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**Frequently Asked Questions about Hiring International Students**

Created by GSDC using information from the University of Chicago, San Francisco State University, and the University of Dayton.

1. **Isn't it illegal to hire international students because they do not have a green card?**

No. Federal regulations permit the employment of international students on F-1 and J-1 visas within certain limits. These visas allow students to work in jobs related to their major field of study. F-1 students can work on "practical training." J-I students may work on "academic training." Both groups of students can work on campus in student positions.

1. **Even if it's legal to hire international students, won't it cost a lot of money and involve a lot of paperwork?**

No. The only cost to the employer hiring international students is the time and effort to interview and select the best candidate for the job. The international student office handles the paperwork involved in securing the work authorization for F-1 and J-1 students. In fact, a company may save money by hiring international students because the majority of them are exempt from Social Security (FICA) and Medicare tax requirements. The only paperwork for the employer is providing a letter indicating the job offer for the authorization. Of course, employers must complete the standard paperwork related to their hiring process such as Form

I-9, as with any new hire.

1. **How long can international students work for me (in the United States with their student visa)?**

F-1 students are eligible for curricular practical training (12 months limit to retain OPT eligibility) before completing their studies, as well as an additional 12 months of optional practical training, either before or following graduation, or a combination of the two. Certain STEM majors are eligible for a 24 month extension of OPT bringing their total time OPT to 36 months. Students with a J-1 visa are usually eligible to work up to 18 months following graduation. They may also be eligible to work part-time during their program of study.

1. **Don't international students need work authorization before I can hire them?**

No. International students must have the work authorization before they begin actual employment, but not before they are offered employment. Many F-1 students will be in the process of obtaining work authorization while they are interviewing for employment. Students can give employers a reasonable estimate of when they expect to receive work authorization. J-1 students must have a written job offer in order to apply for work authorization.

1. **How long can international students work in the United States with their student visa?**

F-1 students are eligible for curricular practical training before completing their studies, as well as an additional 12 months of optional practical training, either before or following graduation, or a combination of the two. However, if they work full-time for one year or more of curricular practical training, they are not eligible for Optional Practical Training.

1. **Doesn't an employer have to prove that international students are not taking jobs from a qualified American?**

No. American employers are not required to document that a citizen of another country did not take a job from a qualified American if that person is working under an F-1, J-1 or H-1B visa. Employers must document that they did not turn down a qualified American applicant for the position only when they wish to hire foreign citizens on a permanent basis and sponsor them for a permanent resident status ("green card").