

International Services Office
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

BEFORE YOU APPLY

What is OPT?

Optional Practical Training (OPT) grants an eligible F-1 student an opportunity to work full-time for up to twelve months in the U.S. in a field that is related to their degree program at each degree level (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctor's).

How do I know if I am eligible?

In order to be eligible for OPT, a student must:

- Have maintained good F-1 status for **one academic year** (including one winter semester and one fall semester) in the degree program at Detroit Mercy.
- Have graduated or be eligible for graduation in current semester.
- Have not already participated in post-completion OPT or exceeded 12 months of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) at your current degree level.

When should I apply for OPT?

Your OPT application must be received by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) no earlier than 90 days before the semester end date and no later than 60 days after the semester end date.

Ways to Apply – Paper or Online Application

USCIS is allowing students to apply for OPT/STEM Extension online. You would create an account on their secure, encrypted website and you'll receive a receipt immediately with your case number versus waiting several weeks for it to arrive in the mail. Paper applications are still being accepted.

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USCIS PROCESSING TIME

Please allow a minimum of 90 days to receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) after USCIS receives your application. If you use the paper application process, you should receive a receipt notice in the mail within 2-3 weeks after submitting the petition. If you use the online application process, you should receive a receipt notice immediately. You can check your case status with your receipt number at www.uscis.gov.

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

Once you have been approved for post-completion OPT, you may only accrue up to 90 days of unemployment during approved OPT period. OPT employment must be part-time or full-time and related to your major field of study. If you accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment, you will be considered out of status.

TRAVEL

Once you've received your card and you decide to travel internationally, you must carry with you the following when you re-enter the U.S.: valid passport, valid F-1 visa, endorsed I-20 (with a travel signature no more than six months old), OPT card and an employment verification letter from your employer. Although you may have these items, you are not guaranteed re-entry.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

SEVP Portal

When your OPT is approved, you should receive an email inviting you to create an SEVP portal account. If you don't receive the email, please contact our office.

On that portal, you must update your **physical address** within 10 days and input your **employment information** as soon as you start an employment. *Failure to report employment may lead to termination of your F-1 status.*

Warning: Please keep a complete history of your employment on the portal. Only add a new employer when you have new employment and DO NOT delete any previous employment information.

Additionally, you should contact our office if you:

- Depart the U.S. and do not plan to return as F-1
- Change name and/or immigration status i.e. H1B, Permanent Residency
- Change your employer or lose your job
- Change of physical residential address

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**ONLINE APPLICATION
PROCESS**

1. Ensure that you have zero holds or monies owed to your Titan student account.
2. Complete *Academic Clearance Form*.
3. *OPT Agreement* completed and signed and signed.
4. Collect the following documents:
 - ☐ Valid passport (at least six months into the future)
 - ☐ Most recent I-94 <http://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>
 - ☐ One (1) 2x2 passport style pictures on a white background taken within the last 3 months.
 - ☐ All previous I-20's with CPT and/or OPT authorization
 - ☐ Photocopies of any previous employment authorization documents (EAD cards)
5. Scan and email documents to have ISO review the documents in # 4.
6. ISO will issue your OPT recommendation I-20, needed for you to submit with your application
7. Create an account on https://myaccount.uscis.gov/users/sign_up
 - a. Form: I-765; code: (c)(3)(B)
8. Complete the online application.
9. Double-check application to make sure all fields are complete.
 - ☐ Upload the documents in #3 (must be JPG, JPEG or PNG).
10. Pay **\$470.00** application fee on <https://www.pay.gov/public/home>
11. E-mail ISO a copy of your receipt number (you will receive one immediately after submitting your completed online application).



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OPT Agreement

Summer 2024 – choose a date between 08/11-10/9

Requested OPT Start Date: _____ Requested OPT End Date: _____

I agree and will comply with the following:

1. To report to ISO, as soon as possible, if I fail to graduate.
2. If authorized for post-completion OPT, you may work part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid.
3. Not to start any employment until I receive the EAD card AND the approved OPT period has started.
4. To update my physical address and employment information on the SEVP portal within 10 days of the change.
5. To report any changes in name and/or visa status i.e. H1B, Permanent Residency (green card), etc.
6. To report if I depart from the U.S. and do not plan to return as F-1.
7. To work only at a job(s) that relate directly to my field of study.
8. To obtain a signature from my International Student Advisor on my I-20 before traveling outside the country. I understand that the travel signature is only valid for six months.
9. NOT to pursue another program or degree full-time while on OPT.
10. To track the days of unemployment I accumulate. I should not accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment. Accumulation of more than 90 days of unemployment will make me out of status.
11. That within 60 days after my OPT ends, I will inform ISO if I choose to do one of the following: leave the country, complete the transfer process to another school, start a new program or change to a different immigration status.
12. That “time worked” can either be working/volunteering in my field of study for part-time (≤ 20 hours/week) or full-time (≥ 20 hours/week) during Post-Completion OPT.
13. To report a change in employment (new job or termination of job) within 10 days of change/end in employment.

Print Name

Signature

Date