Practical training provides F-1 international students with experience in their field of study during or upon completion of a program in the United States. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) authorizes some forms of practical training.

**Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 Students:**
Form of training which directly relates to a student’s program of study and can take place during their program of study (precompletion) or after finishing their program of study (post-completion).

**Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for F-1 Students:**
Alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education or other type of required practicum that a sponsoring employer offers through agreements with a student’s college, university, seminary or conservatory.

**STEM OPT for F-1 Students:**
24-month extension of post-completion OPT for qualifying students with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) degrees.

### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>When It Occurs</th>
<th>Length Requirements</th>
<th>Employer Requirements</th>
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</table>
| **OPT**         | Pre-completion OPT: Occurs before a student’s program end date.  
Post-completion OPT: Occurs after a student’s program end date, or after completion of all course requirements. | Pre-completion OPT: Up to 12 months; eligible for an additional 12 months when a student changes to a higher education level.  
Post-completion OPT: Up to 12 months; periods of pre-completion OPT will be deducted from the overall 12-month allotment. | Student can work for any employer, but the training must directly relate to the student’s major course of study. |
| **STEM OPT**    | Occurs after regular post-completion OPT.           | 24 months; students can participate in two separate STEM OPT extensions under certain circumstances. Student may have multiple, concurrent employers. Periods of STEM OPT authorization cannot overlap. | Student must work a minimum of 20 hours per week. Employer must be enrolled with E-Verify. |
| **CPT**         | Occurs before a student’s program end date.         | No length requirement; one year or more of full-time CPT impacts eligibility for OPT.  
Student can have more than one CPT authorization at the same time. | Employment must be offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school. |

For more information, visit the [Training Opportunities in the United States](https://www.StudyintheStates.dhs.gov) page.