

# International Students

All three of our U.S. campuses have Designated School Officials (DSO) available to assist international students requiring documentation and governmental regulations related to their F1 or M1 visa status. The DSOs for each campus can be contacted at the times and locations below. The Primary Designated School Official is located on the flagship campus in Hyde Park, NY. General questions regarding visa status can be directed to the International Student Affairs Office located on the New York campus.

International Student Services, Roth Hall E255

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday through Friday

## **New York**

Email: [internationalstudentaffairs@culinary.edu](mailto:internationalstudentaffairs@culinary.edu)

Phone: 845-451-1534

Student Affairs Assistant

## **California**

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday through Friday

Managing Director

## **Texas**

Office Hours: 8 a.m.–4 p.m., Monday through Friday

## **Registration and Orientation**

International students arriving at the New York campus will attend an international student information session during orientation (as listed on their orientation schedule). For students in California and Texas, the same information will be shared electronically with international students during their first week on campus.

In order to be reported as present on campus with Homeland Security, international students on all campuses must be registered in the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). The registration process requires that a new student present the following documents to the DSO on their respective campus within 30 days of their program start date\*: passport, visa, Form I-20 signed, I-94, confirmation of health insurance coverage, phone number being used while in the U.S. (if applicable), and physical and mailing address in the U.S. Please note, for all international students transferring from other institutions in the United States, transfer students are required to present the above-referenced information within 15 days of their program start date. Failure to do so may result in a termination of the student's SEVIS record.

Upon registration, the DSO will capture current contact information, and add a travel signature to the second page of the student's most current I-20. This signature permits travel outside of the United States, and must be renewed at least every 12 months, to the date, in order for the student to be able to legally return to the U.S. We strongly encourage all international students to maintain a valid travel endorsement on their most current I-20 at all times.

International students transferring from other institutions in the United States are required to present the above referenced information.

## **Leave of Absence, Withdrawal, Vacation**

Students who wish to take a leave of absence, of any duration, during their program of study must meet with their academic advisor to establish a withdrawal and return date. The academic advisor will provide the DSO with documentation indicating the agreed-upon dates and terms of the student's departure from the college. The student is responsible for understanding the effects of any time out from classes on their SEVIS record/visa status and the requirements for their departure and return. Upon receipt of appropriate documentation, the DSO will modify the student's SEVIS record to appropriately reflect the change.

In some cases, a student's record may require termination for an authorized withdrawal. In this case, the record will be terminated and the student must make plans to exit the United States within 14 calendar days from the last date of class attendance. The student must provide the on-campus DSO with itineraries/receipts of the student's departure travel from the U.S. Approximately 30-45 days before the intended return to classes, the student must provide the DSO with return travel information/itineraries as well as any updated financial support documentation required from the DSO (if applicable). Any students outside of the United States for a period of five months are required to enter the United States on a new SEVIS record and will need to coordinate with their campus DSO.

## **Maintaining Status**

International students are responsible for maintaining their status while studying under an F1 or M1 visa. They are also responsible for the status of any dependents that have received entry to the United States as a result of their student visa. CIA staff are happy to provide advice or assistance, when possible, but students are liable for complying with the laws and regulations of the United States, their home country, and any other countries that they travel to or work in while they are a CIA student.

## **Work Authorization**

Any work in the United States, paid or unpaid, for which F1 visa students have not received authorization in their SEVIS record or through United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is not lawful, and can be grounds for termination of a student's record in SEVIS, revocation of F-1 visa, and/or deportation. We encourage all international students to speak to the DSO on their campus about any and all possible work opportunities before pursuing them.

**International Students who hold an M1 visa, and are enrolled in any certificate granting program at the CIA, may not work in the United States at any time during their program of study.** M1 students may apply for employment authorization following completion of their program. M1 students are eligible for one month of authorized employment per every four months of completed coursework.

**International students who hold an F1 student visa and are actively enrolled in any of our degree programs, and have followed all relevant procedures/met all relevant requirements, are eligible to:**

- Work on campus for up to 20 hours per week in a non-work study approved position, subject to job availability. Students must acquire a Social Security number, through the Social Security Administration, in order to work on campus.
- Work full-time during their approved CPT (externship) period with authorization in SEVIS by the designated school official. Employment authorization is specific to a location and contracted period of time determined on their externship agreement, as established with their employer and academic advisor. Students must provide their DSO with the externship agreement before beginning work at their site. An updated I-20 will be generated at that time, reflecting their CPT authorization, place of employment, and duration of their approved work authorization. Students must have this updated Form I-20 in order to legally work in the U.S. during the externship. Students must acquire a Social Security number, through the Social Security Administration, in order to work in a paid externship placement in the United States. Further information is available in the CPT section of the handbook.

Apply for OPT—Optional Practical Training—to pursue up to one year of full-time employment in the United States following completion of their degree program and upon authorization from USCIS. Students may submit their OPT application up to 90 days before graduation. The approval process through USCIS is a 90-day minimum process on average. Further information is available in the OPT section of the handbook.

Students must acquire a Social Security number, through the Social Security Administration, in order to work in any of the above situations. The Social Security card is a requirement of authorized paid employment in the

United States. Students must obtain an on-campus job or training agreement from their externship site in order to apply for a Social Security number. Students who have not yet applied for a Social Security number at the time of OPT application may do so through the application process itself. If applying for a Social Security number, before submitting an OPT application, international students must apply for their Social Security card in person at the Social Security Administration Office.

**New York** 332 Main St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

**California** 1850 Soscol Avenue, Suite 102 in Napa, CA 94559

**Texas** Room 701, 7th Floor, 727 E. César E. Chávez Blvd., San Antonio, TX 78206

Students must apply for a Social Security number within 30 days of their intended start date for employment. Standard processing time for obtaining a Social Security card is 10 to 15 business days.

## **Practical Trainings**

At The Culinary Institute of America, F-1 students typically will utilize practical training opportunities at some point during or following their enrollment. Students typically use Curricular Practical Training (CPT) prior to graduation during their externship and Optional Practical Training (OPT) after graduation. While designated school officials at the CIA will assist students in applying for practical trainings, the CIA is not responsible for ensuring applications meet application guidelines, approvals, rejections, or reimbursement of any fees incurred through the application process. The CIA reserves the right to establish additional criteria in order to assist students with the application process for any practical training, such as OPT workshops, individualized appointments, and/or signed externships; training agreements may be required.

### **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is "alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school." F-1 students at The Culinary Institute of America utilize their CPT eligibility to fulfill the externship requirement of their degree program (if applicable).

Here are some quick facts about Curricular Practical Training (CPT):

- For students to receive CPT, the training (and employment associated with the training) must be "an integral part of an established curriculum" and "directly related to the student's major area of study." Externship meets this definition.
- Regulations require one full academic year of study before a student may engage in CPT. The CIA defines one full academic year as two consecutive, full-time, 15-week semesters.
- CPT is authorized directly by the designated school official (DSO) who updates the student's SEVIS record with the CPT authorization, including the employment start and end date, employer name and address, and whether the authorization is for part-time or full-time CPT.
- CPT can be paid or unpaid. SEVP guidance states that "compensation is not a consideration when determining whether an opportunity qualifies as CPT." For students to complete paid CPT/externship, a valid Social Security card will need to be obtained prior to starting work during their authorized CPT period and only with a signed externship training agreement as proof of employment.
- At the CIA, F-1 students are registered for CPT in SEVIS to meet the externship/internship curriculum requirements. CPT must be completed within the semester of externship/internship and cannot overlap registered courses in prior or subsequent semesters.
- Students must attend their externship, as per the agreed-upon schedule with their CPT employer, and they must complete/submit their externship assignment by the due date in order to pass their externship course. Attendance and submission of required coursework is required to maintain status during the externship semester.

- Failure to complete the institutional requirements of externship can result in the need to complete the second externship in order to move forward in the program. Second externships are discouraged unless necessary upon evaluation and can affect a student's eligibility for OPT following graduation.

### **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

International students at the New York campus will attend a DSO-led OPT workshop session which take place every six weeks; e-mail alerts will advise of dates and location. For students in California and Texas, information regarding the OPT application process will be shared with international students electronically.

Optional practical training (OPT) is an employment benefit for work that is directly related to an F-1 student's major area of study. It is intended to provide students or recent graduates with practical experience in their field of study during or upon completion of a degree program. There are two forms of OPT that a CIA student is eligible for:

- Post-completion OPT available to a student upon completion of each level of higher education
- Pre-completion OPT (use of pre-completion OPT reduces the availability of post-completion OPT)

The post-completion OPT is the most commonly used form of OPT. The initial post-completion OPT period allows a student to work up to 12 months. OPT is closely regulated by the Department of Homeland Security, and students are required to apply for the position and update a designated school official (DSO) in International Student Affairs on a regular basis.

The basic OPT application process consists of a DSO recommendation in SEVIS, a new I-20, and the student's filing of form I-765 (with supporting documents, see below) with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). When approved, the student receives an employment authorization document (EAD) from USCIS.

### **Condition and Eligibility**

To be eligible for post-completion OPT, the student must:

- Have maintained satisfactory F-1 status
- Have worked fewer than 12 months, full-time in curricular practical training (CPT)
- Receive an EAD card before beginning employment
- Not accumulate more than 90 cumulative days of unemployment during the authorized period of OPT.

Please note all optional practical employment must be related to the major field of study and appropriate for the level of education of the student.

Any prior authorized periods of pre-completion OPT or post-completion OPT at the same degree level are to be deducted from the 12-month post-completion OPT authorization period. OPT is not a guaranteed benefit and the duration of benefit, when granted, is at the discretion of USCIS. Students who diverge from the expected movement through their program of study or violate their status may be denied access to authorized OPT following graduation. Students can otherwise be denied for OPT authorization due to mistakes or omissions on their application for OPT, past discrepancies regarding their status or paperwork, etc.

**International students are strongly encouraged to seek the support of CIA designated school officials** by contacting their campus's DSO and/or the International Student Affairs Office at the flagship campus in Hyde Park, NY. ISA is dedicated to promoting a welcoming, inclusive environment for all students, advocacy for the international student population, unbiased assistance to international students in navigating governmental regulation and campus life, and creating opportunities for the international student population to access their full potential through their experience at the CIA.