



OPT and CPT

Optional Practical Training, OPT

Overview

OPT is an opportunity made available by USCIS for international students to gain up to 12 months (27 months in some circumstances) of practical work experience related to their field of study. Typically, OPT is authorized after completion of the student's degree, though in some instances, it can be granted pre-completion. Students granted OPT authorization are still considered F-1 visa holders, and must continue to keep their school updated with changes in address.

Eligibility

Students must have been enrolled in classes for at least one academic year prior to application. Work authorization must begin after all degree coursework has been completed. During post-completion OPT, the student must remain employed. If the student is unemployed for more than 90 days, cumulative, the student will be out of status and required to leave the US.

Process

USCIS checklist; http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt_checklist.pdf

- Fill out USCIS Form I-765 online. Handwritten form is not acceptable.
<http://www.uscis.gov>
- Fill out USCIS Form G-1145, if you would like notice by text or email of your approval
- Form I-94
- Photocopy of passport – photo page, any renewal pages and amendments
- Photocopy of visa
- Photocopies of ALL I-20s issued
- Obtain Two (2) passport photos. On the back of the photos, print name and SEVIS number with a pencil.
- Photocopies of any previous employment authorization documents
- A check or money order payable to Department of Homeland Security in the amount of \$410
- Email International Admissions to schedule an appointment to review your packet
- Mail your completed packet to USCIS via Certified and Return Receipt through the US Post Office (this will let you know when they have received your packet)

You may not start working until you have received your actual Employment Authorization Document from Homeland Security. While your OPT application is pending, you are considered in legal status. Be aware, you will need to apply for OPT 3 to 4 months prior to your completion of studies.

(Over)

International Enrollment and Services

Ingram Building Room 124C | Phone: 615 494-7667 | James.Shupe@mtsu.edu



OPT and CPT

Curricular Practical Training, CPT

Overview

CPT is a paid or unpaid training opportunity granted by US Immigration. It must be an integral part of the students program of study. To qualify for CPT, the training must be required of all students in the program of study, it must be required for a specific course, or it must be offered through cooperative agreements with the school. CPT must be taken prior to the completion of the student's degree. CPT may be full-time or part-time. If the CPT is full-time (greater than 20 hours per week), it will be considered against the student's OPT. If the CPT is part-time, it does not affect OPT.

Process

- Register for the course. Provide proof of registration.
- Obtain a letter from your Major Professor that the class or internship is mandatory for completion of the degree program, include the course number and the professor's approval of the employer.
- A letter from the employer. It must be on company letterhead, an original, signed by the hiring authority, state beginning and ending dates (which must be within the semester term dates), include a detailed job description, number of hours to work per week, and salary, if applicable.
- Email International Admissions for an appointment to review all of these documents.

You may not begin work until you have been approved by the International Admissions office, and have received an I-20 noting the CPT approval.