



Optional Practical Training (OPT) authorization allows students in valid F-1 status to accept paid off-campus employment, directly related to their field of study, for a period up to 12 months, at their current educational level. No job offer is needed to apply. All students are encouraged to meet with the international student advisor in the Office of Academic Affairs or attend an OPT information session for advisement prior to submitting an OPT application.

Approved optional practical training can be used pre and/or post completion of degree requirements according to the following guidelines. Most students elect to use this type of work authorization after completion of studies to allow for a full year employment experience once a degree has been obtained. Students with less employment eligibility may have a more difficult time finding employment.

	Work authorization for the period <u>after</u> academic program is complete, up to 12 months total.	Work authorization <u>while completing</u> degree requirements. Pre-completion OPT is deducted from the 12 months of employment eligibility available post-completion. Pre-completion OPT authorization ends upon program completion.
	Full-time employment (21+ hrs/week). The type of employment must be directly related to the student's field of study.	Part-time only (maximum 20 hrs/week) while classes are in session. Students may work full-time during official College break periods (winter, summer break). The type of employment must be directly related to the student's field of study.
	Completion of one full academic year of study. Must be in valid F-1 status. Have not used more than 12 months of full-time CPT at the current degree level. Have not used more than 12 months of pre-completion OPT at the current degree level.	Completion of one full academic year of study. Must be in valid F-1 status. Have not used more than 12 months of full-time CPT at the current degree level. Have not used more than 12 months of pre-completion OPT at the current degree level.
	A job offer is not required to apply for OPT. Once post-completion OPT is approved, a student cannot exceed a total of 90 days of unemployment.	A job offer is not required to apply for OPT. Unemployment provisions do not apply for pre-completion OPT.

In general, students are advised to apply 3 months prior to their desired employment start date to allow for often lengthy application processing times. Most OPT applications take 90+ days for adjudication through USCIS. See the OPT Application & Advisor Recommendation form for a chart to determine your application deadlines and requested employment start and end dates.

May graduates are advised to submit their POST-Completion OPT application materials in early February.

December graduates are advised to submit their POST-Completion OPT application materials in early October.

OPT

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Complete USCIS Form I-75. Form and instructions available for download at [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#).

For Item 16 on Form I-75

Enter Eligibility Category (3)(B) if applying for POST-Completion OPT.

Enter Eligibility Category (3)(A) if applying for PRE-Completion OPT.

Complete OPT Application & Advisor Recommendation Form. Form available for download at [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#).

