



OFF CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP for F1 Visa Holders

<http://www.fit.edu/iss/employment/offcampus.php>

Presented by
International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)
211 Keuper Building
(321) 674-8053

This Workshop.....

Covers the rules and procedures for obtaining off-campus work authorization both prior to completion of study and post completion of study

In order to apply for off-campus work authorization you must be in lawful academic status for one year



Attendance at an off-campus employment workshop is required during the year in which you will be applying for either Optional or Curricular Practical Training. Workshops are offered every two weeks. For a full schedule visit [Fall 2011 Off-Campus Employment Workshop Schedule](#).



Off campus employment....

what are you options??

- CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)
- OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)
- ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

F-1 students who are experiencing unforeseen financial hardship while studying in the US, may be able to obtain off-campus employment authorization from United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) under certain conditions. See an ISSS advisor for further information.



1 rule

- In order to utilize any of these options, you must be....

IN STATUS

Rules for MAINTAINING F1 STATUS

- Have a valid passport
- Carry full course load – 12 credits for undergraduates, 9 for graduates
- Make normal academic progress
- Report to ISSS FOR SEVIS updates or changes in status: address change within 10 day of move, extension, transfer or program change
- Adhere to regulations of employment
- Obey state and federal laws
- Depart from the US in a timely manner





What is the difference between:

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)
&
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)

Eligibility and Criteria

- Must be in lawful academic status for **one year**.
- Training must be directly related to the students field of study, and must be a requirement of the program of study and/or receive course credit.
- Training may be full time or part time.
- CPT terminates when student completes course of study, falls out of status, or completion date of CPT is reached.



CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING....

Must be directly related to your major

- Provides experience necessary to program of study
- It generally gives you academic credit in the form of an **Internship or Cooperative Education**. Check your program plan in the University catalog for details
- Recommendation is made by your Advisor
- Obtained *during* course of study
- Job offer **is** necessary
- Afford the help of the **Career Management Services Office** to prepare your resume, build interviewing skills/network, etc.



Internship vs Co-op

- Both are major-related work experiences.
- Employers may refer to a major-related work experience as an internship or a co-op - internship is more common.
- ***At Florida Tech:*** Credit can be awarded through the Co-op Program for approved major-related work experiences regardless of whether they are called an internship or co-op.
- Undergraduate students receive up to 3 hours of academic credit a semester when working full-time (40 hours per week)
- Undergraduate students receive 1-2 hours of academic credit when working part-time.
- Graduate students receive 0 credit

Internship vs Co-op

- Career Management Services administers credit through the Co-op Program but your academic advisor determines if Co-op is appropriate.
- Internship credit may also be available through your academic department that will count towards your degree program.

CPT CONTINUED...

What is considered part time?

- Employment for **20 hours or less per week** while you are enrolled for classes is considered part-time curricular practical training.
- Your I-20 will specify
- No limitation upon the length of time you may participate in *part-time* CPT, but you must be simultaneously enrolled as a full-time student



CPT CONTINUED...

What is considered full time?

- Employment for *more than 20 hours per week* is considered full-time CPT
- I-20 will specify
- Usually utilized during the summer, last semester, or when registered for thesis
- No limits on length of time you may participate, however if you participate in **twelve months or more of full time curricular practical training** you will not be eligible for post-completion practical training (OPT.)



F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Application

Provide ISSS at least two weeks prior to the start of training:

1. Curricular Training Recommendation form to be completed by your ***academic advisor***, course professor or co-op office. Note -- Your advisor must fill out this form, not you.
2. A job offer letter from your employer. The letter must be on company letterhead and include:
 - Duties of the job;
 - EXACT beginning and ending date of your employment
 - Supervisor's name, title, address and phone number
3. Enroll in a course relevant to the work experience: internship, COOP, etc.



<http://www.fit.edu/iss/documents/CPTpacket.pdf>

Do I need to have a job offer prior to submitting my application?

- Yes. Your CPT authorization will be employer and date specific



In SEVIS RTI, off-campus employment is recommended by the DSO through the Off-Campus Employment link on the *Student Information* screen, which will bring up the *Off-Campus Employment* screen:

© SEVIS RTI: Off-campus employment screen

Required fields are marked with an asterisk (*).

1. * Employment Start Date:	<input type="text"/>	(MM/DD/YYYY)
2. * Employment End Date:	<input type="text"/>	(MM/DD/YYYY)
3. * Off-Campus Employment Type:	<input type="text"/>	
4. * Recommendation:	<input type="text"/>	

Add Employment

Reset Values

Cancel

ON CPT....REMEMBER.....

1. You may ONLY BEGIN working on the first date indicated on CPT authorization
2. ONLY valid for one semester at a time, new application package required for any subsequent semesters
3. Part time employment – 20 hours or fewer requires concurrent academic coursework
4. If you are working full time (registered for thesis or in your last semester) for 12 months or more, you become INELIGIBLE FOR OPT.

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

- Optional Practical Training (OPT) is intended to provide hands on practical work experience in the form of *work authorization* to international students who are planning to seek employment in their field of study.

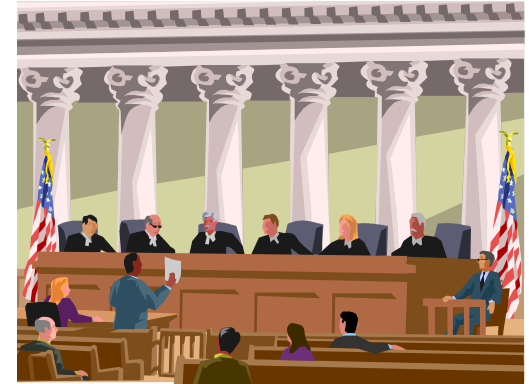


Why do OPT? It's an important bridge.

- Your career in the US after graduation should ALWAYS start with Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT ideally acts as a bridge between your studies and the workplace.
- It allows you to “get your foot in the door” with a US employer without any paperwork on their part: vitally important.
- It allows you to try more than one job if you wish.
- While in some cases it *may* be possible to proceed directly to H1B or even permanent residence without OPT, this is usually unadvisable, as the H1B could be denied, and PR almost always takes more than one year.

OPT HIGHLIGHTS

- OPT allows 12 months of full-time employment related to one's field of study after the completion of each degree program at a HIGHER LEVEL.
- A job offer is *not* required to apply for OPT.
- The employment may occur anywhere in the U.S.
- Employment must be directly related to major field of study
- Changing employers is allowed; no special permission is needed from the USCIS.
- New unemployment restrictions are in effect
- Student must REPORT to ISSS all changes in employer and address. During the period of OPT, a student continues in F-1 status, since OPT is considered as part of the program of study.



Selecting your OPT dates



Important
DATE!

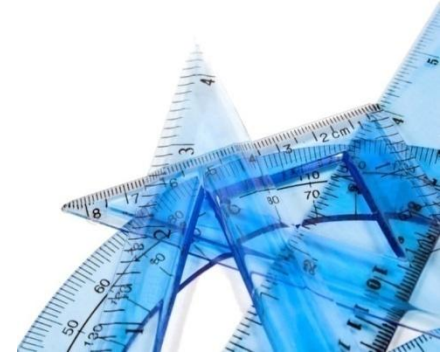
- Can apply *within the 90 days before completing your program or up to 60 days after completion.*
- Apply early. All OPT must end w/in 14 months of program end date
- Thus if you apply *after* completion, you may get less than one year OPT!

Selecting your OPT dates

- Graduate students may request OPT once all coursework is completed, you have petitioned to graduate and thesis/dissertation is remaining
- Employment will begin on the date requested, or the date of the authorization is adjudicated – whichever is later



17 Month STEM Extension – a good deal!

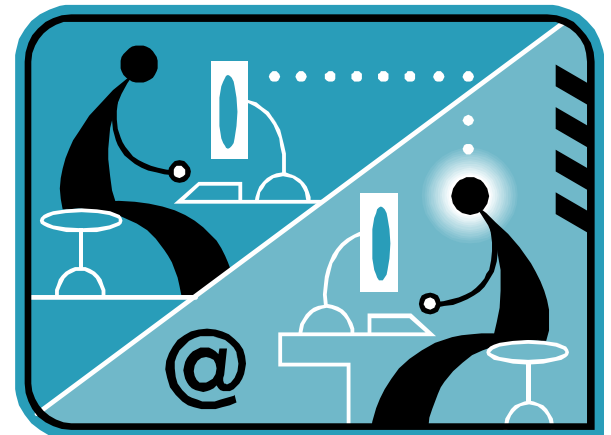


- An F-1 student who has completed a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in a STEM CIP that is approved by DHS for the 17-month extension and is currently engaged in post-completion OPT may apply for the 17-month extension if he or she has a job or job offer from an E-Verify employer."
 - Apply by filing Form I-765 **before** initial 12 months of OPT expires
 - » authorized to continue working 180 days while waiting for approval
 - Employer must be enrolled in E-verify
 - » See www.uscis.gov/E-Verify
 - » Many already enrolled, required by law in some states, but some may refuse, so discuss with employer

REPORTING TO ISSS WHILE IN OPT

- Within 10 days of any change, students in F1 status are required to report the following info to ISSS:
 1. Current address
 2. Legal Name Change
 3. Names of OPT employers, with start and end dates of employment
 4. Periods of unemployment

ISSS must report changes in SEVIS



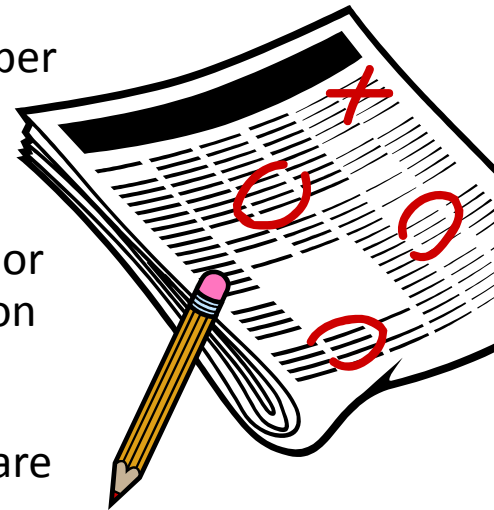
Reporting to ISSS, continued...

- Departure from the U.S. or the end of use of your OPT if earlier than the OPT end date
- Transfer to another US school (which will terminate the OPT)
- On-line OPT reporting available at http://www.fit.edu/iss/forms/opt_reporting.php



Periods of Unemployment

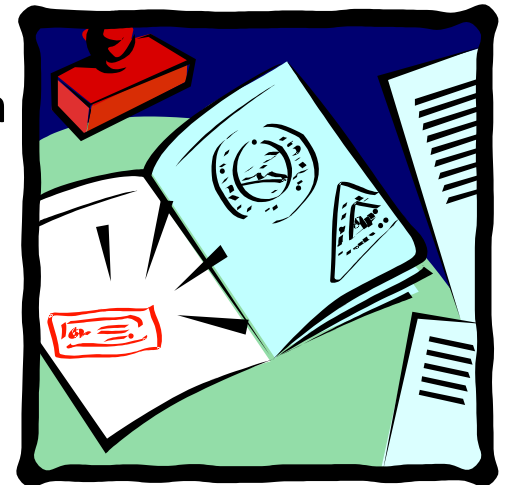
- Unemployment may lead to violation of status
 - Allowed 90 days unemployment during initial period of OPT
 - Those with STEM extension allowed cumulative total of 120 days of unemployment during initial and extension period
 - SEVP says paid or unpaid employment of at least 20 hours per week suffices, it may be with more than one employer, but unpaid does not suffice during STEM extension. Volunteer!
 - SEVP says self-employment, independent contractor work, or through agency or consulting firm are acceptable, but not on STEM
 - Time outside U.S. does not count as unemployment if you are employed before leaving U.S.



This is current guidance which can change, check with ISSS!

Other OPT CAVEATS

- Once you complete your degree, you cannot work on-campus or off-campus until you have the EAD in your possession.
- Once the OPT application is submitted to the USCIS, it is very difficult to change or cancel the application.
- It can take up to three months, sometimes longer, to receive your employment authorization card from DHS – and you cannot begin working until you have the card in your possession.
- You may only work during the timeframe shown on your EAD card.
- **Therefore, apply sooner rather than later!**



TRAVEL WHILE IN OPT



- It is **not** recommended you travel while your OPT **petition is pending** since you will not have a valid EAD
- If you do need to travel during your period of work authorization, be sure to re-enter the U.S. with:
 - Valid F1 visa
 - Your I-20 recommending OPT, signed for re-entry
 - Your EAD card
 - If possible, a letter from your employer verifying employment

Visa renewals while in OPT??

Students who need to apply for a new visa should consult ISSS prior to travel to discuss the visa application process and possible risks (generally not be a good idea.)



So, what are the steps involved to apply?

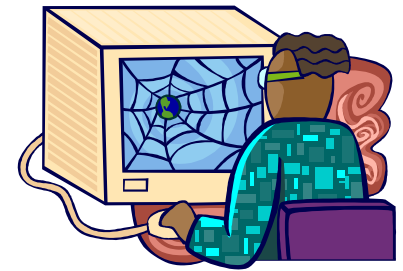
An application for OPT consists of four steps:

1. The student makes a request for OPT to the DSO
2. After determining eligibility, the DSO updates SEVIS with an OPT recommendation
3. The DSO prepares a Form I-20 with the OPT recommendation and requisite signatures
4. The student files a Form I-765 (with fee and other supporting documents) with USCIS.



The Form I-765 in support of post-completion OPT must be received by USCIS **no later than 30 days** after the DSO submits the OPT recommendation to SEVIS

Make an appointment to see an ISSS Advisor



**Bring your “Certificate of
Completion”**

Ph: 674-8053, iss@fit.edu
(Room 211 Keuper)

Still want more info on how to apply ?

<http://www.fit.edu/iss/employment/offcampus.php>

QUESTIONS????

