F-1 Student’s Work authorization requirements for BEST Program Phase III career explorations

Chamu Gowrishankar
Assistant Director
Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS)
Wayne State University
Workshop Outline

After completing the workshop, you will:

➤ Learn about the work authorization options available to pursue BEST internship opportunity.

➤ Make informed decisions to apply for either CPT or Pre-OPT once you secured your internship through BEST program.

➤ Understand the process, paperwork, and timeline related to CPT/pre-OPT processes and plan accordingly.
Employment Options for F-1 Students on BEST Program Phase III career explorations

- On-campus Placement-internship
- Off campus: Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- Off campus: Optional Practical Training (Pre-OPT)
Curricular Practical Training
CPT

What is CPT?
- CPT provides practical, “hands-on” experience to supplement the theoretical knowledge students gain while completing their degree. Must be required or an integral part of the academic program.
- F-1 students become eligible for CPT after being enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one academic year (two semesters) and is completed prior to graduation.
- CPT is approved on a part-time basis (up to 20 hrs/wk) or a full-time basis (more than 20 hrs/week).
- OISS approves CPT. No government application is necessary to apply.
- F-1 students who engage in 12 months or more of full-time CPT become ineligible for optional practical training (OPT).
Curricular Practical Training

Who is Eligible for CPT and the Dos and Don'ts

- Internship may not begin earlier than the first class day of the semester, and must end no later than the last day of the regular term. The CPT approval deadline coincides with add/drop deadline. No CPT can be authorized after that time (called Census Date).

- Since the internship is considered an integral part of a for-credit university course, CPT cannot be authorized after the academic add/drop period has ended.

- Students must be fully enrolled to be eligible for CPT, (8) credits for graduate students for Fall and Winter.

- Students on maintenance status are not eligible for CPT.

- PENALTY FOR UNAUTHORIZED EMPLOYMENT IS STATUS TERMINATION
Curricular Practical Training

CPT process?

- Internship requirement must be an integral part of the academic curriculum and be listed and approved on the IDP and Plan of Work approved for GS 7890 coursework.
- IDP should cover the details of the internship.
- BEST Program Manager will provide a list of students approved for BEST about a month before the semester/internship start date.
- BEST Program Manager will then send the student’s approved IDP, Plan of work, and signed summary of career exploration to OISS.
- Students will receive a communication/advise when they can pick up their CPT I-20 from the OISS front desk.
- Allow 2-3 weeks for the OISS processing time.
Optional Practical Training
Pre-OPT

General information

- Pre-OPT is defined as employment that is directly related to a student’s field and level of study.
- Pre-OPT is an employment opportunity available to an F-1 student who has been lawfully enrolled on a full time basis for at least one full academic year.
- USCIS must adjudicate all Pre-OPT applications before they start working.
- USCIS Processing time can be up to 3 months to receive the EAD card.
- Maximum of 12 months of Pre-OPT but will not have Post-OPT time.
Optional Practical Training

Pre-completion OPT

- A student may apply for pre-completion OPT to work in their BEST internship if they are at the maintenance course.
- A student can only work up to 20 hours per week while school is in session; and must be enrolled full time.
- Part-time or full-time during the student’s annual vacation(spring/summer) and if the student intends to register for the next term of the session.
- Students must continue to enroll full time until the completion of their course work while on Pre-OPT.
Pre-OPT Application Process

- Students must initiate the Pre-OPT process by completing the application from OISS and with USCIS about 3 months from start date of BEST internship.
- Requesting Pre-OPT I-20 from OISS.
- Students must file an I-765 form with supporting documents and fee to USCIS.
- If approved by USCIS, the student will receive an EAD card and cannot start work until the student receives the EAD card and the start date.
- No IDP/POW required to start the process.
Frequently asked questions:

- What is my immigration status while I am on Pre-OPT?
  - Pre-OPT is a **benefit** of being an F-1 student. Therefore, while you are on Pre-OPT you are still an F-1 student and are still subject to the rules and regulations pertaining to your F-1 status.
Frequently asked questions:

- I have to start my internship in a week and I’m in maintenance, can I do CPT?
- CPT is not an option.
Frequently asked questions:

- I cannot pay for the internship course GS 7890, what can I do?
  - Graduate school
Frequently asked questions:

- Can the Pre-OPT cost covered by the Graduate school?
  - Referred to graduate school.
Frequently asked questions:

- Can I work both on campus and BEST internship?
  - Fall and winter, you could work only up to 20 hrs combined. Summer, up to 40 hrs combined.
QUESTIONS.....