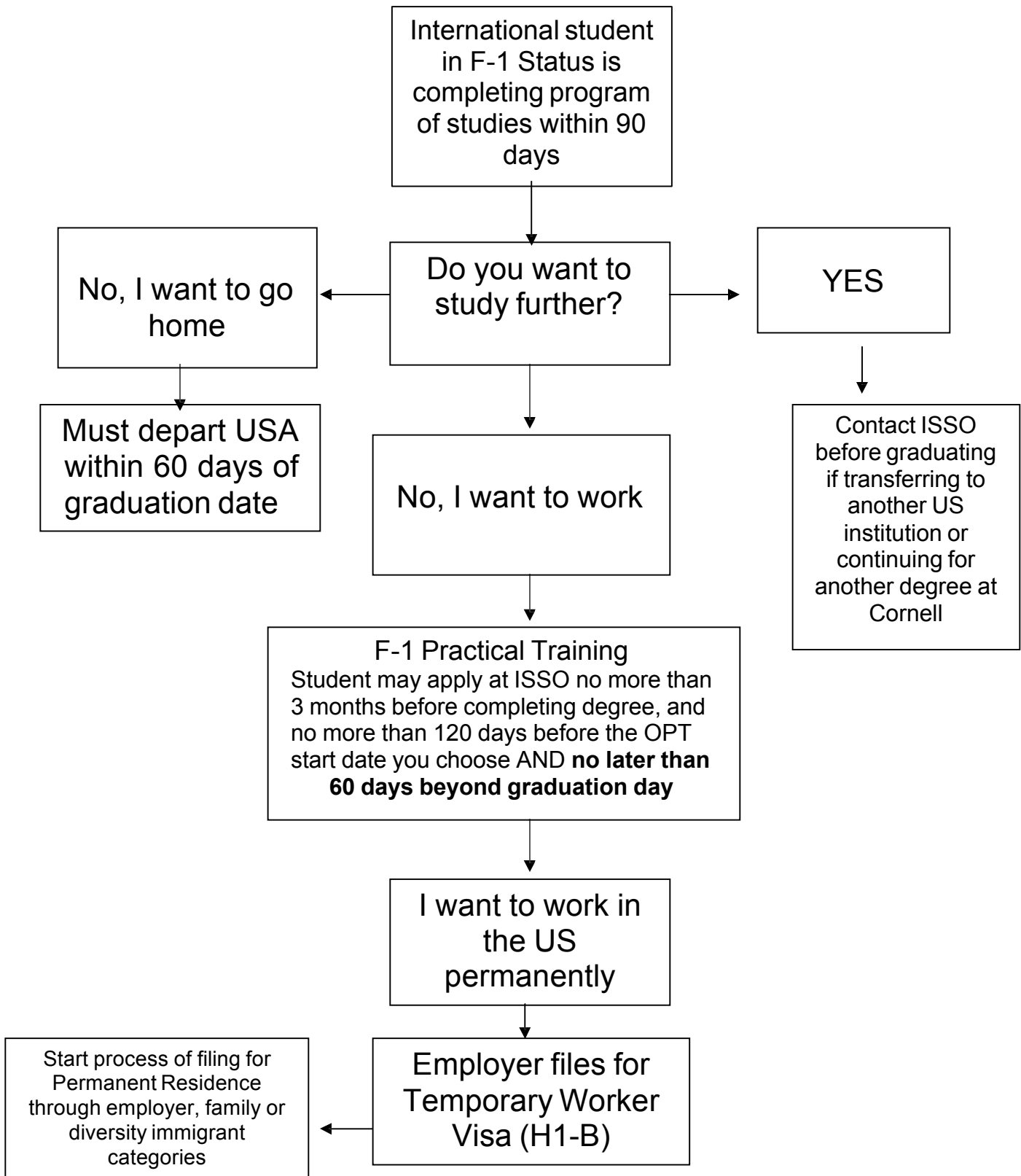
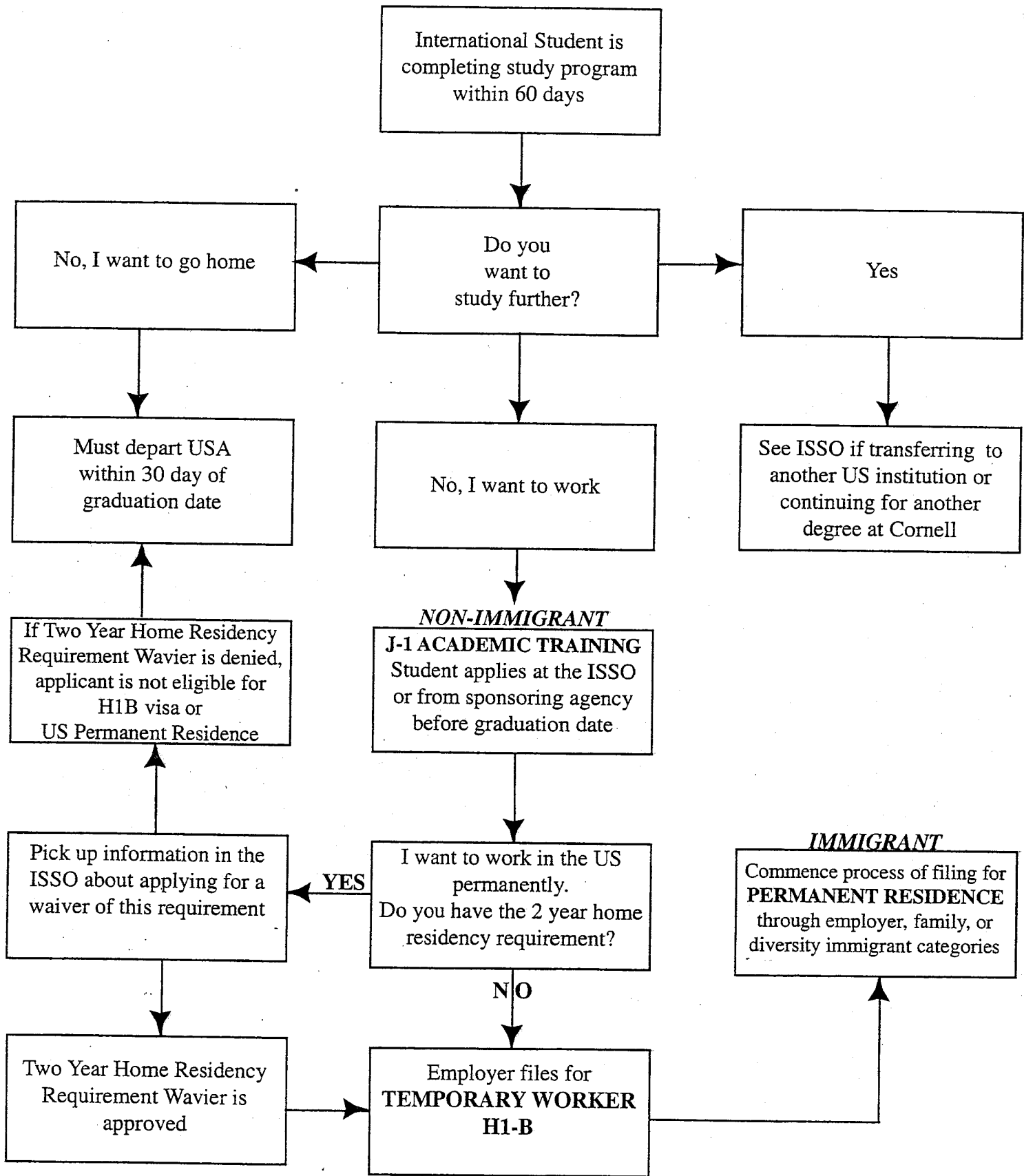


Visa Options after Completion of Studies for F1 Students



Visa Options After Completion Of Studies For J1 Students





International Students: Off-Campus Work

F-1 Student Status allows for two types of “practical training” work authorization which allow you to be PAID for work in your field. **Here are the requirements for both types of practical training:**

- After being enrolled for one full academic year
- Work authorization in your **MAJOR field (NOT your minor field)**.
- Full-time during the summer or winter break,
- Part-time during the academic year (limited to 20 hours total per week).

F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT): (this is the usual choice for internships)

- **BEFORE** you graduate
- Must be **REQUIRED** for your degree, or you must receive credit in a course.
- Could be used for internship, coop, a practicum, or any other work experience.
- Can be full time during the summer, or part-time (20 hours per week) during the academic year
- Apply directly through the ISSO so only takes a day or two.

F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT):

- **Usually used AFTER** you graduate for full time work for 12 months
- If you use it before graduation, that is deducted from time after graduating.
- Could be used for any off campus work in your MAJOR field of study.
- After graduating, students in STEM fields of study may also apply for a 24 month extension.
- Apply to the USCIS after getting new I-20 from the ISSO / Fee of \$410 / takes 2-3 months

J-1 Academic Training: J-1 Students may also work in your MAJOR field after graduating if your DS-2019 is issued by Cornell. You can have up to 18 months as long as your program was at least 18 months long, and if you receive a PhD, you can have another 18 months for post-doctoral research positions. Apply directly through the ISSO.

Staying in the US long term: If you hope to stay in the US long term and work, then you will most likely go through a path of a few different visa types. The most common path is from F-1 OPT, then to H1B skilled worker visa, and then on to US Permanent Residence (also called “green card”).

H1B Skilled Worker: This is a common working visa in the US. Here are some of the features of the H1B:

- Can have up to 6 years, and even more if you have a Permanent Residence application pending
- The job must require (and you must have) at least a bachelor’s degree
- Job must use skills specific to your major field—(not for an entry level administrative assistant job, but could be used for editing or marketing jobs, and for technical jobs)
- The higher the degree level and years of experience required for the job, the easier it is to get
- It is costly for small companies (between \$2500 and \$6000)
- Timing issues (there is a quota which runs out every year)
- Does NOT require what is called a “test of the US labor market”

TN for Canadians and Mexicans: Read more information on this type of visa by going to www.uscis.gov and typing in “TN Visa.”

US Permanent Residence: The permanent residence process can take a long time (between 6 months and 5 or 6 years depending on your situation). For this reason, you will need to count on having not only F-1 OPT, but also an H1B before you get the green card. Here are some features of the “employment based” green card process:

- Expensive for small companies (more than \$4000)
- Can take between 6 months and 5 or 6 years
- Usually does require a “test of the US labor market”
- The higher the degree level and the more experience is required for the job, the easier it will be to get the green card

Some Popular Questions:

1. How does OPT/CPT affect paid/unpaid internships respectively?

For unpaid employment, you do NOT NEED ANY WORK AUTHORIZATION (no CPT or OPT). You will only need special work authorization for PAID employment (can use either CPT or OPT).

2. What is the timeline for applying for OPT/CPT?

For CPT, you should apply at least one week in advance of working. For OPT, you will need to apply 3 months in advance of working.

3. Can you do an internship in an area unrelated to your major?

No, for F-1 students, practical training is ONLY for your major field. There is an exception for work for certain international organizations (like WHO or UN). In this case, there is another kind of work card for which you can apply, but can take 3 or 4 months to get.

4. When a company asks if I have the legal right to work in US, is the answer Yes or No?

Some possible phrasings and answers:

“Do you have U.S. work authorization for this employment?” YES

“Will you need visa sponsorship for this job?” NO

“Will you need visa sponsorship in the future?” YES

“Are you permanently work authorized in the U.S.?” NO.

Some useful websites:

ISSO F1 & J1 Student Employment: <https://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us>

ISSO Visas After Graduation: <https://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/visas-after-graduation>

ISSO Immigration Workshops: <https://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/immigration-workshops>

Miller Mayer law firm: <http://www.millermayer.com/>

Final Word: At least once before you graduate, come to the ISSO’s “Visas After Graduation” talk, held once in October and February every year.

We will send out announcements!