



F-1 Visa International Student and Optional Practical Training

There are 2 types of Practical Training: **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)** and **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**. A student may be authorized for 12 months of practical training and become eligible for another 12 months when the student changes to a higher educational level.

An eligible F-1 student may request employment authorization for practical training in a position that is directly related to his/her major area of study. The school must approve practical training and endorse the I-20 accordingly. Students in English language programs are ineligible for practical training.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT must be an integral part of an established curriculum of a degree program. The student must receive academic credit for the coursework completed as CPT. The school must authorize the CPT on the SEVIS I-20 but the student does not need to apply to CIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, formerly INS) for employment authorization. CPT does not have a definite time limitation but is usually granted for 12 months.

Students who have received one year or more of full-time CPT are ineligible for CPT unless the student is enrolled in graduate studies that require immediate participation in CPT.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

OPT is available for 12 months to a student who has finished the requirements for the degree or who has graduated with a degree. A student must complete all OPT within a 14-month period following the completion of study. The OPT must be directly related to the student's major area of study. OPT must be requested prior to the completion of all course requirements for the degree or prior to the completion of the course of study.

OPT may be granted 1) during the student's annual vacation or at other times when school is not in session if the student is currently enrolled and is eligible for registration and intends to register for the next term or session; 2) while school is in session, provided that OPT does not exceed 20 hours per week while school is in session or 3) after completion of a course of study.

A student may submit an application for OPT up to 90 days prior to being enrolled for one full academic year provided that the period of employment will

not begin until after the completion of the full academic year. An OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is based on an endorsement by the school on the SEVIS I-20 and requested from the CIS by filing the I-765 application and submitting the appropriate filing fees. The EAD is issued by the CIS.

F-1 Student Visa OPT Document List

- Passport valid for at least 6 months from date of application
- All previous passports with U.S. visa stamps or notations
- Original form I-94
- Two (2) color passport style photo (straight on photo)
- Original approval notices of F-1 (I-797)
- CIS approval notices of any other nonimmigrant status or extensions (if applicable)
- Original current SEVIS I-20 signed by the DSO on page 4
- All previous SEVIS I-20's
- Letter from DSO attesting to full-time status in good standing from time of enrollment
- Student ID card, tuition fee receipts and class registration Academic transcript