



# Things to Know About OPT

## Optional Practical Training

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an important opportunity for F-1 students. To maintain F-1 status during OPT you must comply with U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) employment and reporting requirements. The CSU Stanislaus Office of International Education provides the following information to assist you in meeting those requirements.

## WHAT IS OPT?

OPT is employment authorization for F-1 undergraduate and graduate students that allows them to legally work for up to 12 months per education level in a position directly related to their major. Students must have been lawfully enrolled as a full-time student in an SEVP-approved school for at least 1 academic year in order to be eligible for OPT. Language Training students are not eligible for OPT.

## Types of OPT

### *Pre-Completion*

A current student may apply for OPT either:

- during the student's annual vacation and 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

or

- while school is in session, provided that practical training does not exceed 20 hours a week while school is in session.

### *Post-Completion*

A student may apply for this type of training after completion of all course requirements for the degree. This does not include thesis or equivalent. Students must complete all training within 14 months of the completion of study unless eligible for a 24-month STEM extension.

## Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Eligibility for OPT

*Use of full-time CPT for 12 months or more eliminates eligibility for OPT. Part-time CPT does not affect OPT.*

## How to Apply

### Pre-Completion

Students may apply any time once they have met the 1 year of lawful full-time enrollment at a SEVP-approved school. The student is responsible for choosing a start date. Once the OPT I-20 is printed, the student will need to have it mailed to USCIS within 30 days.

## Post-Completion

Students can apply as early as 90 days before the last day of classes and up to 60 days after the last day of classes. The student is responsible for choosing a start date. The start date must be within 60 days from the student's last day of classes of their final semester. The student's application must be received by USCIS BEFORE the 60<sup>th</sup> day from completion of study. Once the OPT I-20 is printed, the student will need to have it mailed to USCIS within 30 days.

Please visit <https://eie.csustan.edu/international-students-international-education-documents> to find your application materials.

- the Optional Practical Training (OPT) Checklist
- Optional Practical Training (OPT) Processing Application
- Optional Practical Training (OPT) I-765 Application and Instructions