



Career Information for International Students

*Office of International Programs and
Studies (OIPS)*

September 9, 2011



Why are you here?

To find out about:

- On-campus work?
- Off-campus work during study?
- Off-campus work following study?
- Long-term work in the U.S.?

Remember that handouts are available on our website at:

<http://www.unm.edu/oips/work.html>



Agenda

- Overview of Various Employment Issues
- Types of Work Authorization (F and J)
- On-Campus Work
- Off-Campus Work During Study
- Career Services and COOP
- Off-Campus Work Following Study
- Things to Consider/Advanced Planning



Cultural Issues

- Résumé writing, job searching and job interviewing are all culturally specific!
- Important to learn the US process for these
- Also varies by field and academia vs. private sector



Cultural Issues

- Get feedback by utilizing Career Services
- Also check with your department, professors and colleagues
- Get informed before beginning the job search to have the best chance at success!!



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CAREER SERVICES

- Career Advisement
- Career Assessments → MBTI & SII
- Career Fairs → 7 Career Fairs
 - Engineering/Science Fair (9/14/11) 9-3
 - Business & Accounting Fair (9/15/11) 1-7
 - Graduate School Fair (10/6/11) 10-3
- Cooperative Education (Co-op)
- Job & Internship Listings → Lobo Career Connection



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CAREER SERVICES

- Resume, Cover Letter, Interview Skills
- Career Resource Lab → Free printing
- On-campus Recruiting
- Workshops on Various Career Topics:
 - Etiquette Dinner (spring), Resumes, Interview skills, Job Search, How to work Career Fairs



Office of Career Services

[Home](#)

- [About Us](#)
- [Students](#)
- [Employers/Recruiters](#)
- [Faculty](#)
- [Alumni](#)
- [Community Members](#)

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Quick Links

- [Lobo Career Connection](#)
- [Presentation Request](#)
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- [Division of Student Affairs](#)
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- [University College Advisement](#)
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- [LGBTQ Resource Center](#)

Future Career Fairs

SEPTEMBER 14TH!

ENGINEERING
 CAREER FAIR

SEPTEMBER 14, 2011
 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
 STUDENT UNION BALLROOMS

HES
 Higher Education Society

SEPTEMBER 15TH!

**BUSINESS &
 ACCOUNTING**
 CAREER FAIR

SEPTEMBER 15, 2011 1:00 PM - 7:00 PM UNM STUDENT UNION BALLROOMS

OFFICE of CAREER SERVICES
 ANDERSON SCHOOL of MANAGEMENT CAREER SERVICES

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Verizon Wireless – September Employer of the Month



Verizon Wireless is ranked on of America's best employers. Our eighty-four thousand employees enjoy an industry leading pay and benefits package. That means helping you drive your career through a world of opportunities to meet your professional and personal goals. Our environment is one that thrives on diversity and collaboration, it's one that inspires excellence.

To learn more please visit our Employer of the Month page:
www.career.unm.edu/employer/current_employer.php



September 2011 Career Fairs



GETTING STARTED

- Account Created
- Privacy Settings
- Personal Profile
- Academic Profile
- Resume
- Facebook Integration

CAREER TOOLS AND ADVISING

Manage Professional Network Profile

FIND A JOB

Jobs I Qualify For

LAND AN INTERVIEW

- Scheduled Campus Interviews
- Pending Campus Interviews
- Campus Interviews I Qualify For

ATTEND EVENTS

- UNM Business Career Fair 2011 Participants
- UNM Graduate and Professional School Fair 2011 Participants



Immigration Issues

- International students are in the US for study; work permission/authorization is a privilege and not a right!
- Easier to hire those who don't need visas
- Work authorization is given for specific categories in the immigration regulations
- You must always have proper authorization to work in the US or risk serious consequences!



Immigration Issues

- Definition of Employment/Work =
“compensation for services rendered”
- Terms like “internship,” “practicum,” and
“clerkship” are not immigration terms; they
refer to types of learning/training positions
in the real world, not work authorization
- Work authorization is different according to
visa type (F or J); Which are YOU??



Tax Issues

- You **WILL** need to pay federal, state and city taxes on U.S. income
- International students who are non-residents for tax purposes (generally those in the US for less than 5 calendar years) will not have to pay Social Security or Medicare taxes (FICA) even on OPT
- Tax sessions in March

Employment Categories for Those on Student Visas

F-1 Students

1. "ON CAMPUS":
"UNM" Work Only
Other Work:
2. Curricular Practical Training ("CPT")
3. Optional Practical Training ("OPT")

J-1 Students

1. "ON CAMPUS":
"UNM" Work Only
Other Work:
2. Academic Training ("AT")



On Campus Work

J 1 and F1 Students

J 1 and F1 Students - On Campus Work

“On Campus” Work Authorization

- Specific employment category in the regulations
- Must be for a UNM entity or for a company that is on UNM campus and provides services to students (e.g., Chartwells)
- Student must be in good academic standing
- Only allowed while enrolled as a student and in legal status (not after program completion)

J 1 and F1 Students - On Campus Work

“On Campus” Work Authorization

- Limited to part-time during semester (20 hours or less per week)
- Part-time *or* full-time *between* semesters as long as you will enroll for the next semester
- Immigration rules limit international students to 20 hours per week, domestic students can work up to 30 hours
- Can be full-time in summer if continuing student or 30 hours if enrolled

J 1 and F1 Students - On Campus Work

“On Campus” Work Authorization

- Assistantship hours count toward hourly limit, so you may not be able to accept other employment (depends on total hours)
- International students can't apply for “Work Study” jobs (US government funded), but can apply for “Student Employment” jobs

J 1 and F1 Students - On Campus Work

“On Campus” Work Authorization

- J1 students are required to report employer name and any changes to OIPS (we put in SEVIS)
- Letter from sponsor required for J1 students with non-UNM sponsor (e.g., Fulbright)

J 1 and F1 Students

Other work authorization that can take place on campus

- Work in a UNM job through types of student work permission other than the “On-campus” category may be possible
- Depends on department; Engineering students are usually NOT allowed
- Although it is physically on campus, it would have to meet the criteria for other work types in the regulations if you already have 20 hours of “On-campus” work

J 1 and F1 Students - On Campus Work

Other work authorization that can take place on campus

- To do this, you must meet all requirements for the specific type of work authorization and be authorized IN ADVANCE by OIPS
- This would allow you to have 20 hours per week under the “on-campus employment” regulations and 10 additional hours under another type of employment (CPT [F1] or Academic training [J1])
- You are limited to 30 hours of total work because of UNM Student Employment rules
- Summer or winter break can be full-time



Other Work

J 1 and F1 Students

J 1 and F1 Students - Other Work

Work Before Program Completion

- Both F and J students can be authorized for other work (in addition to “on campus” employment) during their studies
- This can be authorized after two semesters of study for F1 and one semester for J1
- The location of this work (on or off campus) is not relevant as long as the work meets the criteria to get the authorization
- To be authorized, the work has to be in your field of study

J 1 and F1 Students - Other Work

Work Before Program Completion

- You also must be enrolled in a course that is specifically for “internship” or “practicum” work
- The course can be Coop (Cooperative Education) through UNM Career Services or it can be an internship or practicum course offered by your department
- The course cannot be “Independent Study” or “Project”
- If there is no course enrollment, you cannot be authorized UNLESS your degree program requires an internship

J 1 and F1 Students - Other Work

Work Before Program Completion

- This work can be authorized for ONLY 20 hours per week during fall and spring
- This work can be authorized for more than 20 hours ONLY during the summer and winter break (have to be a continuing student)
- You must have the written authorization from an OIPS advisor BEFORE you can begin work or the work is illegal!
- We can only give the work authorization after you have signed up for the course

J 1 and F1 Students - Other Work

Work Before Program Completion

- If you are an exchange student, your home school advisor will need to provide information
- The process can take some time, so apply as soon as possible
- Students who want to continue work need to enroll EVERY semester and have the work authorized AGAIN by OIPS EVERY semester before the work starts (so if you want continuous work, you need to apply again before your current authorization expires)

J 1 and F1 Students - Other Work

Work Before Program Completion

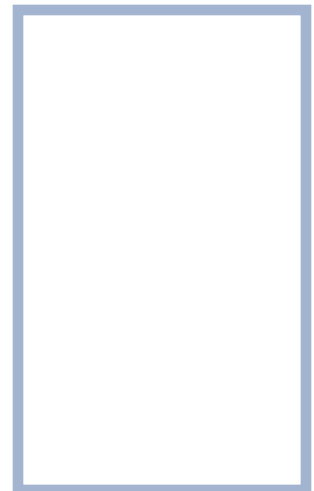
- Most common way students have work during study authorized is Career Services Coop program
- Coop is an actual course that is for 0 credit hours, but appears on your transcript
- Coop has requirements and is taken for credit/no credit
- You have to complete the Coop requirements in order for the work to be legal!
- Last date to sign up for this semester is September 30th (6th week of semester)



Cooperative Education (Co-op)

Tommy Nguyen
Career Services

Keith Hitz
Cooperative Education Coordinator





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What is Co-op?

- A program that provides UNM students with the opportunity to combine actual work experience with their academic studies and receive credit for it on their academic transcript. It is a CR/NC course.
- Co-op enrollment could qualify international students with F-1 visa to obtain CPT (Curricular Practical Training) to work off campus in their area of study.



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Who qualifies for Co-op?

UNM students who are:

- making significant progress towards a degree at UNM
- undergraduate students with at least 24 completed credit hours at UNM

OR

- graduate students with at least 9 completed credit hours at UNM



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Who qualifies for Co-op?

UNM students who are:

- in good academic standing:
 - undergraduate student GPA: + 2.5
 - graduate student GPA: + 3.0
 - *students in the School of Engineering/Architecture & Planning must meet additional program requirements (see Career Services for details)*



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Types of Co-op

- Part-time Co-op during the *spring* and *fall* semesters:
 - 240 Hours per semester
- Full-time Co-op during the *summer*:
 - 480 hours
 - 40 hours per week maximum if you are NOT enrolled in summer classes
 - Can be outside of New Mexico



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Application Steps

1. Register with UNM Career Services

Register online through website:
www.career.unm.edu. Click on
Lobo Career Connection. Use your
Banner Id and fill out profile.

Registration is free and does not
have to be renewed every semester



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Application Steps

2. Meet with the Co-op Coordinator

Meet with Keith Hitz to learn about the program and to get any questions answered.

You can make an appointment to see him through email:
khitz@unm.edu



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Application Steps

3. Identify your Co-op Employer

Search for internship/co-op positions on our job-website (Lobo Career Connection) or/and talk to classmates & professors. Career Fairs are another great opportunity.

Schedule an appointment with your Career Advisor (CDF) to get help finding the right employer(s).



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Application Steps

4. Register for your Co-op Program
 - Fill out the Co-op Agreement Form* **COMPLETELY** and get it signed off by:
 - You
 - Your employer/supervisor
 - Your academic advisor
 - Office of International Programs and Studies (OIPS)
 - Associate Dean (Engineering student only) or Director for Architecture
 - The Co-op Coordinator – Keith Hitz
 - Current Transcript must be attached with your application (unofficial copy)

* (www.career.unm.edu)



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Application Steps

4. Register for your Co-op Program

(cont'd)

Once all parties signed your form, Submit to Keith. The hold must be lifted on the course. Please allow time for this process.

You will also receive 3 copies of your signed agreement form (one for you, one for your supervisor, and one for OIPS).

*Check with Scholarship office to make sure your scholarship will not be affected.



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Application Steps

4. Register for your Co-op Program

(cont'd)

Remember:

You must take a copy to OIPS for approval before you can legally work. OIPS will provide Keith with a copy of your I-20 to verify your legitimate employment.

**This process needs to be completed each semester*



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Application Steps

5. Student & Employer Evaluations

At the end of each semester you will receive two evaluation forms:

- The Student Evaluation
- The Supervisor Evaluation

You are responsible for turning in the completed evaluations before the specified deadline in order to receive credit (CR) for your Co-op course.



Career Services Contacts

Career Development Facilitators (CDFs):

Anderson Schools of Mgt

Autumn Collins

autumnc@unm.edu

College of Arts & Sciences

Richard Ross

ross@unm.edu

College of Fine Arts

Autumn Collins

autumnc@unm.edu

College of Education

Caitlyn Henke

crhenke@unm.edu

Health Sciences

Richard Ross

ross@unm.edu

Co-op Coordinator:

UNM – all colleges/schools **Keith Hitz** khitz@unm.edu



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Questions?

Office Phone: 277-2531

Walk-in Hours:

Mon / Tue	12:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Wed	1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Thur	9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Friday	9:00 am to 11:00 am & 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Student Services Rm 220

www.career.unm.edu



Other Work Types for J1s

J 1 Students Only!
“ACADEMIC TRAINING”
Work Authorization

J-1 Students – Other Work Types

Academic Training

- “Academic Training” - only other type of work authorization for J-1 students (for Non-UNM work or over 20 hrs for UNM during the semester)
- Amount of time different depending on degree
 - Non-degree (e.g., exchange): allowed only for same length of time as the academic program
 - Bachelor’s and Master’s: 18 months max (unless program is shorter)
 - PhD: 36 month max (18 mths only before graduation)
- All work (part-time and full-time) accumulates at a full-time rate toward the maximum

J-1 Students – Other Work Types

Academic Training

Academic Training Requirements:

- Need to complete one semester of enrollment
- Be in good academic standing
- OIPS (or outside sponsor) permission and advisor recommendation in advance in writing
- Primary purpose in U.S. must be for study
- Only in your field of study!!!
- Pre- or post-graduation work allowed



J-1 Students – Other Work Types

Academic Training

Requirements:

- Each work experience authorized for each employer and for specific dates; MUST BE ON DS-2019
- Must have a job offer (not like F)
- *If before completion of studies*, you must enroll in COOP, an internship course, or the internship must be REQUIRED for your degree
- *If after study*, it MUST be authorized before you complete your program or you are no longer eligible



J-1 Students – Other Work Types

Academic Training

- Talk to an OIPS advisor if your program is about to end and you are still looking for employment!
- OIPS advisor authorizes the work, you do not need to apply to immigration!
- Process will take some time, so you need to try to plan as far in advance as possible



J-1 Students – Other Work Types

Academic Training

Example of “Academic Training”

Nesle is ambitious and never feels tired! She worked 20 hours per week during her summer break (3 months total) in between her 1st and 2nd years of her Master’s Program at an Albuquerque company. She received academic training authorization from OIPS before beginning. The experience was a great supplement to her studies. Nesle plans to work for the same company after graduation. Before graduation, she receives advance permission in writing from her advisor and from OIPS (her DS-2019 is from OIPS). How long can Nesle work on her post-completion academic training?



J-1 Students – Other Work Types
Academic Training

Questions?

J1 students stay to end for information about advanced planning for a work visa or you are free to go!



Other Work Types for F1s

F-1 Students Only!

**“CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING”
(CPT)**

and

“OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING” (OPT)

F-1 Students - Other Work Types

Practical Training Basics (CPT or OPT)

- Intended as work experience in your field of study, so can **ONLY** be in your field
- Could be for a non-UNM employer or for working more than 20 hours per week for UNM (if approved)
- Can only work with prior authorization on the I-20!!!
- Only after one academic year of full-time enrollment in legal status
- Only if you meet the requirements for the specific type of training
- Two types: Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

What is CPT?

- Immigration work authorization eligible to F1 students who qualify
- Intended to be work in your field of study that is part of your **curriculum**, so it has to have an academic component
- No restriction on time allowed, but if you take more than 12 months of full-time CPT you get **no OPT** (usually 12 months)
- Part-time CPT does not affect OPT

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT Requirements:

- ONLY before graduation or program completion!!
- Must be enrolled for internship course OR your degree must REQUIRE an internship (i.e. COOP program or internship course/requirement listed in UNM catalog)
- Must have specific job offer (not like OPT)
- Part-time *ONLY* (20 hours or less) during fall and spring semesters; full-time (more than 20 hours) *ONLY* during summer vacation or if full-time is REQUIRED for all students in the degree program

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT Requirements:

IMPORTANT!!!!

- You **MUST** have an authorization from OIPS on p. 3 of your I-20 **BEFORE** you begin working or you have worked illegally!
- Apply as soon as possible (it may take more than a week to get all the signatures and complete the authorization process)
- Two ways to apply for CPT at UNM: 1) *via Co-op* or 2) *via internship course/degree requirement*

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT Via Co-op Requirements:

- Co-op is most common way students are authorized for off-campus or extra work during study
- Co-op is a way to make work part of your academic experience and qualify for CPT
- Last date to sign up for this semester is September 30th (6th week of semester)

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT Via Co-op Requirements:

- Complete CO-OP process with Career Services and enroll in “Co-op 105 work phase”
- Obtain a current unofficial transcript (can get from the “One Stop”) showing the enrollment in the Co-op course
- Meet with an OIPS advisor (appointment or walk-in 1-3, M-F); bring your transcript and proof of enrollment in Co-op 105 class, Learning Agreement, I-94 and passport to apply for the work authorization
- Return the next day to pick up the I-20 showing your work authorization; show it to your employer

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT *Via Co-op* Requirements:

- **Remember!!!** Work is not approved until the authorization is printed on your I-20!
- You can only work between the dates specified in the authorization! You have to be **REAUTHORIZED EACH SEMESTER!**
- You can only work for the employer listed!
- You must complete Co-op 105 class and **RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THE CLASS** for the work to be LEGAL and to get it again!!!

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Example of “CPT” via CO-OP

Yu is in the second year of his MBA program and has secured a paid part-time internship at an Albuquerque firm “Duke City Enterprises” for the Spring semester. His plans are finalized by December 10th and he plans to begin the internship on January 21st. He completes the CO-OP paperwork at the end of the Fall semester and enrolls in the CO-OP course for the Spring semester. He comes in to meet with the International Advisor in OIPS on January 6th. Yu brings his CO-OP Learning Agreement, unofficial transcript, I-94 and passport

The advisor authorizes this part-time, for-credit “CPT” at Duke City Enterprises in SEVIS. Yu returns the next day to pick up the new I-20 indicating the CPT employer and work dates and begins work as scheduled on January 21st.

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT Via Internship Course Requirements:

- Offer letter from your employer listing the job title, duties, dates and location
- Department recommendation (in CPT handout); the department must indicate the course # or specific requirement (from UNM catalogue)
- Enroll in course and get a current unofficial transcript (can get from the "One-Stop")
- Meet an OIPS advisor at walk-ins; bring transcript, department recommendation, job offer letter, I-94 and passport to be authorized
- Return the next day to pick up the I-20 showing your work authorization; show it to your employer

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What is OPT?

- Optional work permission eligible to F1 students who qualify
- Intended to be temporary work in your field of study
- Allowed for 12 months per academic level
- Students in certain STEM disciplines may qualify for a 17-month extension

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Why would I do OPT?

- Opportunity to get experience in your field of study
- Can lead to a permanent position
- Gives employer time to apply for a more permanent type of work permission for you

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

When would I do OPT?

- At UNM, most students take CPT, not OPT, for all work while studying full time
- Most students apply when they have completed either all requirements for the degree or they have completed everything except the thesis or dissertation

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

When would I do OPT?

- If you want to work full-time during fall or spring semesters you **MUST** apply for OPT (but you have to have completed all degree requirements except thesis/dissertation to qualify)

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What are the requirements for OPT?

- You do NOT need a job offer to apply
- You must have at least one academic year of consecutive, full-time enrollment
- Work must be in your field of study *only!*

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

When can I work part/full-time?

- If you still have course requirements to complete you can only work part-time during fall and spring semester (but could work full-time in summer) – Remember you can also try CPT for this!
- Post-completion OPT can *only* be authorized as full-time (part-time is not an option)!

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What if I Don't Find a Job?

- Students must be “employed” in their field of study for 20 hours or more in order not to accrue days of unemployment
- Students who accrue more than 90 days of unemployment while on post-completion OPT are technically out of status

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What Counts as Employment?

- Remember, you do NOT need a job to apply, but you cannot accrue more than 90 days of unemployment while in post-completion OPT
- Things that count as “employment”: (must be more than 20 hours)
 - Regular employment/job
 - Multiple short-term “gigs” in time period
 - Self-employment
 - Volunteer work in your field

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What if I am still working on my thesis or dissertation?

- If you have completed all requirements except for your thesis or dissertation you can choose to apply for OPT while completing that final requirement
- You can try CPT if work is full-time in summer and part-time during semesters

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What if I am still working on my thesis or dissertation?

- If you apply for OPT you have to choose “pre-completion” or “post-completion” OPT or make two applications splitting time between both
- Taking OPT as “pre-completion” allows you to extend your I-20, but you cannot qualify for other benefits available to those with “post-completion” OPT

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Can I Extend the 12 month period?

- If you are on “post-completion” OPT and your employer has applied for an H1B for you before your OPT ends, you may be eligible for “cap gap” to work until the H1B starts
- Also: STEM disciplines with E-verify employer may be able to extend for 17 months

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Pre vs. post-completion OPT

<u>Pre-Completion</u>	<u>Post-Completion</u>
Unemployment is not counted	Unemployment counts (not allowed >90 days total)
Allowed to work full-time if ABD/ABT	Must “work” at least 20 hours per week
Cannot apply for STEM extension	Can apply for STEM extension (if discipline is STEM and employer is E-Verify)
No “Cap Gap” extension	Yes “Cap Gap” Extension
May extend student program if time is needed	Cannot extend student program (front of I-20)

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

When do I apply?

- Deadline: USCIS MUST receive your application within 60 days of completing all degree requirements for you to be eligible!!
- The date that you complete all degree requirements is usually BEFORE the graduation date! (e.g. the date you complete your last final exam or hand in your thesis!)

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

When do I apply?

- The date the OPT authorization begins can be up to 60 days after last final exam or degree requirement (you set the date)
- Applications are long and must be sent and processed by USCIS before work can begin
- Can take 3 months or longer to authorize, so you should apply 4 months before you plan to start work

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What start date should I request?

- You have to guess the most likely date you will start (hard to know)
- Start date **MUST** be within 60 days of program completion at the latest
- Date can essentially not be changed when chosen

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

When can I start working?

- Work is ONLY authorized when you receive the Employment Authorization Document (“EAD”) and the start date on the card has been reached
- You must have the EAD *before* you can work



F-1 Students – Other Work Types
Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What is the process?

- Read OPT handout on OIPS website
- Obtain department recommendation (form on handout); department must indicate when you completed coursework and/or when you will complete all degree requirements (to decide if you are eligible, and for which types: pre or post completion)

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY THE F-1 STUDENT SEEKING
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING AND RETURNED TO THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISOR.**

A. I understand the work I perform must be directly related to my major(s)/field of study and it must be appropriate for someone having my level of education. I further understand that I do not need to have a specific job offer at the time of OPT application. However, I expect that if I get a position for OPT it will be in: _____.

(List all your UNM major(s) and minors(s) here)

B. I am requesting my OPT be for the dates below. I understand OPT authorization is limited to a total of 12 months per educational level and that OPT permission is automatically terminated if I transfer to another school or start studying at another educational level. This OPT is being requested as: Pre-completion OPT Post-completion OPT

C. You **WILL** accrue days of unemployment toward the 90 day limit, so whether or not you have a job offer should be a consideration when selecting your OPT start date.

Beginning date: _____

Ending date: _____

Full time / Part time (20 hours or less)
(circle one)

Name of Student

Name of International Advisor

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of International Advisor

Date

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Applying for OPT

How do I apply for OPT?

- Obtain a current unofficial transcript from the “One-Stop” (in the former Student Services Center)
- Make an appointment to see an OIPS advisor; bring your advisor’s recommendation, transcript, I-94, passport and apply for the OPT recommendation

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Applying for OPT

How do I apply for OPT?

- The OIPS advisor processes the recommendation and you return the next day to pick up the new I-20 (you will send a copy to USCIS)
- Send the application for OPT to USCIS within 1 month of getting the recommendation and wait for the authorization to arrive (EAD card)

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Example of “OPT”

Mina is finishing the Master's in Computer Science in May and hopes to work in the US before returning to her home country. While she hopes to have a job in her field, she has not yet located a position. In February, she gets the recommendation from her academic advisor and makes an appointment to meet with the OIPS advisor. Working together, they complete the forms to apply for an EAD card authorizing Mina to begin OPT employment on June 15. Mina mails the application to USCIS on February 28. In March, she finds a great job in San Francisco. Her EAD card arrives on June 1. She moves to San Francisco to begin work on June 15 per her agreement with her new company.

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Can I get OPT again if I do another degree?

- Students who are authorized for OPT at one level, must complete a higher level program to get OPT again

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

How Can I Extend My OPT?

“Cap Gap”

- Extension only available if H1 is in process between April 1 and October 1
- For Cap Gap you must have proof of receipt of H1B application by USCIS (contact OIPS if you want an I-20 for travel)
- If Not Selected for H, Cap Gap ends
- If Waitlisted, Cap Gap is a little longer until decision is made
- If Selected, Cap Gap extends the OPT until the H starts

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

How Can I Extend My OPT?

STEM Extension (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

- Students who are in specific STEM disciplines can apply for a 17-month OPT extension if they meet requirements
- Discipline listed on I-20 must be on STEM list
- OPT must be “post-completion”
- Employer must participate in E-Verify
- Application must be received BEFORE current OPT expires

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Does taking CPT affect OPT ?

- Only if you are authorized for more than 12 months of full-time CPT
- If you take less than 12 months of full-time CPT, you get all your OPT
- Part-time CPT does NOT affect OPT

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What status am I in while on OPT?

- You are still in F-1 status, so you need all your previous F-1 documents to travel and re-enter the US:
 - Passport
 - I-20 with signature less than 6 months old
 - F-1 visa
- You also need:
 - EAD
 - Letter proving employment in your field if you want to exit the US and reenter

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What status am I in while on OPT?

- F1: OIPS must still report your information to USCIS while you are working
- Bring or send copy of EAD to OIPS as soon as you receive it
- Always update OIPS with address changes, name changes, employer changes, changes in immigration status or if you leave the U.S.
- Follow messages from our office for changes in the upcoming year

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Travel Restrictions

- Not safe to travel after you complete program if the EAD card is in process
- Not safe to travel while on OPT unless you have the EAD, Signed I-20, valid visa AND you have a specific job to return to in your field (need a letter proving job listed on I-20)
- If you do not have all of these, you may NOT be allowed to return
- Not safe to travel if H1 (or PR) is in process

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Requirements while on OPT

Study Restrictions/Issues

- Authorization to engage in OPT is automatically terminated when you transfer to another school or begin study at another educational level!
- New 12 month period of OPT can be authorized after each educational level (but must be a HIGHER level)

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What options are there after OPT ?

- Other types of work status include: H1B, J1, TN (Mexico/Canada), L and E
- Special work status for some countries
- Most common is H1B, “Temporary worker – Specialty Occupations”
- Employers that are not “Public Research Institutions” are subject to a limit or “cap” on the number of visas

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What options are there after OPT ?

- H1B for others restricted (65,000 regular, 20,000 for those with US Master's degree) – called the "Cap"
- Reached on 1/26/2011 for this fiscal year
- H1B status begins on October 1 of each year (government fiscal year)
- Applications can be submitted 6 months in advance for 10/1 start date (4/1)

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What options are there after OPT ?

- Work visa session offered every semester
- Free consultations with an immigration attorney
- This semester: Friday, April 1, 2:00-5:00, Mitchell Hall Room 101

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What happens if my OPT ends before my H1 starts, again?

- Students who have been approved for H1B status can get “Cap Gap” extension if:
 - OPT is “post-completion”
 - H1B is in process between 4/1 and 10/1

F-1 Students – Other Work Types

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What happens if my OPT ends before my H1 starts, again?

- Student must contact OIPS if they want proof (I-20) showing the extension
- Student must have USCIS approval of the H1B (must present receipt notice to OIPS for I-20)

“Words for the Wise”

Apply for work permission **EARLY!!!**

- Students **MUST** plan and apply in advance in order **NOT** to jeopardize your ability to work in the US or remain here legally!
- Should begin OPT forms 3-5 months before completing your program if you plan to work and ask advisors questions even earlier!
- Don't wait for the “H” visa – it can be a long process so you can be “stuck” with no work eligibility

“Words for the Wise”

Plan Your Program Completion

- Consider your program completion date carefully with any work in mind
- Your advisors may be able to work with you on the date of completion to make it convenient to transition to work
- Don't plan to travel out of the US at the end of your program if you are applying for work

“Words for the Wise”

Other Issues

- J visa holders subject to the 2-year home residency requirement can *not* change to H without waiver
- There may be some tax advantages to remaining in F-1 status



Checklist for Off Campus Work

1. Understand your visa type and work authorization
2. Read OIPS handouts thoroughly and carefully!!!!
3. Utilize Career resources on campus
4. Identify appropriate job opportunities in your field
5. Obtain written permission from your department
6. Meet with your Advisor in OIPS EARLY!
7. Do not begin work without authorization
8. Provide documents to your employer
9. Check with OIPS re: travel restrictions while applying for work permission and while working
10. Maintain contact with OIPS while working