

WHY HIRE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FOR A JOB?

What's OPT?

OPT, or optional practical training, is work authorization recommended by a F-1 student's University and approved by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS-USCIS). F-1 students authorized for OPT are issued an "EAD" (Employment Authorization Document) from DHS.

How long can a student work on OPT?

Students on an authorized OPT period can engage in training directly related to their major and typically will be able to work for 12 months. A student with a STEM degree may be able to work up to 36 months if specific requirements are met.

How long does it take for the student to get OPT?

Processing times for DHS-USCIS vary but tend to take between 1.5 to 3 months. Post-completion OPT employment (i.e., after a student graduates) may only begin after a student completes their course of study in their respective degree and has the EAD in hand.

Is there a cost to support the student's OPT?

No, the employer incurs no costs for the OPT. The student is responsible for the filing fee with DHS-USCIS.

What are the requirements for an employer to sponsor OPT?

Employers do not have any additional reporting requirements for students on Post-Completion OPT.

What are the additional requirements to sponsor STEM OPT?

Students with STEM degrees may be eligible for an additional 24 months of employment authorization. STEM OPT does have some requirements for employers, including helping a student complete and maintain an I-983 training plan, reporting an end in employment, and the employer must be enrolled in E-Verify.

To learn more about the STEM OPT Extension, check out this link. It covers fields such as economics, psychology, and many others.
<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/stemList2024.pdf>

What happens after OPT ends for a student?

For a student to continue working after OPT ends, they must have some other form of U.S. work authorization, such as an employment-sponsored visa like an H1-B. Some employers sponsor work visas beyond an OPT, but this is not required. Alternatively, employers with multi-national offices can consider transferring successful employees to branches outside the U.S.