Optional Practical Training (OPT)

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) permit lawful F-1 students the opportunity to gain practical work experience in their major field of study. This experience is called Optional Practical Training (OPT). By law, OPT must be approved by the Principal Designated School Official (PDSO, International Student Advisor) and submitted to USCIS within 60 days of degree program completion. F-1 visa holders become eligible for another year of OPT when they change to a higher educational level. The checklist below will offer guidance in requesting Optional Practical Training.

NOTE: OPT application process is not complete until you sign a new Form I-20.

Checklist:

Initial Eligibility Requirements:
You must:

- Have valid F-1 status
- Have been lawfully enrolled full-time for at least one academic year
- Have used less than one year of full time Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- Not have already used a full year of OPT based on your current degree
- Be in the last semester of your degree program or completing your thesis or equivalent

Submit paperwork to International Student and Scholar Services:
Legible copies of:

- Passport ID pages
- Latest Admission Stamp (red stamp inside passport)
- Latest Visa
- Front and back of I-94 Card (or Approval Notice with new I-94)
- Front page and signature page of all previous I-20s from all schools
- Any previously-issued Employment Authorization Documents
- OPT Release Form
  - Item 16 Eligibility Category:
    - Pre-completion OPT input "(c) (3) (A)"
    - Post-completion OPT input "(c) (3) (B)"
- 2 recent passport size photos
- Academic Transcript
- $380 Fee: check or money order payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security