



U.S. Employer's Guide to Hiring University of Maine International Students





The purpose of this guide is to inform U.S. Employer's about:

- International students' F-1 and J-1 work authorization options
- The ease of procedures and costs involved when hiring UMaine international students for internships and full-time jobs
- How the Office of International Programs and the Career Center can support employers' recruiting efforts

LEGAL NOTICE:

The guide is not intended to serve as legal advice; it is for informational purposes only. The University of Maine Office of International Programs serves UMaine students directly and does not give immigration advice or respond to questions from employers. Content is subject to change. Employers are advised to consult an experienced U.S. immigration attorney with any additional questions.

University of Maine Career Center & Office of International Programs



The Office of International Programs' mission is to enhance the academic experiences of international and domestic students by providing advising, immigration services, advocacy, and programming to the University of Maine community. OIP, hereafter referred to as the international office, seeks to empower students with the knowledge they need to navigate their VISA status, including seeking and obtaining authorization to work. This information pertains to UMaine sponsored students only and may not apply to students at other institutions.



The Career Center prepares undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni to make informed decisions about their futures by providing comprehensive resources, programs, and counseling on career development, employment, and graduate school. The Career Center offers a variety of employer services, designed to facilitate employers' access to UMaine's talented students and alumni, such as Career Fairs, On-Campus Recruiting, and Employer Info Sessions. The Career Center is unable to screen students' immigration status on behalf of employers.



Why hire international students?



UMaine international students represent more than 75 countries and pursue a diverse array of degrees and career goals. They possess qualities that top employers seek:

- Global perspectives with diverse viewpoints and experiences
- Multilingual and cross-cultural communication skills that are vital for companies to compete in a global economy
- Effective leadership and teamwork skills along with the ability to adapt to changes

The majority of UMaine international students are in F-1 or J-1 immigration status that includes off-campus work authorization benefits during and after the academic program. The remainder of this guide provides an overview of these work authorization options along with long-term employment visa options and resources. We hope the information will help clarify and streamline the hiring process of international students.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Employers should note that a Social Security number alone is not sufficient proof of work authorization for international students. It is critical that employers confirm an international student's work authorization prior to the employment start date to prevent any liability for the student and employer in the future.

Internships/Jobs during Degree Program

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for F-1 students

WHAT IS IT?

- Off-campus work authorization for F-1 students who are currently pursuing degree programs and have completed one academic year
- Employment must be related to student's field of study and can be paid or unpaid
- Typically issued for internships or short-term employment opportunities
- Authorized by the international office

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- Employment authorization is given on a semester by semester basis
- CPT may be extended or renewed with advance approval
- Generally, students are limited to part time (20 hrs or less per week) during the Fall/Spring semester and full-time work during the summer; some graduate students may be eligible for full-time CPT

PROCESSING TIME

- 3 business days upon receipt of a complete CPT application to international office

STUDENT'S ROLE

- Verify eligibility for CPT
- Obtain academic department approval & enroll in concurrent academic course as determined by academic department, if applicable
- Submit complete CPT application to the international office at least 3 business days prior to beginning employment

PROOF OF AUTHORIZATION

- A new CPT I-20 listing the authorized employer, address, dates of the authorization, and whether part-time or full-time employment has been granted on page 3
- Work cannot begin until student obtains authorization

EMPLOYER'S ROLE

- Provide student with an offer of employment
- Request a copy of the CPT I-20 from the student for I-9 purposes
- There is no cost to the employer and the CPT application is entirely the responsibility of the student

Internships/Jobs during Degree Program

Academic Training (AT) for J-1 students*

*J students are listed in the following categories in section 4 of the DS-2019: Student (Bachelor), Student (Master), Student (Doctorate), Student (Non-Degree). All other categories are NOT classified as students for immigration purposes.

WHAT IS IT?

- Off-campus work authorization for J-1 students who are currently pursuing or have recently completed a study program in the U.S.
- Employment must be related to student's field of study and can be paid or unpaid
- Typically issued for internships or short-term employment opportunities
- Authorized by the international office

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- Duration is determined by the student's length of study; students should consult with the international office
- Before completing the course of study, AT can be part-time (20 hrs or less per week) during the Fall/Spring semester or full-time in the summer

PROCESSING TIME

- 3 business days upon receipt of a complete AT application to international office

STUDENT'S ROLE

- Verify eligibility for AT
- Obtain academic department approval
- Submit complete AT application to the international office at least 3 business days prior to beginning employment and within eligibility period

PROOF OF AUTHORIZATION

- A new DS-2019 listing the authorized employer and dates of the authorization in section 5
- Work cannot begin until student obtains authorization

EMPLOYER'S ROLE

- Provide student with an offer of employment
- Request a copy of the DS-2019 from the student for I-9 purposes
- There is no cost to the employer and the AT application is entirely the responsibility of the student

Employment After Graduation

Optional Practice Training (OPT) for F-1 students

WHAT IS IT?

- Employment authorization for F-1 students who have completed all coursework for their academic program
- Employment must be related to student's major field of study and can be paid or unpaid
- Recommended by the international office and authorized by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) based on student's petition for benefits

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- Typically, 12 months of employment are granted
- Designated STEM majors working for eligible employers may extend (see next page)
- Full-time employment is allowed

PROCESSING TIME

- Typical time from submission to approval by USCIS is 90 days
- Students may apply up to 90 days prior to and up to 60 days after program completion

STUDENT'S ROLE

- Verify eligibility for OPT
- Submit complete and timely OPT application to USCIS in order to obtain approval prior to beginning employment
- Report employment to the international office
- Ensure work is related to field of study

PROOF OF AUTHORIZATION

- Employment Authorization Document (EAD card/ Form I-766) indicating start and end dates of work authorization
- Students must have EAD card in order to begin work

EMPLOYER'S ROLE

- Request a copy of the the EAD from the student for I-9 purposes
- There is no cost to the employer and the OPT application is entirely the responsibility of the student
- Student can be approved for OPT without an offer of employment

Employment After Graduation

STEM Extension Optional Practice Training (OPT)

WHAT IS IT?

- An extension of a student's 12-month OPT
- Student must be a recipient of a STEM designated degree and working for an E-Verify employer
- Employment must be related to student's STEM major field of study
- Volunteer, unpaid, and self-employment are not allowed
- May be based on a previously earned STEM degree
- Recommended by the international office and authorized by USCIS based on student's petition for benefits

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- An additional 24-month extension of the 12-month OPT for a total of 36 months OPT work authorization
- Allows total of 2 lifetime STEM Extensions, the 2nd after earning a new STEM-eligible degree at a higher level and obtaining a new, higher level of 12-month OPT

PROCESSING TIME

- Typical time from submission to approval by USCIS is 90 days
- Students may apply up to 90 days prior to the end date of their 12-month OPT, but no later than their OPT end date

STUDENT'S ROLE

- Verify eligibility for STEM Extension
- Submit complete and STEM OPT application to USCIS prior to the end date of their 12-month OPT
- Report employment and any changes to employment to the international office

PROOF OF AUTHORIZATION

- A new Employment Authorization Document (EAD card/Form I-766) indicating start and end dates of extended work authorization
- If a timely STEM OPT application has been filed with USCIS, the student may work for up to 180 days after the end date of their 12-month EAD card

EMPLOYER'S ROLE

- Student must be employed or have offer of employment from a company
- Must be participating in E-Verify and provide student with E-Verify and EIN number
- Must complete I-983 Training Plan and attest that wages and compensation are commensurate with "similarly situated U.S. workers"
- There is no cost to the employer
- See additional [STEM OPT Reporting Requirements](#)

Employment After Graduation

Academic Training (AT) for J-1 students*

*J students are listed in the following categories in section 4 of the DS-2019: Student (Bachelor), Student (Master), Student (Doctorate), Student (Non-Degree). All other categories are NOT classified as students for immigration purposes.

WHAT IS IT?

- Employment authorization for J-1 students who have completed a study program in the U.S.
- Employment must be related to student's field of study and can be paid or unpaid
- Authorized by the international office

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- Duration is determined by the student's length of study; students should consult with the international office
- After completion of program, AT must be a minimum of 20 hrs per week

PROCESSING TIME

- 3 business days upon the receipt of a complete AT application to the international office
- Students must apply for their DS-2019 end date or program completion date, whichever is earlier

STUDENT'S ROLE

- Verify eligibility for AT
- Obtain academic department approval
- Submit complete AT application to the international office at least 3 business days prior to beginning employment and within eligibility period
- Begin employment within 30 days of program end date

PROOF OF AUTHORIZATION

- A new DS-2019 listing the authorized employer and dates of the authorization in section 5
- Work cannot begin until student obtains authorization

EMPLOYER'S ROLE

- Request a copy of the the EAD from the student
Provide student with an offer of employment
- Request a copy of DS-2019 from the student for I-9 purposes
- There is no cost to the employer and the AT application is entirely the responsibility of the student

Long-Term Employment in the U.S.

H-1B

WHAT IS IT?

- Employer-sponsored visa that permits temporary employment in “specialty occupations”
- A limited number of H-1B applications are granted each year
- Exceptions to the quota are granted to some non-profit, research, and educational institutions

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- H-1B status is initially granted for a duration of up to 3 years, but can still be extended/renewed up to a total of 6 years

PROCESSING TIME

- Total processing time (including preparation & application) may take 2-6 months; renewals, extensions, and change of employer may be shorter
- For most private employers, H-1B applications should be submitted on April 1 for cap subject applications
- Approved applications are effective October 1
- Exceptions to the timeline may be granted to some non-profit, research, and educational institutions

STUDENT'S ROLE

- Student may be eligible for a “Cap-Gap” Extension of OPT while the H-1B petition is pending or waiting for the effective date
- Student should consult with the international office for instructions and eligibility

PROOF OF AUTHORIZATION

- Employer will receive official approval letter from USCIS listing the effective date
- Students eligible for the “Cap-Gap” Extension will be issued a new I-20 by the international office upon request

EMPLOYER'S ROLE

- The employer, with a qualified immigration attorney, is responsible for preparing and filing the petition
- Costs will include attorney and USCIS application fees
- The employer is responsible for filing a timely petition

Long-Term Employment in the U.S. Additional Employment-Based Visa Categories



NON-IMMIGRANT TEMPORARY WORKER VISAS

- TN: NAFTA Professionals from Canada and Mexico
- E-3: Especially Occupation Visa for Australians
- H-1B1: Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Professional - Chile, Singapore
- H-2A: Temporary Agricultural Worker
- H-2B: Temporary Non-agricultural Worker
- H-3: Trainee or Special Education visitor
- L-1: Intracompany Transferee
- O: Individual with Extraordinary Ability or Talent
- P-2/3: Artist or Entertainer (Individual or Group)

NON-IMMIGRANT TEMPORARY WORKER VISAS

There are several other visa categories that allow immigrants to work in the U.S. on a permanent basis.

More information on these visa categories, fees, and application processes can be found here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/all-visa-categories.html>

Employers who have questions about their international candidate's ability to work in the U.S. should consult an immigration attorney.

Contact Us

With questions regarding recruiting UMaine international students

Career Center

<https://umaine.edu/career/>
umainecareercenter@maine.edu
(207) 581-1359



Resources

- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws-guidance>
- U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet on Internships: <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/whdfs71.pdf>
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): <https://www.uscis.gov/>
- U.S. Department of State: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>
- E-Verify: <https://www.e-verify.gov/>
- American Immigration Lawyers Association: <https://www.aila.org/>
- Department of Homeland Security Study in the States: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>