

GUIDELINES FOR HIRING MICA F-1 STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

F-1 students and graduates are eligible to apply for practical training and are hired regularly by U.S. employers. Practical training is a benefit of an F-1 visa holder, not a separate visa category. Additional information on F-1 employment can be found at <https://www.uscis.gov/>

EMPLOYING A CURRENT MICA F-1 STUDENT

Curricular Practical Training (CPT): In some cases, international students on F-1 student visas are permitted to work in paid or unpaid off-campus internships. This U.S. Government employment authorization is called Curricular Practical Training, or CPT.

How does a student become authorized?

- Authorization is job-specific. Students will be authorized to work for a specific employer for a specific set of dates. Student will obtain an official document that lists their authorized employer's name and address and their dates of employment.
- Students must obtain authorization from the Joseph Meyerhoff Center for Career Development and the Office of International Education prior to starting any work.

How much does it cost?

- No cost to employer other than the student's compensation.

What kind of work can the student do?

- Employment must be a for-credit internship
- Employment may be paid or unpaid, as per regulations relating to all U.S. employees
- During the semester, employment must be under 20 hours/week
- During winter and summer breaks, employment may be full-time
- Students are eligible to apply for Social Security Numbers only if employment is a paid position

What is the employer's responsibility?

- Employers may treat F-1 students who have CPT authorization like any other US employee, but should not employ the student beyond the authorized dates.
- Employers should ask a student their CPT authorization end date. After this date, a student will no longer be authorized to work. If an employer wishes to extend a student's employment, bear in mind that the student must seek a new employment authorization.
- Employers do not need to seek authorization or file any applications in relation to a student's immigration status.

EMPLOYING A RECENT MICA F-1 GRADUATE

Optional Practical Training (OPT): Many F-1 students qualify for Optional Practical Training, commonly called OPT, which allows the student to engage in temporary employment to gain practical experience in his or her field of study. OPT allows up to 12 months of employment after graduation.

How does a student become authorized?

- The student must obtain permission from MICA's Office of International Education, as well as employment authorization from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) before they start any work.
- Authorization is not job-specific. Students will be authorized to work for one or multiple U.S. employers during a specific set of dates.
- Student will obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD Card) from USCIS that will authorize them do work related to their major for up to 12 months.

How much does it cost?

- No cost to employer. The student pays a filing fee to USCIS for obtain an EAD card.

What kind of work can the student do?

- Employment must related to the student's major.
- Employment may be paid or unpaid, as per regulations relating to all US employees.
- Employment must be at least 20 hours/week.

What is the employer's responsibility?

- Do not employ the student until the student has received the EAD card and has reached their authorized start date.
- Provide a job offer letter for the student's records. This will also be necessary if the student has personal or work related travel outside of the U.S.
- Treat employees on practical training like U.S. employees in terms of pay, discipline, etc.
- Employers do not need to seek authorization or file any applications in relation to a student's immigration status.
- Employers should ask a student their OPT authorization end date. After this date, a student will no longer be authorized to work. An employer may choose to initiate the process of sponsoring a student's work visa following the conclusion of the OPT authorization.

Timeline:

- After the student submits their application to USCIS, the authorization process may take 3 months or more. Employers should ask a student whether they are already authorized or when their authorization term will commence.
- Employers should be aware that in some cases students will not know exactly when authorization will commence until they receive their EAD card.