



OFFICE OF
MULTICULTURAL
AFFAIRS

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Definition

- Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an employment option available to F-1 students for employment *directly related to the major area of study*.
 - 12 month period of OPT per higher degree level.
 - 17 month STEM Extension OPT maybe possible for some students.
- The 12 month OPT period can be divided into 2 types, Pre-Completion and Post-Completion.
 - Pre-Completion OPT is before degree completion and typically used for summer internships if you do not qualify for CPT
 - Post-Completion OPT is after degree completion

Eligibility

- HAVE maintained legal F-1 status for one full academic year.
- NOT have used full-time CPT for 12 months or more.

Standard OPT Hours and Limitations

- Employment must be directly related to your academic major and be commensurate with your educational level
- Standard OPT time per degree level is 12 months
 - the 12-month allotment per degree level may be divided into various segments (Pre-Completion or Post-Completion OPT)
- Pre-Completion OPT
- Post-Completion OPT
 - Used after degree program completion
 - start date must fall within 60 days of program completion (this is not the same date as the graduation ceremony if you are completing in December)
- Unemployment Limit of 90 days starting from OPT start date
- During Post-Completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment.

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- Students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any Standard Post-Completion OPT.



- For Post-Completion OPT, the employment does NOT have to be paid employment as long as there is no violation of labor laws, but must be at least 20 hours a week.
 - interning or volunteering in a position directly related to the academic field
 - work for hire (contractual relationship)
 - employment through an agency

Recommended Travel & OPT

- Before the expiration of your I-20, with I-20 travel signature
- With EAD, signed I-20 for travel, valid visa, passport, letter from employer.

Not Recommended Travel

- The period after your I-20 has expired and before you receive the approved EAD.
- If your F-1 visa has expired and you will need to apply for a new one.
- While STEM Extension is pending, you should not travel outside the US

While you are on OPT you are still considered an F-1 Manchester University student.

Therefore you must:

- ▶ Notify the Office of Multicultural Affairs of any address change via the e-form on
- ▶ Have your I-20 signed for travel by our office
- ▶ Report employment information (name, address, interruption of employment) and changes to employment to the Office of Multicultural Affairs

(STEM Extension students must complete this form every 6 months.)