

F-1 OPT & J-1 AT

Foreign students in F-1 status are generally eligible for a period of Optional Practical Training (OPT) prior to and upon graduation. Recent graduates who did not already use up their OPT or are ineligible for other reasons, will normally be eligible for a period of 12 months of OPT. Graduates who obtained a degree in a STEM field (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) are eligible for an additional period of 24 months of OPT for a total of 36 months. Individuals who are eligible for post-completion OPT must apply to USCIS to obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Once the EAD is received and the start date on the card has been reached, the individual can then work.

Foreign students in J-1 status are generally eligible for a period of 18 months of Academic Training (AT) upon graduation. Individuals who earned a PhD are eligible for an additional period of 18 months of AT. Individuals who are working on the basis of AT do not need an EAD (as is a requirement for individuals on OPT).

Individuals interested in applying for OPT or obtaining AT employment authorization should contact their international student adviser at the institution where they obtained their degree. The UM International Center cannot assist with the AT and OPT applications for non-UM students. Only the adviser at that institution will be able to assist with the required (application) procedures.

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