

CPT & OPT for F-1 Visa Students

	Curricular Practical Training (CPT)	Optional Practical Training (OPT)
What is it?	Authorization to work off-campus in the major field of student's academic study only *Minimum one academic year in valid F-1 status	Authorization to work in the United States (can be on or off campus) in the major field of student's academic study only
Academic Program Completion	Only BEFORE you complete your degree	Usually AFTER you complete your degree
Employment Part vs. Full Time	Can only have part-time internships or jobs during regular academic terms; BUT can work full- or part-time during annual vacation term	Can work part- or full-time It can be jobs, internships, volunteer work, or self-employment
Sponsorship from Employers?	NO! Employers NEED to consider H-1B or other types of long-term working visas when it comes to the student's OPT expiration.	

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Work Authorization	International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) by the university After departmental approval	ISSS and United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)
Paperwork from Employers?	No additional paperwork except for proof of employment such as an official offer letter	
Length	<p>Term basis Can have many part-time CPTs before students graduate</p> <p>*For full-time CPT (only during annual vacation term) 12 months or more of full-time CPT will lose eligibility to engage in OPT</p>	<p>Only one OPT per degree level Most majors: 12 months after completion of degree requirements;</p> <p>STEM: 12 months + 17-month extension=29 months *Can only use the OPT extension once per lifetime.</p>

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Employment Offer	MUST have found a(n) job/internship offer before students apply	No need to have an offer before students apply
Change Employers	One employer per CPT; Separate paperwork for multiple employers	One OPT for all employers; Can change employers without reapplying OPT and report all employment changes to the International Student & Scholar Services Office
College Credits	YES. Register for an elective internship course (ex. BA 404 or CPSY 404) per term, credits must count toward degree	NO because OPT is only for students who have completed their degree requirements