

## ***CPT vs. OPT at a Glance***

<b>Curricular Practical Training (CPT)</b>	<b>Optional Practical Training (OPT)</b>
Must have been lawfully enrolled as a full-time student for at least one academic year to be eligible	Must have been lawfully enrolled as a full-time student for at least one academic year to be eligible
May only be used <u>before</u> completing one's studies	May be used during one's studies (Pre-Completion OPT) and after completing one's studies (Post-Completion OPT)
Employment or experience must be "integral to the established curriculum" of the degree program	Employment must be directly related to one's major field of study
Student must be registered for a course corresponding to the employment or experience	No course registration required
Semester-specific--CPT is only authorized on a semester basis (Ex. fall, spring or summer CPT)	Not semester-specific
Student can work either part-time (20 hours per week or less) when school is in session or full-time during winter and summer break.  <i>Note: Only students who are working solely on their thesis/dissertation or final project may apply for full-time CPT during the fall or spring semester.</i>	Pre-Completion OPT may be part-time (20 hours per week) when school is in session, full-time during school breaks (winter or summer) or full-time (when working on one's thesis/dissertation).  Post-Completion OPT may be authorized for full-time employment.
12 months of full-time CPT eliminates eligibility for OPT. Part-time CPT employment does <b>not</b> affect eligibility for OPT.	Any periods of Pre-Completion OPT, whether part- or full-time, are deducted from the total 12-month OPT period.
Employer-specific—Student can only work for the employer listed on the student's I-20 and in SEVIS	Not employer-specific—Student can work for any employer as long as the position is related to his/her field of study
ISSS can authorize CPT by issuing a new I-20 with CPT recommendation.	ISSS and USCIS must authorize OPT. ISSS issues new I-20 with OPT recommendation. USCIS then issues Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
Processing time is 5-7 business days.	Processing times vary, but are generally 1-3 months.

Employment is only permitted during the dates in the CPT recommendation on the student's I-20 and in SEVIS.	Employment is only permitted during the validity dates on the EAD card.
Student must pay for the CPT-required course	USCIS requires a \$340 application fee