



Hiring International Graduates

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There are currently **more than 200 international students** at IPFW. While some of these students choose to return to their home countries upon graduation, many seek the option of staying in the U.S. to work. International students bring a diverse range of skills and abilities to the workplace including their Indiana University or Purdue University education, foreign language skills, initiative, and flexibility.

Prior to graduation, international students have the option to apply for **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**. This visa allows graduates to work in the U.S. for one year in a field directly related to their major. Students with degrees in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math) may be eligible for a 17-month extension. Students interested in applying for OPT are solely responsible for the application process and fees; there is no cost or paperwork for the employer. This is the perfect option to fill short-term contracts or to train employees prior to sponsoring them for long-term employment.

There are options for employers to retain these international workers after the OPT has expired. The employer can file an application for the **H-1B visa** on behalf of the employee. There is a cost for the employer to apply for this visa, but many companies find that the cost is similar to what they would spend on recruiting and/or training. H-1B visas are granted for three years, but can be renewed for a total of six years. The annual limit for H-1B visas for international students who have completed undergraduate degrees is 65,000, with an additional 20,000 limit for those who hold graduate degrees.

There are additional visa options for students from **Canada, Mexico, or Australia**. Canadian and Mexican citizens may be eligible for the **TN-1 visa** if the offer of employment is in one of the professions covered by the North American Free Trade Agreement ([view the list](#)). This visa is valid for three years and either the employee or employer can file for an extension in three-year increments, indefinitely. Citizens of Australia who wish to work in specialty occupations in the U.S. can apply for the **E-3 visa**, which is valid for two years and can be renewed indefinitely. The specialty occupation requires related theoretical and practical knowledge and at least a bachelor's degree.

International students bring many **unique advantages** to any organization. They benefit greatly from the experience gained from working in the U.S., and hiring them isn't as difficult as some employers may think. We urge you to contact Brian Mylrea, director of international education, at mylreab@ipfw.edu or 260-481-6923 if you have specific questions about this process.

