Name of Training Supervisor/Employer: _____

Dates of Activity/Employment: _____

Training Supervisor/Employer Address: _____

Start Date: _____

End Date: _____

Updated 7/2018

CPDC: J-1 Student Employment

- **On-Campus employment** should be listed on your resume, particularly if you are working as a Course Assistant, Teaching Assistant, or Research Assistant.
- List **title** correctly—confirm with your supervisor.
- Once **Academic Training (AT)** has been obtained and the date has started, then off-campus employment can be listed on resume once opportunity has started.



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F-1 Students: On and Off-Campus Employment Authorization

On-Campus

F-1

- No special authorization is necessary **(on-campus employment only)**
- On-Campus is defined as working for CMU or for one of CMU (food service) vendors, and can only be 20 hours per week or less during an academic term (i.e. fall/spring)
- **IMPORTANT:** On-campus work authorization ends on current I-20 program end date or when program is completed, whichever comes first!



CPDC: F-1 On-Campus Employment

- **On-campus employment** can be listed on a resume.
- Be accurate with **titles** and be sure it is listed in the appropriate **section** (Professional Experience, Research Experience, etc).
- Do not list it on resume until experience **has started**.
 - Note: **Part-time** has different meanings:
 - Immigration=20 hours or less
 - Employers=definition varies

Off-Campus Employment Authorization:

F-1

- **F-1 Students**
 - Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
 - Optional Practical Training (OPT)
 - Pre-Completion OPT
 - Post-Completion OPT
 - STEM Extension OPT
 - Cap-Gap Extension



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Curricular Practical Training (CPT)



Off-Campus:

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)

F-1

What is CPT and Who is Eligible?

- CPT is defined as authorization for practical training which is “an integral part of an established curriculum”
- Only available prior to completion of degree program (no CPT in last semester!)
- To be eligible:
 - Must have been a full-time student in the U.S. for one academic year (two full semesters); exception: grad students whose program requires internship/practicum in 1st year
 - Must have a job offer at the time of application
 - Must meet academic requirements
- CPT is limited to what is a required or elective **integral** component of a degree program. Policy may vary by program or school. 365 days or more of full-time CPT authorization will make you ineligible for OPT.

Off-Campus: CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)



Types of CPT:

- **Required CPT:** requirement for graduation
- **Optional CPT:** Optional program credit that counts toward major degree requirements (Must register for internship/practicum course)
- **Part-time CPT:** 20 hours or less/week
- **Full-time CPT:** more than 20 hours/week.

****Use of full-time CPT for one year or more eliminates eligibility for Optional Practical Training. Use of part-time CPT does not affect eligibility for Optional Practical Training****

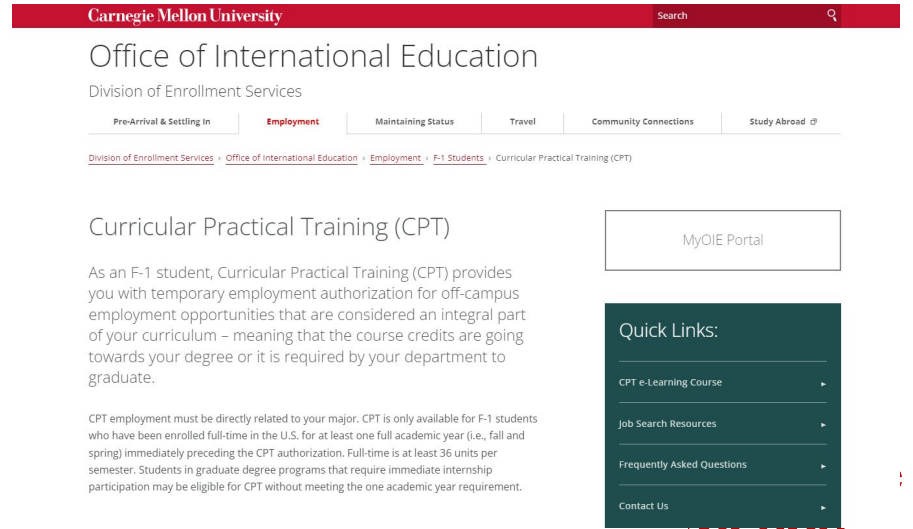
Off-Campus: CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)



Application Process for CPT:

- Job offer is required!
- Academic department approval
- Academic course registration
- Complete [CPT Canvas course](#)
- Submit online form via [MyOIE Portal](#)
 - Will receive CPT I-20 as proof of work authorization
- No fee (except tuition for internship course)

Want more information about CPT?  Go to [OIE website](#)



The screenshot shows the Carnegie Mellon University Office of International Education website. The header includes the university name and a search bar. The main navigation menu has tabs for Pre-Arrival & Settling In, Employment (which is selected), Maintaining Status, Travel, Community Connections, and Study Abroad. Below the navigation, there are breadcrumb links: Division of Enrollment Services > Office of International Education > Employment > F-1 Students > Curricular Practical Training (CPT). The main content area is titled 'Curricular Practical Training (CPT)' and contains text explaining that CPT provides temporary employment authorization for off-campus opportunities that are an integral part of the curriculum. A 'MyOIE Portal' button is visible on the right side of the page. A 'Quick Links' sidebar on the right includes links for CPT e-Learning Course, Job Search Resources, Frequently Asked Questions, and Contact Us.

CPDC: CPT from Employment Perspective

Summer internships

- You must confirm if you are **eligible** for CPT.
- Seek employment **directly related to field of study**.
- During Career Fairs, look for employers **willing to hire international students and/or sponsor work visas**.

Not eligible for CPT?

- You can still **do something** with your summer! Research, projects, opportunities back home, OPT (if eligible), etc.

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Optional Practical Training (OPT)



Off-Campus: OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)



- OPT is an off campus employment authorization for obtaining work experience directly related to the student's major field of study
- OPT is available both before and after completion of your degree program
- Eligibility:
 - Must have been a full-time student in the U.S. for one academic year (i.e. two full consecutive terms)
 - Have used less than 12 months of full-time CPT
 - Have not been previously approved for 12 months of OPT at the same degree level

Off-Campus: OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)



Types of OPT

1. Pre-Completion OPT
2. Post-Completion OPT
*Total time – 12 months; may be split between pre- and post-OPT
3. STEM Extension
*Total time – 24 months
4. Cap Gap Extension
*Total time – the time gap between end of post-OPT and start of H-1B status



Off-Campus: OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)



Pre-Completion OPT

- Begins and ends BEFORE completion of major/degree requirements
- Part-Time or Full-Time, depending on time of year and enrollment requirements
- Types:
 - During annual vacation (summer)
 - *You must intend to register full-time for the immediately following term*
 - *May be full or part-time authorization*
 - While school is in session (fall & spring)
 - *Must be registered full-time during that term*
 - *May be part-time only (20 hours per week or less)*

Off-Campus: OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)



Post-Completion OPT

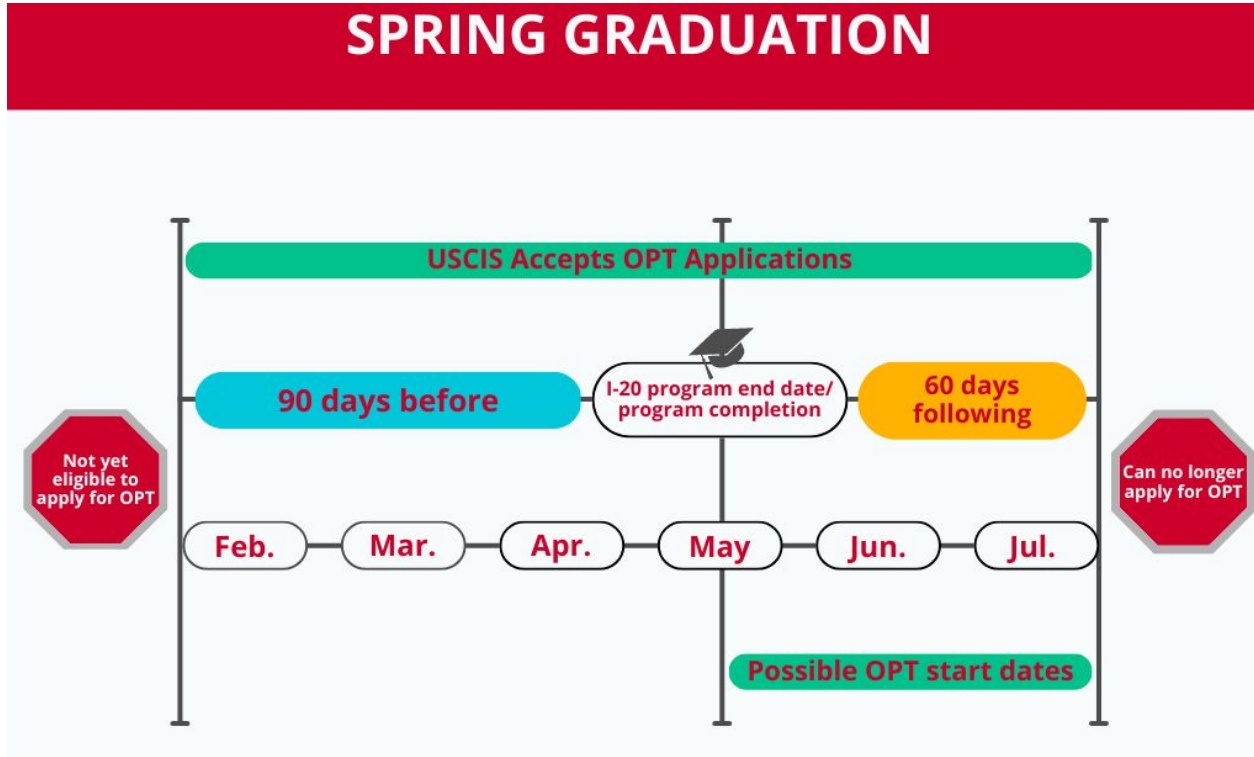
- Begins and ends AFTER completion of enrollment requirements
- Apply during your final term of study (last term you are registered for required units)
- Requested Post-Completion OPT start date must be within 60 days after program completion date
- Always authorized as full-time. Must work at 20+ hours/week to maintain status
- During post-OPT, may not be unemployed for more than 90 days (cumulative).

Off-Campus: Post-OPT

The Application Process has **IMPORTANT** Timelines!!



SPRING GRADUATION



Off-Campus: OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)



Application Process:

❖ **No job offer required to apply!**

1. Recommendation (new I-20) from OIE
 - Complete the [REQUIRED OPT Canvas course](#) (for Post-OPT ONLY)
 - Submit e-Form via [MyOIE Portal](#)
 - 10 business days processing time for new I-20
2. Submit OPT application to USCIS
 - Cost of application (check [USCIS website](#) for exact amount) + cost of photos
 - The OPT application can be filed with [USCIS online](#).
3. Authorization (EAD Card) is issued by USCIS
 - USCIS processing time may take 2-5 months!
 - [Check on current government processing time](#)

For More Information: Go to [OIE website](#)

Off-Campus: CPT & OPT Similarities

F-1

CPT & OPT

- Must have already completed one academic year full-time in the U.S.
- Work needs to be related to major
- Doesn't matter if work is paid or unpaid



Off-Campus: CPT & OPT Differences



CPT

For opportunities integral to your program curriculum.

Requires employment offer to apply

Approved by: OIE and Academic Department

Cost: Tuition and fees, if required by department (paid to CMU)

Processing Time: 10 business days

Maximum: as many times as it counts towards degree (e.g., internship course)

OPT

Does not need to count toward degree requirements.

Does not require employment offer to apply

Approved by: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

Cost: Application fee (paid to the government)

Processing Time: may take several months

Maximum: 12 months*

**Students in STEM majors may be eligible for additional 24 month extension*

CPDC: OPT Considerations

- Employment during OPT must be **directly related to your field of study**.
- An offer is not needed to apply for pre-opt or post-opt. So, **do not wait** until you have a job offer to apply.
- You can interview for jobs **while OPT is pending**. Clearly communicate your anticipated OPT start date during these interviews.

CPDC: OPT Considerations Continued

- Your anticipated **OPT start date must be communicated** to employers during interview process.
- When interviewing for jobs, communicate clearly about start date—your **OPT must have started** to participate in training, employer orientations, the first day of employment, etc.
- Employment Questions on job applications—answer to the best of your ability. In order to stay in the US and work beyond OPT, you WILL need some sort of visa sponsorship.

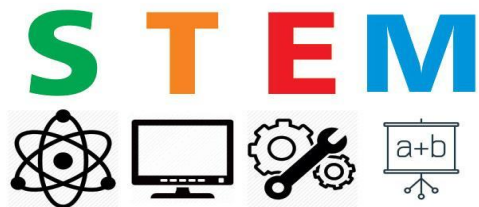
CPDC: OPT Considerations Continued

Career Fairs

- CMU has Career Fairs this Fall and Spring! You can participate for practice, even if you're not eligible for CPT or OPT this summer. "Group Sessions" are perfect for you to attend right now.
- It's a good idea to practice talking with employers and you can explain when/if/how you'll have work authorization.
- Good to start thinking about what industries you will work in and what positions you are qualified for.

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STEM OPT Extension



Off-Campus: STEM OPT Extension (STEM)

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- STEM OPT is a 24-month extension of Post-OPT
- Specific STEM majors only (see government [CIP code list](#))
- Must be employed and apply **before** post-OPT EAD expires
- Employer must be in **E-Verify** (a government database)*
- Employer must complete **Form I-983** (training plan)
- Must be **paid**, at least 20 hrs/week, and related to STEM degree; no self-employment allowed

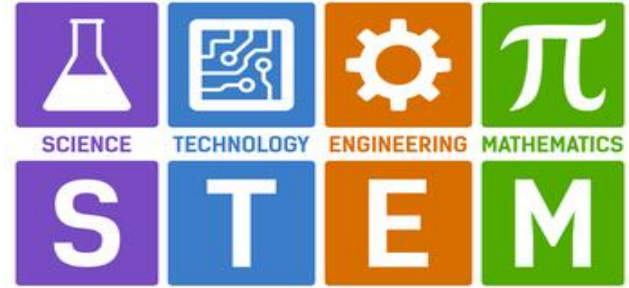
*** CMU is not an E-verified employer for STEM OPT purposes; you cannot have STEM OPT based on employment with CMU**

Off-Campus: STEM OPT Extension (STEM)

F-1

Application Process for STEM OPT:

1. [Confirm eligibility and prepare Form I-983](#)
2. Recommendation (new I-20) from OIE
 - 10 business days processing time for new I-20
3. Submit STEM OPT application to USCIS
 - Cost of application (check [USCIS website](#) for exact amount) + cost of photos.
 - The STEM OPT application can be filed with [USCIS online](#).
4. Authorization (EAD Card) is issued by USCIS
 - employment may continue for up to [180 days](#) after your post-OPT ends with a pending STEM OPT application)



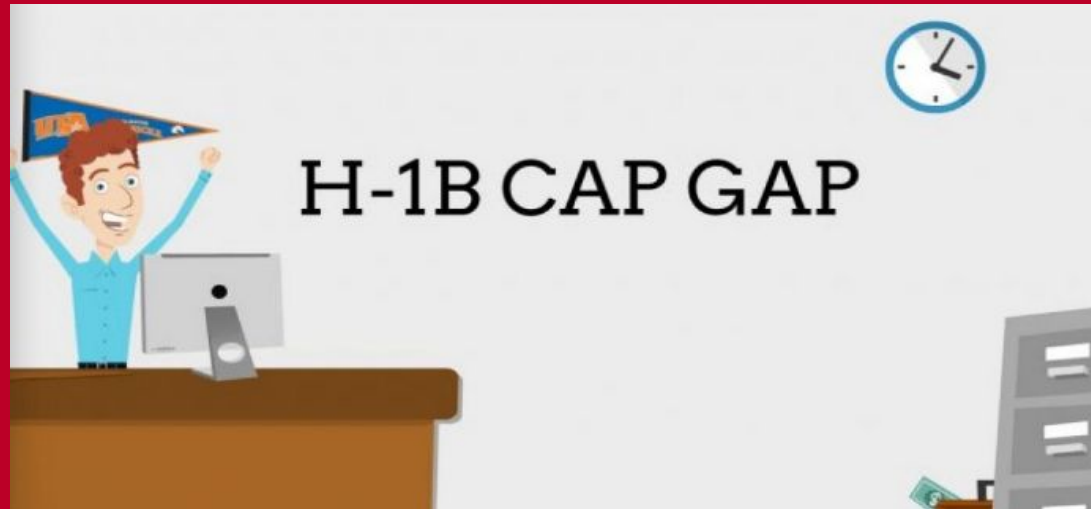
For More Information About STEM OPT: Go to [OIE website](#)

CPDC: STEM OPT Considerations

- As CMU alumni, you have **lifetime access** to Career Services. Reach out to your Career Advisor/Consultant if you need assistance during OPT or STEM OPT.
- STEM OPT applications review the **direct relation** of your work to your degree from CMU.
- Keep your resume updated and accurate during this time.
- Continue networking!

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Cap Gap OPT Extension



Off-Campus: Cap Gap OPT Extension

F-1

- Cap Gap is OPT extension based on H-1B status and intended to cover a possible gap between end of OPT and start of H-1B (October 1)
- There is a limit (“**Cap**”) of H-1Bs each year for private business jobs (*not colleges*).
- H-1Bs for industry jobs (*not colleges*) start only on October 1 of each year.
- Application for H-1B can be submitted to USCIS up to 6 months prior to start date (*April 1*).
- These date restrictions may cause a “**Gap**” in employment authorization for students on OPT. Cap Gap OPT extension covers this gap

Eligible for Cap Gap if:

- H-1B filed by employer ***before*** expiration of OPT
- OPT end date is between April 1 and October 1
- **H-1B is filed as a “Change of Status” (COS)**

Off-Campus: CAP GAP Extension

F-1

Application process for Cap Gap OPT Extension:

- Cap gap extension is **automatic** (if you are eligible)
- Cap Gap I-20 issued by OIE (can be requested via the [MyOIE Portal](#))
- No fee

For more information about the Cap Gap OPT Extension:

Go to the [OIE website](#)

CPDC: H-1B and other Visa Considerations

- H-1B sponsorship is usually part of a verbal conversation during the hiring process. It's not as common to appear in the offer letter.
- If an employer is willing to sponsor you for an H-1B, discuss this with them. But, do not engage in this conversation if you have no interest!
- The H-1B petition is filed and paid for by **the employer**.
- There are other visa options besides the H-1B:
 - Perhaps working as long as possible on OPT or STEM OPT is best
 - You might be eligible for O-1, L-1, TN, EB-3 or other options
 - Be considerate during the conversation
- The professional world is small--people know each other and so managing good relationships is important.

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Additional Information and Resources



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Avoid Scams and Fraudulent Employers

A **fraudulent employer** is an individual who falsely represents their identity, company, job posting, and/or any other aspects of employment. Fraudulent employers are looking to take advantage of students for monetary gain or identity theft.

Examples of Types of Scams:

Personal Assistant Scam-

An email offers compensation for a short interview conducted via text message.

Hired Without Interview Scam-

You receive an offer letter, despite never having interviewed for the job or only had an “interview” conducted via text message or email. Sometimes these offers use real or fictional names of people you may know such as faculty members at your institution.

Too Good to be True Scam-

You are offered a salary or other benefits that seem to be much higher than the average salary/benefits for this role. There will usually be a sentence that asks the employee to pay an upfront fee/training fee prior to starting the job which will be reimbursed at the end of the training.

If you are concerned that you've encountered a [fraudulent employer](#), please contact your career consultant and/or report it to the CPDC by calling 412-268-2064.



BEWARE OF SCAMS

Police or Law Enforcement Agencies WILL NOT contact you by phone with threats of	Faculty or Staff WILL NOT contact you via email with job or volunteer work to solicit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• social security usage• tax liability• deportation• money transfers• gift card payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• checks for you to deposit and pay back• gift cards as payment• mailed packages• crypto currency

NEVER:

- give money to anyone you do not know
- give out your Social Security Number
- provide debit or credit card number
- provide personal information, ID or Passport number

When in doubt contact CMU Police IMMEDIATELY!
412-268-2323



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Social Security Number

- Social Security number (SSN) is required if you earn wages in the US
- Apply for a [Social Security Card](#) as soon as you are eligible
 - CPT – up to 30 days before start date listed on CPT I-20
 - OPT – only from start date on approved OPT EAD (can apply for SSN as part of OPT application)
- Not eligible if within two weeks of CPT or OPT end date



Taxes

- Students are subject to all taxes, except Social Security & Medicare
- Students **MUST** file tax forms by mid April of each year, generally **April 15**

Taxes Due



Office of International Education



Cyert Hall, 1st Floor
412-268-5231
oie@andrew.cmu.edu
[Website](#)

Career and Professional Development Center



West Wing, 2nd Floor
412-268-2064
www.cmu.edu/career

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