



Office of Visa Services
120 Alexander Street, 1st Floor
Princeton, New Jersey 08540-7102
T 609.258.1451
F 609.258.2142

Optional Practical Training Recommendation

To: Academic Advisors or Authorized Department Personnel

F-1 students are eligible to apply for permission to engage in employment for Optional Practical Training (OPT) as provided in regulations of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for F-1 students. OPT is employment in a job related to the student's field of study and is intended to enhance and supplement the formal, classroom education. Such employment must be recommended by the International Graduate Student Advisor and authorized by the USCIS. In order to be eligible, a student must have been in lawful immigration status and a full-time student for at least one academic year. Situations in which a student may apply are limited to:

- Full-time or part-time employment during annual vacation if the student is enrolled and intends to register for the next semester .
- Part-time employment (20 hours per week or fewer) while school is in session (**must be approved by Departmental Director of Graduate Studies and, if applicable, the student's dissertation advisors.** Please see Employment Policy as listed in the Graduate School Announcement). While school is in session, a student may only work a total of 20 hours per week. This means that a student may not hold an AI (Assistant in Instruction) or AR (Assistant in Research) in conjunction with OPT.
- Full-time employment after completion of course requirements but while working on the thesis (**for up to 12 months of ET/DCC status**).
- Full-time employment after completion of program. Completion of program is defined as follows:
 - The last day of the month in which a FPO occurs for students who defend their dissertation before December 31 in the Fall Term/April 30 in the Spring Term.
 - January 31 for students who defend after December 31 in the Fall Term.
 - June 30 for students who defend after April 30 in the Spring Term.

F-1 students are eligible for 12 months of OPT per each advanced degree program that they finish. **While a job offer is not required at the time of application, the student is required to be employed for at least 9 of 12 months.**

Students should be advised that OPT applications are taking from 8 to 12 weeks to process at the USCIS Service Center. Students may not start employment before they receive their work authorization. **Applications may be filed up to 90 days prior to a completion date and not later than 60 days after completion date. However, OPT start date must be no later than 60 days after the completion date.**

Before authorization of OPT can be granted, the Office of Visa Services must have a statement from the student's academic advisor indicating the date the student completed all degree requirements or the expected date of completion and a recommendation that the OPT be granted. The date of completion is not necessarily the end of the term or the graduation date but the date all the requirements for the degree are fulfilled.

Please complete the form on the reverse side and return it to the student, so that we may process the student's request. Should you have any questions, please contact Mladenka Tomasevic, the International Graduate Student Advisor, at 258-1445 or mtomasev@princeton.edu

Optional Practical Training Advisor Recommendation
Academic Advisors: Please complete one of the following sections

AFTER DEGREE

If the student is applying for OPT to commence after completion of course of study (FPO, all degree requirements):

Please complete this section for Ph.D. students only:

This is to certify that _____ (*student's name*) is expected to complete the Ph.D. program in the field of _____. The expected FPO date is _____ (*month/day/year*).

Please complete this section for Master's students only:

This is to certify that _____ (*student's name*) is expected to complete all requirements for the Master's degree in the field of _____ on _____ (*month/day/year*).

Printed Name of Academic Advisor or Authorized Personnel

Signature of Academic Advisor or Authorized Personnel

Telephone Number and /or E-mail Address

Date

AFTER ENROLLMENT ENDS

If the student is applying for OPT to commence after completion of all coursework while working on Thesis/ and after period of regular enrollment, plus DCE, OR when status is changed to ET/DCC:

All coursework for the Ph.D. degree in the field of _____ was/will be completed by _____ (*month/day/year*) by _____ (*student's name*). **ET/DCC begins:** July 1 Sept. 1 February 1.

The student is expected to finish his/her program by _____ (*month/day/year*).

Printed Name of Academic Advisor or Authorized Personnel

Signature of Academic Advisor or Authorized Personnel

Telephone Number and /or E-mail Address

Date

VACATION AND PART-TIME DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR EMPLOYMENT

If the student is applying for OPT to commence during vacation (i.e., summer) or during the school year (part-time only):

I endorse _____ (*student's name*) request for : full-time OPT part-time OPT from _____ to _____ (*month/day/year*). With university support, you are eligible to work from June 1 to fall registration. Anticipated completion date of academic program _____.

Printed Name of Academic Advisor or Authorized Personnel

Signature of Academic Advisor or Authorized Personnel

Telephone Number and /or E-mail Address

Date