

For Those Graduating This Semester

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

This is an employment option for F-1 students who would like to have work experience directly related to their field of study. Students who are eligible can be authorized for up to 12 months total OPT per degree obtained. There are two classifications of OPT; pre-completion and post-completion.

Pre-completion can be used during a student's time before they graduate, and post-completion can begin immediately after graduation. If you have already completed 12 months of CPT, you are ineligible for OPT. Talk to your International Student Services Coordinator about your circumstances if that applies to you.

Not ready for OPT, but required to complete an internship on or off campus due to your major? Take a look at Curricular Practical Training (CPT).

Pre- completion:

- Work authorization for a period that will begin and end before the completion of the degree program
- Able to work part time (20 hours or less a week) while school is in session and full-time (more than 20 hours a week) during official academic breaks
- Pre-completion OPT time will deduct from post-completion OPT eligibility, at a rate of half time. For example, if you work part-time for 6 months, you have used up 3 months of your OPT.

Post- completion:

- Your OPT start date must be within 60 days of your program's completion date, which is typically the graduation date or the last day of classes. Please reach out to the International Student Services Coordinator to confirm this date (~add link to Holly's bio)

OPT Eligibility

1. Must have been enrolled in a full-time degree seeking program for one academic year
2. An official job offer is not required for application

3. One 12-month OPT per degree obtained
 - a. Degrees that are able to be obtained at SU:
 - i. Associates
 - ii. Bachelors
4. Are you a STEM major?

To Apply:

1. Make an appointment to meet with the International Student Services Coordinator (login required) (~link to TD appointment making) to discuss your OPT eligibility and options
2. Submit a Completed Application packed to the International Student Services Coordinator johnston@susqu.edu
 - i. This is to be completed by you and your academic advisor
 - ii. Your pre-completion OPT dates must begin and end before the completion of your degree program.
 - iii. Your post-completion OPT dates must start within 60 days of the completion of your program.
 - a. This packet includes:
 - a. Completed form I-765 (PDF)
(~<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf> – link that “PDF” goes to”)
 - b. All previous and current i-20’s including any from other universities
 - c. Valid passport (must be valid for at least 6 months in the future)
 - d. F-1 Visa
 - e. i-94 (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>)
 - f. Any Previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card, if applicable
3. The ISS Office will review your OPT application and issue a new i-20 with an OPT recommendation note if they find you suitable to participate in OPT
4. While your packet is being reviewed by the ISS Office please prepare 2 passport sized photos and a Cashier’s Check, Personal Check, or Money Order for \$410 payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security
5. Once your new i-20 is ready, your International Student Services Coordinator will contact you to pick it up. With the new i-20 you will send the entire packet to USCIS

6. USCIS must receive your application packet within 30 days of your new OPT i-20 issuance date. If it is not received within 30 days, OPT will be denied and your ability to appeal is null and void

STEM OPT Extension

If your degree will be in a major that qualifies as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), you're eligible for a 24-month extension of post-completion OPT.

STEM OPT Extension Eligibility:

1. Approved post-completion OPT authorization
 - a. NOT pre-completion OPT
2. Bachelor, master's or doctoral degree in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, or math) that appears on the DHS STEM-Designated Degree Program List
(<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf>)
3. Employment with an "E-Verify Employer" (<https://www.uscis.gov/e-verify/about-program/e-verify-employers-search-tool>)

To Apply:

1. Set up a meeting with your International Student Services Coordinator to discuss your eligibility and the application process (~Link to TD appointment set up)
2. You will need the following to apply:
 - a. Form I-983 (PDF)
(<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/i983.pdf>)
 - b. Form I-765 (PDF) (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf>)
 - c. Proof of STEM Degree (transcript or diploma)
(<https://mysu.susqu.edu/REGS/Documents/Transcript%20Request%20Form.pdf#search=transcript>)
 - d. Copy of i-20 with STEM OPT recommendation from ISS
 - i. Set up an appointment with your ISS Coordinator if it's not on your i-20
 - e. Copy of your valid passport
 - f. Copy of your F-1 Visa

- g. Copy of your most recent i-94
 - h. Copy of all your i-20's
 - i. Copy of previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Card
 - j. Two passport-sized photographs
 - k. Check or money order for \$410 made payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3. For some more information check out the Study in the States STEM OPT page (<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub>)

CPT

During summer or winter break you may work full-time in off-campus training programs that are "an integral part of an established curriculum" but must first obtain work authorization for Curricular Practical Training (CPT). Training must be related to your major.