



CPT versus OPT

F-1 Practical Training Authorization Comparison Chart

Revised: 1/21/2019

	Curricular Practical Training (CPT)	Optional Practical Training (OPT)
Eligibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must have been enrolled full-time for at least one full academic year. 2. Must currently be in valid F-1 status. 3. Degree-seeking students only. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must have been enrolled full-time for at least one full academic year. 2. Must currently be in valid F-1 status. 3. Degree-seeking students only.
Types	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Required by your program: UW-Madison Guide requirement for all students in your program. 2. Optional or elective of your degree program: integral part of the established curriculum. Course enrollment required. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-completion: authorization to begin and end before you complete your degree. 2. Post-completion: authorization to begin after you complete your degree.
Enrollment Requirement	<p>Full-time enrollment is required each fall and spring semester.</p> <p>In most cases, specific course enrollment is required during the semester that you request CPT authorization.</p>	<p>Full-time enrollment is required each fall and spring semester for pre-OPT.</p> <p>No specific course enrollment requirement for OPT authorization.</p>
Training Position Offer	<p>Offer required.</p> <p>Position must be directly related to your major listed on your I-20.</p>	<p>Offer not required.</p> <p>Position must be directly related to your major listed on your I-20.</p>
Part-time (20 hr/wk or less) Full-time (over 20 hr/wk)	<p>Allowed during any semester, as long as you continue to be enrolled full-time during each fall and spring semester.</p> <p>You must prioritize your studies!</p>	<p>Pre-completion: typically part-time, unless you're requesting summer pre-OPT</p> <p>Post-completion: must be full-time</p>
Application Fee	\$0	\$410 per application
Authorization Granted By	<p>International Student Services (ISS)</p> <p>Allow up to 15 business days for processing</p>	<p>U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)</p> <p>Allow 3-5 months for processing</p>
Proof of Authorization	New I-20 with authorization dates, location, and employer on page 2.	Employment Authorization Document (EAD card)
Effect on Other Training Authorizations	If you accumulate 365+ days of full-time CPT, you are not eligible for post-completion OPT at the same degree level.	Any pre-completion OPT used is subtracted from your post-completion OPT authorization.
Time Limits	You may be authorized multiple times per degree level.	12 months per degree level as long as you move up in degree levels.