

OPT options

Option	Requirements	Pros	Cons	Costs	Timing
Pre-completion OPT during summer vacation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job offer recommended before applying • Carry approved student medical insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides part-time or full-time off-campus employment in summer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses part of 12- month OPT allotment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USCIS application fee required with every OPT application (\$380 after 11/15/10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can apply up to 90 days before job starts
Pre-completion OPT while school is in session (prior to completing all course work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job offer recommended before applying • Academic dept. approval required • Carry approved student medical insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides part-time off-campus employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could use on campus employment instead • Limited to working 20 hours per week • Uses part of 12- month OPT allotment • Must be enrolled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USCIS application fee required with every OPT application (\$380 after 11/15/10) • Tuition & fees for semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can apply up to 120 days before job starts
Pre-completion OPT after completion of all course work except thesis or dissertation and ETD submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job offer recommended before applying. • Academic department approval required • Carry approved student medical insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides full-time off-campus employment. • Period(s) of unemployment not counted • May request extension of academic program if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cap gap extension • No 17 month STEM extension • Uses part or all of 12-month OPT allotment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USCIS application fee required with every OPT application (\$380 after 11/15/10) • If enrolled for 3 credit hours in order to defend, pay tuition and fees for 3 hours • If enrolled for 1-credit defending status, pay defending status fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can apply up to 120 days before job starts • Apply in a timely manner because OPT must start on or before the beginning of the semester • Not an option after the semester has begun
Post-completion OPT after program end date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No job offer required to apply • Academic recommendation required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides full-time off-campus employment • Cap gap extension option • 17 month STEM extension possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periods of unemployment are counted - maximum 90 days allowed during 12 month period. • No program extensions available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USCIS application fee required with every OPT application (\$380 after 11/15/10) <p>Enrollment may be required during the term of application for OPT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defending Student Status fee OR • 3 credit hours tuition and fees OR • Full time hours tuition and fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply no more than 90 days before program end date • Must apply before end of 60 day grace period • OPT must start within 60 days of program completion date regardless of when application is filed