



MONTCLAIR STATE

UNIVERSITY

Employing International Graduates by Victoria Donoghue, Director, International Services, Global Education Center. For further info, please call 973.655.6862.

Many US employers have an interest in hiring recent college and professional school graduates. This is true in every field from healthcare and the sciences to the arts. All the same, employers often shy away from hiring international graduates because they are intimidated by many of the complex US immigration laws.

In reality, hiring international graduates is not very difficult and the potential rewards are enormous; international graduates help US employers to improve the delivery of healthcare, expand their businesses, and perform cutting edge research. Hiring an international graduate involves only a basic understanding of the visa options available. While there are many visa classifications available, those outlined below may be useful options to consider when an employer wants to hire a international:

F Visas/ Optional Practical Training: When a student is in a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral program and has completed all course requirements for the degree, he or she is eligible for a 12 month period of OPT or Optional Practical Training. The application process involves obtaining permission from the academic institution and requesting work authorization or an EAD, from United States Citizenship & Immigration Services ("USCIS"). The EAD allows a student to engage in free market employment. A student may also do an internship or have Curricular Practical Training ("CPT"). CPT must be related to the student's course of study.

J Visas: J-1 students are eligible for academic training after graduation. Academic training provides an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge obtained in an academic program to a practical work experience. Doctoral students who obtain a post-doc position may be eligible for academic training. Employment must be authorized by the Responsible Officer at the academic institution.

H-1B Visas: The H-1B visa program is intended to permit US employers to hire the highly educated employees for “specialty occupations” (positions that require at least a Bachelor’s Degree in a specialized field). Examples include Research Associates, engineers, accountants, medical personnel, and computer professionals. The period of stay for H-1B holders is 6 years, and an application must be made to USCIS. Extensions beyond six (6) years may be possible under certain circumstances.

O and P Visas: International graduates who have demonstrated extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business or athletics may be able to receive an O visa to work in their area of expertise. By way of example, an art school graduate with an exceptional portfolio might be eligible for an O visa. The period of stay for an O visa is 3 years and incremental extensions are available. P visas are available for performing artists and athletes. These visas require applications to USCIS.