



Hiring International Students: Information for Employers

International students can offer employers a wide range of skills and abilities. Obtaining permission for them to work in the US is not difficult. We urge you to seriously consider hiring one of these students for the cultural and practical benefits and perspectives they can bring to your organization. This document is intended to provide answers to common questions that relate to employing international students.

Can international students really work in the US?

Absolutely! The Federal Register (Title 8 code, Part 214) states: "international students who hold valid F-1 visas are eligible for "Practical Training." This "Practical Training," more commonly referred to as OPT (Optional Practical Training), allows students to work full-time at a company and be paid for up to twelve months following their graduation while still remaining in F-1 (student) visa status. For more information about OPT, see <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/programs/global/visa/opt.html>.

Most international students at Mount Holyoke decide to "save" the twelve months they are allotted for OPT so that they can begin work immediately and have a twelve-month "grace" period in which to begin applying for an H1-B visa.

As an employer, what do I have to do?

Once an international student has been hired, the *Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9)* must be completed by both the employer and the student. The student uses her EAD card as proof of her permission to work.

What if I want to hire an international student as a regular employee of my company?

You can sponsor an international student for an H1-B visa either immediately after her graduation or at the end of her Practical Training period. This will allow the student to work in the US for additional years. The H1-B visa is only valid for employment with your organization. The international graduate must reapply to the USCIS if she wishes to change firms. Mount Holyoke College's Center for Global Initiatives can recommend attorneys who are skilled in the processing of H1-B visa applications.

Won't it cost my company a lot of money to hire international graduate?

No, it won't. Although many companies do decide to pick up the costs involved in the processing of an H1-B visa application (USCIS fees, attorney costs), it is not a requirement. The employee could also pay these processing fees.

Is it possible to sponsor someone for permanent residency?

Occasionally, the match between an employer and an international student is so good that the employer wishes to assist the employee in obtaining permanent residency, also known as a *green card*. Obtaining permanent residency is more expensive and takes more time than the types of work permission previously described. However, with the assistance of an immigration attorney, the application procedure can be quick and painless.

Why should I hire a Mount Holyoke international graduate?

Mount Holyoke international students are extremely intelligent, talented and capable women. Over the years many companies and organizations have benefited immensely from their expertise and their sensitivity to cultural issues. It has been proven many times that they can get the job done!