



Hiring International Students: A Guide for US Employers

Recruiting International Students in the US

Hiring international students is a simple and straightforward process. In most cases, the application is the responsibility of the student, not the employer.

Columbia Engineering's international students typically hold either F-1 (foreign student) or J-1 (exchange visitor student) visas. Both F-1 and J-1 visas allow students to work in the United States before and after graduation.

Summer Internships: Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- Hiring F-1 Students for internships is free and easy for employers and does not require employer "sponsorship."
- Students have work authorization (called CPT) in their field after two terms of full-time study.
- Employment can be full-time or part-time.
- Applying for CPT is the responsibility of the student, not the employer.
- Columbia University requires a copy of the official offer letter confirming the details of the internship, but this is typically provided by the student.

Full-Time Positions: Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- Columbia Engineering F-1 students have 12 months of work authorization (called OPT) after completing their degree. They are eligible for an additional 24 months through STEM OPT extension, for a total of 36 months.
- Students must work a minimum of 20 hours per week to maintain OPT eligibility.
- Applying for OPT is the responsibility of the student, not the employer.
- After 36 months, students can transition from OPT to another visa type, such as the H-1B.
- Employers can confirm the eligibility of their employees electronically through the E-Verify system.

J-1 Visa (Exchange Visitor Student)

- J-1 Students are eligible for 18 months of work authorization through the University's Academic Training Program (PhD. Students may be authorized to work for up to 36 months).
- Applying for work authorization is the responsibility of the student, not the employer.
- Columbia University requires a copy of the official offer letter confirming the details of the internship, but this is typically provided by the student.

Continuing Employment after OPT

H-1B Visa (Temporary Work)

- The H-1B Visa (Temporary Work) is an employer-sponsored visa for foreign nationals employed in a "specialty occupation" which includes any position that requires a Master's degree.
- Students with H-1B Visas may be eligible for up to 6 years of employment with the sponsoring employer.
- The employer is responsible for filing the petition on behalf of the international employee for the H-1B visa. The process is detailed on the US Citizenship and Immigration Services website (www.uscis.gov).

We are here to help!

For more information on accessing Columbia Engineering talent and to learn how we can assist you in your recruiting efforts, contact us:

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<https://career.engineering.columbia.edu>