



**OPT FAQ’s**

1. Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an employment opportunity for F-1 students, available after the completion of each degree level – BS, MS, PhD.
2. Employment should be in the field of study. In addition to a full time position, part-time work and/or internship opportunities are also permitted.
3. Students must obtain employment 90 days after their OPT start date (the date chosen for their I-20). Students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during OPT.
4. OPT is for 12 months, or a 17 month extension for STEM students.

Eligible for 17 month OPT Extension:

* Actuarial Science
* Computer Science Applications
* Drug Design
* Engineering
* Engineering Technologies
* Biological and Biomedical Sciences
* Mathematics and Statistics
* Medical informatics
* Military Technologies
* Neuroscience
* Pharmaceutics
* Physical Sciences
* Science Technologies
* Medical Scientist (MS, PhD)

1. STEM extensions should be filed 120 days before OPT ends.
2. Students MUST attend a Padnos International Center OPT Fair to apply for OPT.
3. See accompanying pink sheet for OPT application requirements.
4. After the OPT application has been submitted students SHOULD NOT leave the U.S. until they receive their OPT card. Students who have to leave will forfeit their application and will need to re-apply.
5. Students may travel while on OPT. They must have a signed I-20, valid passport, F-1 visa, I-94, and a job offer to re-enter the U.S.
6. OPT applications typically take 3 months to process though 120 days is the time allotted.
7. First students will receive a receipt letter with a reference number. Liz Smith will send an email when the letter arrives and it is important that students pick up and save this letter. This receipt will enable you to track your application status online.
8. All students on OPT are required to report to the Director of International Student and Scholar Services within 10 days of:
   * Any change in name or address
   * The name and address of their employer
   * Any change to the name and address of the employer
   * Any interruption of such employment (laid off dates)
9. Students on OPT are reported to USCIS by GVSU.
10. Students on OPT are eligible to take classes at any institution in the U.S. as long as they are also working.
11. If a student has concluded their OPT status, and is pursuing another degree, they must contact PIC so that PIC may transfer their SEVIS record.
12. Students on OPT are required to complete tax forms by April 15th.
13. Students interested in the H-1 process should attend the Legal Seminar on working after graduation hosted each semester by the Padnos International Center.

Resources:

Department of Immigration & Citizenship Enforcement (2/19/2009)  
<http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/release_6_0_training_slides_f_m_users.pdf>

Department of Homeland Security Announcement   
<http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1207334008610.shtm>

US Citizenship and Immigration Services Q and A   
<http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/OPT_FAQ_4apr08.pdf>