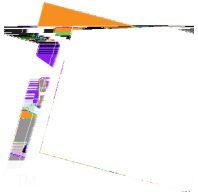
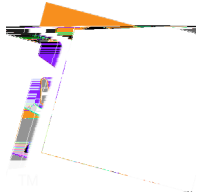
Optional Practical Training (OPT)



- What is OPT?
- OPT Facts
- STEM Extension OPT
- Applying for OPT
- OPT Reporting & Travel Requirements

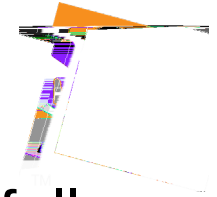
What is OPT?



- Optional practical training is temporary employment authorization by US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) that allows F-1 students to gain practical work experience (on- or off-campus) by applying their academic knowledge to a position directly related to their area of study.

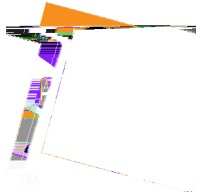
- Pre-Completion
- Post-Completion OPT: 12 Months
- Available to all majors
- Students in certain area of study may be eligible for a 24 month extension near the end of the 12 month period.

OPT Facts



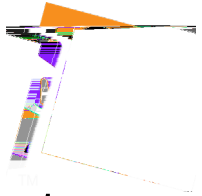
- To be eligible, you must have completed at least one full academic year of study (fall and spring semesters only)
- Post-completion OPT is granted to students who will work AFTER graduation/degree completion.
- You should apply for OPT BEFORE you graduate/finish coursework
- The earliest you can apply for post-completion OPT is 90 days before your graduation or completion date.
- **You do not need to have a job to apply for OPT**

OPT Facts, continued



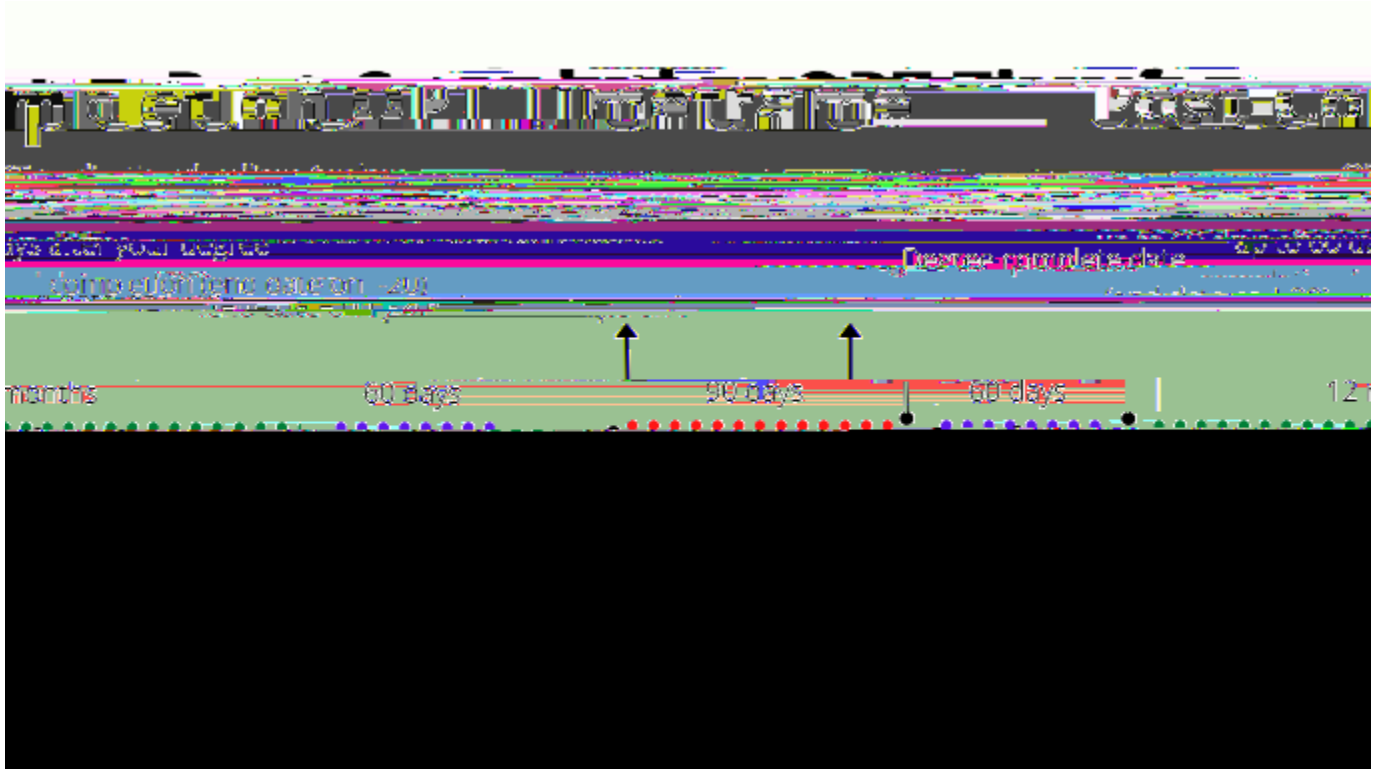
- Have not engaged in a full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for over 12 months at the same educational level.
- You are only eligible for 12 months of full-time OPT for each higher degree level earned. The 12 months begin with the start date on the EAD card.
- **MUST work in a position directly related to your field of study**
- You choose the date you wish to begin working.
- Start date MUST be within 60 days of graduation

OPT: Post-Completion, continued



- Can begin immediately after the program completion date but no later than two months (within 60 days), following program completion.
- Application must be received by USCIS within 60 days after program completion.
- If your OPT is approved you will be issued an EAD card, which you must have BEFORE you begin working.
- Employment must be full-time (20+ per week).
- May not exceed 90 aggregate days of unemployment

Post-completion OPT Time Frame



OPT 24 Month Extension

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