International Student Employment: On and Off-Campus

Presented by the Office of International Services (OIS)
Presenters

Kaylee Burns (she/her)  
Immigration Specialist

Louis Deemer (they/them)  
Immigration Specialist
Today’s Objectives

1. Learn **basics** of F-1 on-campus employment
2. Learn **basics** of F-1 off-campus employment
3. Learn how students from other institutions can work at Pitt
4. Learn the roles that faculty / staff play in F-1 employment authorizations
Overview – F and J status

F-1 Student
J-1 Exchange Visitor – Student Category

• Individuals engaging in a full course of study at an accredited institution.
• Must maintain full-time enrollment in Fall and Spring.
• Can work with proper authorization.
• Programs administered by US Department of Homeland Security (F-1) and US Department of State (J-1)
  • OIS issues Forms I-20 and DS-2019 for individuals.
Overview – F and J status

F-1 Students: 97%

J-1 Students: 3%
Work vs. Volunteering

- **Work:**
  - Receiving compensation
  - Can be monetary or otherwise
  - Do others get paid for the same activity?

- **Volunteering:**
  - Pitt Make a Difference Day
  - Animal Shelter

- Any "volunteering" must meet Department of Labor standards
  [https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/71-flsa-internships](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/71-flsa-internships)

- **Guidance from Pitt’s HR:** A foreign national who is not authorized to work at the University of Pittsburgh cannot volunteer at the University in a position for which wages would normally be paid or other benefits would normally be forthcoming. This includes all positions listed in job families by the Office of Human Resources.
  [https://www.hr.pitt.edu/students/volunteering-and-temporary-visas](https://www.hr.pitt.edu/students/volunteering-and-temporary-visas)
F-1 Student Life Cycle

Academic Program (4 yrs)

On-campus employment

CPT (off-campus)

OPT

STEM OPT
F-1 Student Life Cycle

1. Academic Program (4 yrs)
2. On-campus employment
3. CPT (off-campus)
4. OPT
5. STEM OPT
Current Pitt Students: On-Campus Employment

Work Authorization

- F1 – no special authorization required
- J1 – requires OIS authorization letter
- Must complete OIS Orientation

Definition

- At Pitt, By Pitt, For Pitt

Weekly Hours

- Fall/Spring semesters: ≤20 hours per week
- Summer: >20 hours per week
Current Pitt Students:
On-Campus Employment

SSN
- Apply at SSA office
- Student submits SSN letter request via My OIS
- Employer will then need to sign OIS letter for SSN application
- Can start work w/o SSN

I-9 and Onboarding
- Pitt’s HR handles I-9 processing for students

Post-Graduation
- Students MUST have OPT approval to continue
Current Pitt Students: Curricular Practical Training
F-1 Student Life Cycle

- Academic Program (4 yrs)
- On-campus employment
- CPT (off-campus)
- OPT
- STEM OPT
Current Pitt Students: Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- Off-campus employment authorization for activities that are an “integral part of an established curriculum”
  - Must be academic in nature and connected to enrollment
  - Must be directly related to student’s field of study

- Must complete 2 terms of full-time enrollment in F-1 status

- Basic qualifications:
  1. Internship required for graduation (GSPIA, Social Work, etc.); OR
  2. Internship for credit that counts towards degree requirements; OR
  3. Internship contributes data/skills essential for dissertation research
Current Pitt Students:
Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

• CPT is department and program specific
  • Example: Engineering co-op program; GSPIA required internship
  • OIS’ Guidelines: OIS Fact Sheets | Office of International Services (pitt.edu)

• Authorization process
  • Student obtains internship offer letter
  • Submits “CPT Request” via My OIS
  • Academic advisor confirms academic relationship

• OIS approves CPT request
  • Creates new I-20 for student
  • If student doesn’t have SSN, can apply at SSA office.
Current Pitt Students:
Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Academic advisor confirms academic relationship
Current Pitt Students:
Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Students CANNOT begin internships until OIS approves CPT Request!
Current Pitt Students: Optional Practical Training
F-1 Student Life Cycle

- Academic Program (4 yrs)
- On-campus employment
- CPT (off-campus)
- OPT
- STEM OPT
Current Pitt Students: Optional Practical Training (OPT)

**Off-campus authorization for work**
- 12 months of work authorization, *directly related* to student’s field of study
- ALL students can apply, regardless of major

**Eligibility:**
- 2 consecutive semesters of enrollment
- 12 months per educational level
- Job offer NOT required
- Can work in qualifying position anywhere in U.S.
Current Pitt Students:
Optional Practical Training (OPT)

When to apply?

• ~3 months prior to graduation

How to apply?

• Submit “OPT Request” in My OIS
  • Academic advisor confirms that student is on track to complete program
  • Prepare and send application materials to federal government

Processing time?

• 1 – 1.5 months → students should apply early!
Current Pitt Students:
Optional Practical Training (OPT)

• **USCIS** grants authorization
• Student remains on F-1 visa status
  • **OIS maintains immigration record**
• Student must report OPT employment to OIS via My OIS
Current Pitt Students: Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Academic advisor confirms academic relationship and graduation timeline

My OIS

OPT Request

The student above is applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT), employment authorization granted by United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) for employment related to the student's major field of study. Such employment must be officially recommended by OIS before it can be granted by USCIS. OIS must have a statement from the student's Academic Advisor indicating the date of completion of the student's degree requirements.

Please complete the form below so that we may process this student’s request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your school's assigned Immigration Specialist.

End date for the academic term in which the student will complete all requirements for degree program.*

My telephone number*

I certify that this information is correct to my knowledge.*

If you have any additional comments or concerns, please contact the Immigration Specialist assigned to your school.
Current Pitt Students: STEM OPT Extension
F-1 Student Life Cycle

- Academic Program (4 yrs)
- On-campus employment
- CPT (off-campus)
- OPT
- STEM OPT
Current Pitt Students:  
**STEM OPT Extension**

- Additional 24 months of off-campus authorization for work / experience that is directly related to student’s field of study

- SOME students can apply  
  - Student’s major must be in a [DHS “STEM qualifying” field](#)  
  - Depends on the “CIP Code” listed on the student’s Form I-20

- STEM OPT application submitted during last few months of OPT authorization
Current Pitt Students: STEM OPT Extension

• Students must complete Form I-983 Training Plan with employer
  • Serves as proof of relationship to field of study and bona fides of relationship
  • I-983 online resource from federal gov’t

• Students submit Form I-983 to the school they attended
  • School that student attended assists with application process
  • Student sends application to federal government
  • 1-2 months processing time
Current Pitt Students:

**STEM OPT Extension**

- **While STEM OPT extension application is pending**
  - Students can continue working for up to 180 days after OPT expires
  - If at Pitt, students will renew I-9s with Pitt's HR

- **STEM OPT Approval**
  - Students must report employment at 6-month intervals to school they attended
  - 12 / 24-month interval: I-983 evaluation
Students from other schools:
Current Students from Another Institution:
Curricular Practical Training/Academic Training

Work Authorization
• F1 – CPT I-20 from another school
• J1 – AT DS-2019 from other school

SSN
• Apply at local SSA office with proof of employment

I-9 and Onboarding
• Check with Pitt’s HR first (All-Temps)
Current Students from Another Institution:
Optional Practical Training/Academic Training

Work Authorization
- F1 – OPT / STEM OPT I-20 and EAD
- J1 - AT DS-2019 from other school

SSN
- Apply at local SSA office; or
- Apply as part of OPT application process

I-9 and Onboarding
- Normal process as for all other non-student employees
Students from other schools:

**STEM OPT Extension**

• While STEM OPT extension application is pending
  • Students can continue working for up to 180 days after OPT expires

• STEM OPT Approval
  • Students must report employment at 6-month intervals to school they attended
  • 12 / 24-month interval: I-983 evaluation
Students from other schools:

• You can provide OIS with information about the individual via the “Departmental Services” section of My OIS.
  • “Other Sponsored Document Reporting”

• Why?
  • We can add individual to OIS’ communications re: events, etc.
Who is my Immigration Specialist?

• Caity Dawson
  • Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
  • College of General Studies
  • School of Public Health
  • School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

• Richard Sherman
  • College of Business Administration

• Kaylee Burns
  • Regional campuses

*Contact Information: www.ois.pitt.edu/whoismyis
Who is my Immigration Specialist?

• Louis Deemer
  • Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
  • School of Dental Medicine
  • School of Medicine
  • School of Pharmacy
  • Swanson School of Engineering

• Jean Wenner
  • Katz Graduate School of Business
  • School of Computing and Information
  • School of Nursing
  • School of Education
  • School of Social Work

*Contact Information: [www.ois.pitt.edu/whoismyis](http://www.ois.pitt.edu/whoismyis)
Questions?