

## Optional Practical Training (OPT) Work Authorization for F-1 Students

### The Regulations: [8 C.F.R. 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(A)]

Optional Practical Training (OPT) provides an opportunity for F-1 students to gain up to one year of experience in their field of study during the following time periods:

- ❖ During summer break and at other times when school is not in session;
- ❖ While school is in session (if OPT does not exceed 20 hours per week);
- ❖ After completing the program of study (Students who have completed all coursework and are writing a thesis or dissertation may apply for full-time OPT and work while enrolled and completing the thesis or dissertation.)

### Eligibility:

- ❖ Must be an F-1 student who has been enrolled full-time for at least one academic year (9 months).
- ❖ Must be graduating with a degree from MSU or engaged in a full-time degree program.
- ❖ Proposed employment must be directly related to the student's area of study.
- ❖ Must not have been granted full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for more than one year.
- ❖ Must not have been granted more than 12 months of full-time OPT at the same or higher degree level.

### When to Apply & Deadlines:

- ❖ An F1 student may apply for post-completion OPT up to **90** days before the student's program end date and up to **60** days after his or her program end date. In addition, the student's OPT application must reach USCIS no later than **30** days after his or her OPT I-20 been issued.
- ❖ The completion of studies date does not always correspond with the date the I-20 expires. Completion of studies is defined as the last day of the term in which you complete the courses required for the degree, or if you are defending a thesis or dissertation, the last day of the term in which you defend.
  - **For students defending between terms:** The defense date is the completion of studies date.
  - **For students completing in the summer:** If you complete all courses required for the degree in Summer I, the last day of this term is the completion date. If you complete all courses required for the degree in Summer II, the last day of this term is the completion date.
  - If a defense is required, in either Summer I or Summer II, the completion of studies date will be the last day of Summer II, and enrollment in one of the summer terms is required.
- ❖ *Early application is recommended to avoid processing delays.*
- ❖ For Pre-completion OPT during the school year (part-time) or summer vacation, there is no deadline to apply. Students are encouraged to apply early to allow for lengthy processing times.

**On-campus student employment must end no later than the completion of studies date.**

**Application Checklist** – *Your OPT application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date your OPT I-20 was created.*

- OPT** eligibility form (attached).
- Student Reporting Requirements during OPT period**
- I-765 Form\*** (attached). Complete numbers 1-15. Sign at the bottom.
- G-1145 E-Notification Form** (attached). Optional if you want to receive email or text notifications of your application status from USCIS.
- 2 passport photographs.** Photos should be taken **within 30 days of application.** *Write name and I-94 number lightly in pencil on the back.*
- Photocopies** of your **I-94** (front and back), **passport** (picture identification, expiration date, date of last entry stamp) **visa**, and any **EAD** previously issued to you. (You must make your own copies to mail to USCIS; IS cannot do this.)
- Photocopies of all previous I-20s.** (You must make your own copies to mail to USCIS; IS cannot do this.)
- Check for \$380** made payable to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security.** Cash is not acceptable.