



INTERNSHIPS & CPT FOR STUDENTS ON F-1 VISAS

While you pursue your engineering degree at the A. James Clark School of Engineering, you will find numerous opportunities to gain practical experience in your field of study.

Students can conduct research with faculty, participate in competitions and projects, or work at a part-time job on campus.

During school breaks, some international students seek internships in their home countries. Others incorporate one or more Curricular Practical Training (CPT) experiences in the U.S. into their degree.

INTERNSHIP FAQs FOR F-1 VISA HOLDERS

Why should I seek an internship or campus job?

Employers expect to see work experience on your resume before you graduate. Working will also help you build soft skills and professional references.

For the most up-to-date policies on F-1 employment options during and after your studies, see the website of the [University of Maryland's International Student and Scholar Services \(ISSS\)](#).

See the Campus Jobs section of our website for ideas on seeking campus employment.

When should I start applying for internships?

Some companies hire during the fall semester for the following summer, while others recruit summer interns in the spring. Peak recruiting occurs in September-October and February-March.

Do you have a list of internship placements for students in my degree program?

Our office provides resources to help you to prepare for your job search, but it is your responsibility to search and apply for internship positions. Read your emails and check our website so you keep track of events where you can connect with professionals and alumni.

How do I get started on my search for an internship?

First, attend a *Resume Basics* Workshop. Create (or update) your resume based on our suggestions, then bring it to Engineering Career Services for a critique.

Complete your Handshake account information with accurate personal and academic details. Once you upload your approved resume, you can review and apply for job listings through this platform.

WHAT ABOUT J-1 VISA HOLDERS?

Degree-seeking and exchange students in the Clark School that are here on a J-1 visa should check with an ISSS advisor as soon as possible about eligibility for on-campus employment and [Academic Training](#). Do not wait until the end of the semester, as the approval process can take some time.

INTERNSHIP FAQs FOR F-1 VISA HOLDERS, CONT'D.

How can I improve my chances of finding an internship?

Attend our workshops, including *Internship Search Tips for International Students*. Make a good impression when speaking with or writing to potential employers.

Build your professional network. Prepare to attend career fairs and employer information sessions. Meet new people (and practice your English, if its not your first language) by seeking out campus clubs and activities.

Gain experience with a part time job, research position, independent projects or organized competitions where you can practice your skills.

Have a parallel plan. Check [GoinGlobal](#) for opportunities outside the U.S. and companies in different U.S. cities that have sponsored H1B visas.

What do I do once I get an internship offer?

Consider all options before you say yes to an offer. Our workshop and handout *Job Offers and Salary Negotiation* covers questions to ask about an offer and what to do if you need more time to respond.

Once you accept a position, you should discontinue your job search and immediately notify any other employers that may still be seriously considering you that you have decided to accept another position.

Review [ISSS' page on CPT](#) for guidelines and limitations. If enrolling in ENCO 099/098 for the academic component of your CPT, bring the relevant paperwork to Engineering Career Services at least three business days before you plan to start work.

But what if I get a better offer after I accept one?

Even if a more interesting offer comes along, you are committed to the offer you already accepted (even verbally). There are serious consequences for renegeing on a job offer, both for your reputation and your access to our services.

Will I have to move to participate in an internship?

The more flexible you are about geographic location, the more likely you are to find a position. Some employers even help you pay for relocation. Note that during the semester, CPT will only be approved for a part time internship in the DC metro area.

What if I want to quit my internship?

If you are considering resigning from a co-op position, you must first speak to both your supervisor at work and Engineering Career Services staff. Be prepared to discuss the reasons for your resignation and the implications of your decision.

If you cannot resolve the conflict with your supervisor and decide to resign, it is customary to give at least two weeks' notice. You will need to provide a copy of your resignation letter to ISSS immediately so they can update your I-20.

What if my employer wants to hire me full time?

Your co-op/intern employer may, but is not obligated to, offer you a permanent position after completion of your work assignment. You are not obligated to accept such an offer if it is made. It is your responsibility to request approval from ISSS for Optional Practical Training (OPT) before accepting full time employment.

Questions about finding an internship or enrolling in ENCO?

Contact:

Engineering Career Services

1131 Glenn L. Martin Hall

Phone: (301) 405-3863 | Email: careerengr@umd.edu | <https://eng.umd.edu/careers/students/international>

Walk-in questions & resume critique: Mon - Fri, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Questions about maintaining status as an international student, CPT or OPT?

Contact:

International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)

1126 H.J. Patterson Hall

Phone : (301) 314-7740 | <http://globalmaryland.umd.edu/offices/international-students-scholar-services>

Walk-in hours: Mon-Thu, 1:30 - 3:45 pm

See website for additional information, chat and appointments.

ENCO 099/098 APPROVAL & REGISTRATION

ENCO is a zero (0) credit course that serves as the academic component for engineering students participating in CPT.

Eligibility to Enroll in ENCO 099/098 for CPT

- Maintenance of F-1 status for at least one academic year (2 semesters, Fall/Spring or Spring/Fall).
- Good academic standing. Undergraduate students must have at least a 2.0 semester GPA and a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 at the time of enrollment. For graduate students, the minimum cumulative and semester GPA is 3.0.
- Internship (curricular training) offer that is directly related to the student's major field of study.

Graduate students: Master's students only taking credits of 799 or Ph.D. students that have finished all required course work and/or advanced to candidacy are not eligible to enroll in ENCO as the academic component of CPT. Graduate assistants should consult with their supervisors before accepting an internship that might conflict with their obligations to the university.

Preparing to Request Permission to Enroll in ENCO

1. Obtain an **offer letter on official company letterhead** from your employer that includes all of the following:
 - Your full name
 - Specific start and end dates (Month Day, Year) of your internship. See deadline requirements: go.umd.edu/issdates
 - Job title, and the specific term *co-op*, *intern*, or *internship*
 - The name of your supervisor during the internship
 - Address of your workplace (both the employer mailing address and your work site, if different - no PO Box work site addresses). Limited to working in-person in the DMV during Fall/Spring; if outside DMV, *must* be remote.
 - Number of hours per week you will work (not more than 20 hours/week during the Fall/Spring semesters)
 - Description of your specific job duties (at least 2-3 sentences that makes it apparent how the position relates to your program of study)
 - Salary/amount of compensation (even if unpaid)
2. Submit an Experience request in Handshake. You will go to your career center in Handshake and select "Experiences" from the menu under the heading photo of the page, then select submit a new experience and start entering all the required information. Next, you will digitally sign the experience and select the green button to submit. From there you will be prompted to upload your offer letter.
3. Our office will review your request and prompt your supervisor to approve the experience in Handshake. Allow 24 hours between each step at a minimum (M-F). This is not an automated process.

ENCO Enrollment Process

1. Upon receiving your supervisor signature, our office will receive an email to complete a final review of your experience in Handshake. If the experience is fully complete we will grant you the final approval and enter your approval to enroll in ENCO 099/098.
2. Once approved, you will register for ENCO 099 or 098 for the term(s) you will be working.
 - For the Summer or Winter term, the fee is \$30 and will be charged to your UMD account.
 - For the Fall or Spring semester, the course fee is \$78 and will be charged to your UMD account.

Taking Courses While Enrolled in ENCO099/098

During the Fall and Spring semester, students on F-1 visas must enroll in the courses required to make normal progress towards the completion of their program of study.

Students who enroll in courses in addition to ENCO098 during the Summer or Winter will be charged tuition based on the number of credits or units. If the course is then dropped the week before the session begins, the student may receive a 100% refund. After the first day of classes, the refund amount decreases significantly. Payment and refund deadlines for each Summer and Winter session are posted by the [Office of Extended Studies](#).

CPT AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

You must receive CPT work authorization, and an updated I-20, from the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) in 1126 H.J. Patterson before you can begin work for the internship/co-op employer.

After you have enrolled in ENCO099/098, upload your completed Handshake experience form and offer letter to iTerp.

ISSS can process CPT authorization requests during their posted walk-in hours (Monday - Thursday, 1:30 - 3:45 pm).

You may also schedule an appointment for CPT requests via the “Chat with an ISSS Advisor” (Monday - Friday, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm) or by calling 301-314-7740. Same day appointments are rarely possible.

If everything is in order, ISSS will grant you CPT permission on your I-20 for the exact dates of your employment.

If your CPT authorization request is denied, you should notify Engineering Career Services right away.

Extensions and Multiple Employers

CPT approvals are limited to once per semester, so you must consider placements carefully before requesting CPT work authorization from ISSS. You may have more than one employer during a term as long as you submit all documentation simultaneously.

Changes to dates or employers will not be made once CPT is authorized for a given term, including extensions within the same semester. See ISSS’s guidelines when determining your start and end dates with your employer.

Fall, Spring, and Summer are considered separate work terms for CPT even if worked consecutively. If your employer would like you to continue working in the next semester or term, you must request a new offer letter and complete the CPT authorization request process for that term.

ENCO099/098 COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are no class meetings for the 0-credit ENCO course.

Assessment and Grading

At the end of each internship, you are required to complete a final survey reflecting on the work experience. Failure to complete the survey may result in an "Incomplete" or "F" for the course, which will appear on your UMD transcript.

The evaluation process is an opportunity for you to reflect on your experience and articulate the ways in which the work experience has contributed to your education. Engineering Career Services will notify you by email (at the address on file through Testudo) at the end of each work term to remind you to complete your survey online through our website.

After you fill out and submit the survey, a grade of “Satisfactory” will be submitted for ENCO 099/098. If we do not receive your work report by the given deadline, we will give you an “Incomplete” grade for ENCO. *Co-op/Internship Work Experience* will appear on your transcript. A grade indicating Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) will also appear.

Supervisor Evaluations

At the end of each work assignment, we will send your employer a performance evaluation form that asks your supervisor to evaluate you in areas such as dependability, attitude, ability to learn, attendance and punctuality, communication skills, and relations with others. These evaluations will be returned to Engineering Career Services and kept in your file. You are welcome to read them at any time. *Your grade for ENCO does **not** depend upon the receipt nor the content of the supervisor evaluation.*