

Hiring an International Student

Q. What is an F-1 Visa and are these students eligible for employment?

A. The F-1 Visa is a temporary, non-resident student visa and these students are eligible for employment, but must first receive authorization before beginning employment off campus. They are not eligible to work off-campus during their first academic year.

Q. What are their student employment options?

A. After their first year, international students are eligible for temporary employment that is directly related to their field of study such as co-ops or internships; this is known as Curricular Practical Training (CPT). CPT is defined as being integral to the student's program of study and is "alternate work/study, internship, co-operative education or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school." You can find additional information at www.uscis.gov or www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/index.html.

Prior to beginning CPT, International students at UAHuntsville are required to participate in a mandatory workshop sponsored by the International Student and Scholar Office (ISSO) at UAHuntsville and their co-op or internship must be authorized through the ISSO and the Career Development Office.

Q. What do I need to provide to a student to authorize their co-op or internship?

A. All you will need to provide to the student is an original offer letter, on company letterhead, detailing the position, the schedule (alternating co-op, parallel co-op or internship), the number of hours the student will be working and the beginning and ending dates of the work period.

Q. Is there a cost involved for companies who hire international students?

A. No. There are no additional costs to hiring an F-1 student and the ISSO handles all of the paperwork involved in securing their work authorization.

Q. Is there a set length of time that international students can work?

A. Federal regulations require that employment be terminated at the conclusion of the authorized period of CPT. Students on an F-1 visa can work no more than 12 months of Curricular Practical Training; however, they also have another 12 months available through Optional Practical Training (OPT) that can be used either before or after graduation or in combination with CPT. Further information about OPT can be obtained through the ISSO or Career Development Office.

Q. Are international students subject to being taxed?

A. Yes, unless they are exempted by a tax treaty. But generally speaking, students who earn an income through CPT are subject to all applicable federal, state and local income taxes; however, F-1 students are typically exempt from Social Security and Medicare taxes. Check with the student to see if s/he is considered a "resident alien" for income tax purposes. If so, then Social Security and Medicare taxes will need to be withheld.