Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 Students

Information in this section relates to standard Optional Practical Training (OPT). The following sections describe in detail the requirements for each level of the application process:

- **Applying for Optional Practical Training** [1]
  - OPT Online Certification Course [2]
  - OPT Online Review Course [3]
- **After You Have Applied for Optional Practical Training** [4]
- **While You Are On Optional Practical Training** [5]
- **OPT STEM Extension** [6]
- **CAP GAP** [7]

The following information is a short description and general criteria to consider before applying for OPT.

**Definition**

OPT is defined in the Federal Regulations as temporary employment directly related to a student's field of study. During OPT, a student remains in F-1 status. The end result of the OPT request process is an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) issued by United States Citizenship and Immigrations Services (USCIS).

**Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for OPT, the student must:

- Be in legal F-1 immigration status
- Be a full-time student for at least one academic year
- Have U-M approved health insurance

*Note*: Post-completion OPT applications are typically denied by USCIS if the Level of Education indicated in item #4 on the I-20 is “non-degree.”

**Maximum Length**

- The standard OPT period is a cumulative maximum of 12 months.
- Part-time OPT is deducted from the 12-month limit at 50%.
- An F-1 may become eligible for another 12 months of OPT if he/she advances to a higher educational level.
Some students may be eligible for an extension of their OPT based on a STEM degree [6].