



# **Work Authorization for International Students**

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# Work Authorization: CPT, OPT, STEM OPT

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## CPT

Curricular Practical Training is a type of practical training available for F-1 students when the training is integral to your major and is required by the program.

You can work part time during the semester, and can do full time during the school break.

CPT authorization is required for unpaid internships as well.

## When am I eligible?

You are eligible for CPT after completing two semesters of study as a full time student.

\*A Required Work Experience (MGMT 500) during summer between the first and second year of enrollment in the degree program.

## When should I apply?

As early as possible, at least one week before your internship start date.

## OPT

Optional Practical Training is a type of employment authorization available for F-1 students.

OPT can be used before the program end date (pre-completion) and after the program ends (post-completion).

## When am I eligible?

You are eligible for OPT after completing two semesters of study as a full time student.

## When should I apply?

Post-completion OPT:  
The earliest date you can submit your application to the USCIS is 90 days before the program end date. You should make sure you submit it no later than 60 days after the program ends.

Pre-completion OPT:  
You should apply at least 90 days before your employment starts. Pre-completion OPT must end no later than the program end date.

# CPT Authorization Timeline

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## Where to start?

- Complete the Canvas course on CPT.
- Attend one of the CPT workshop.
- Check the CPT Application Form.

## What to prepare?

- Check with department for degree or course requirement for internship.
- Receive internship offer letter which contains all the required information.

## What to submit to OISS?

- CPT Application Form, signed by academic advisor/program director.
- Offer Letter.
- Printout of the program requirement or course registration.

## How long to wait?

1 – 2 weeks.

- Normal processing time is 1 week. Expect processing time to be 2 weeks during peak request times such as March-May and October-December.
- Incomplete application or missing information in the offer letter may delay the approval process.

## What happens next?

- OISS processes CPT application, issues a new I-20 with CPT authorization, and emails student when I-20 is ready

## What is next?

- Receive I-20 with CPT authorization. Apply for SSN, if applicable.
- Start work on CPT start date, and end employment on CPT end date.
- Complete academic requirements and receive grades, if applicable.

# OPT Authorization Timeline

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## Where to start?

- Complete the Canvas course on OPT.
- Attend one of the OPT workshop.
- Check the OPT Application Form.

## When to apply?

- Post-completion OPT: The earliest date you can submit your application to the USCIS is 90 days before the program end date. You should make sure you submit it no later than 60 days after the program ends.
- Pre-completion OPT: You should apply at least 90 days before your employment starts. Pre-completion OPT must end no later than the program end date.

## What to submit to OISS?

- OPT online submission form.
- OPT Faculty Advisor Form, signed by academic advisor/program director.
- Form I-765.
- Photocopy of the most recent I-94.

## How long to wait for OISS?

- 1 – 2 weeks.
- Attend the OPT workshop and complete the Canvas training course to make sure you submit a well prepared application. It will expedite processing of your OPT I-20.

## What happens next?

- OISS processes OPT application, issues a new I-20, and emails student when I-20 is ready.
- Schedule and attend an OPT Pick Up appointment with OISS.
- Submit OPT application to USCIS online or by mail.

## How long to wait for USCIS?

- 3 – 5 months. You should receive your EAD card in mail to start employment.

<https://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork>

# STEM OPT Authorization Timeline

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## Where to start?

- Review the STEM OPT Tutorial & FAQs.
- Check if SEVP Portal information is accurate.
- Check the forms I-765 & I-983

## When to apply?

- The earliest date you can submit your application to the USCIS is 90 days before your OPT end date. You should make sure you submit it before your OPT ends.

## What to submit to OISS?

- Student Statement of Understanding.
- Form I-765.
- Form I-983.
- Photocopy of the most recent I-94.
- Proof of payment of \$500 Rice STEM OPT administrative fee.

## How long to wait for OISS?

1 – 2 weeks.

- Review the STEM OPT Tutorial and Tips for Filling Out I-765 to make sure you submit a well prepared application. It will expedite processing of your STEM OPT I-20.

## What happens next?

- OISS processes STEM OPT application, issues a new I-20, and emails student when I-20 is ready.
- Assemble and submit STEM OPT application to USCIS online or by mail.

## How long to wait for USCIS?

3 – 5 months.

- If STEM OPT EAD card is not received by the start of the STEM OPT, you are allowed to continue employment for up to 180 days.





# Questions?

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