

8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f)(10) – Students in colleges, universities, seminaries, conservatories, academic high schools, elementary schools, other academic institutions, and in language training programs

(10) Practical training. Practical training may be authorized to an F-1 student who has been lawfully enrolled on a full time basis, in a Service-approved college, university, conservatory, or seminary for one full academic year. This provision also includes students who, during their course of study, were enrolled in a study abroad program, if the student had spent at least one full academic term enrolled in a full course of study in the United States prior to studying abroad. A student may be authorized 12 months of practical training, and becomes eligible for another 12 months of practical training when he or she changes to a higher educational level. Students in English language training programs are ineligible for practical training. An eligible student may request employment authorization for practical training in a position that is directly related to his or her major area of study. There are two types of practical training available: (Introductory text revised effective 1/1/03; 67 FR 76256)

(i) Curricular practical training programs. An F-1 student may be authorized by the DSO to participate in a curricular practical training program that is an integral part of an established curriculum. Curricular practical training is defined to be alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school. Students who have received one year or more of full time curricular practical training are ineligible for post-completion academic training. Exceptions to the one academic year requirement are provided for students enrolled in graduate studies that require immediate participation in curricular practical training. A request for authorization for curricular practical training must be made to the DSO. A student may begin curricular practical training only after receiving his or her Form I-20 with the DSO endorsement. (Revised effective 1/1/03; 67 FR 76256)

(A) Non-SEVIS process. A student must request authorization for curricular practical training using Form I-538. Upon approving the request for authorization, the DSO shall: certify Form I-538 and send the form to the Service's data processing center; endorse the student's Form I-20 ID with "full-time (or part-time) curricular practical training authorized for (employer) at (location) from (date) to (date)"; and sign and date the Form I-20ID before returning it to the student.

(B) SEVIS process. To grant authorization for a student to engage in curricular practical training, a DSO at a SEVIS school will update the student's record in SEVIS as being authorized for curricular practical training that is directly related to the student's major area of study. The DSO will indicate whether the training is full-time or part-time, the employer and location, and the employment start and end date. The DSO will then print a copy of the employment page of the SEVIS Form I-20 indicating that curricular practical training has been approved. The DSO must sign, date, and return the SEVIS Form I-20 to the student prior to the student's commencement of employment.

(ii) Optional practical training--

(A) Consistent with the application and approval process in paragraph (f)(11) of this section, a student may apply to USCIS for authorization for temporary employment for optional practical training directly related to the student's major area of study. The student may not begin optional practical training until the date indicated on his or her employment authorization document, Form I-766. A student may be granted authorization to engage in temporary employment for optional practical training: (Paragraph (f) (10(ii)(A) revised 4/8/08; 73 FR 18944) (Paragraph (f)(10)(ii)(A) revised effective 1/1/03; 67 FR 76256)

(1) During the student's annual vacation and at other times when school is not in session, if the student is currently enrolled, and is eligible for registration and intends to register for the next term or session;

(2) While school is in session, provided that practical training does not exceed 20 hours a week while school is in session; or

(3) After completion of the course of study, or, for a student in a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree program, after completion of all course requirements for the degree (excluding thesis or equivalent). Continued enrollment, for the school's administrative purposes, after all requirements for the degree have been met does not preclude eligibility for optional practical training. A student must complete all practical training within a 14-month period following the completion of study, except that a 17- month extension pursuant to paragraph (f)(10)(ii)(C) of this section does not need to be completed within such 14-month period.

(B) Termination of practical training. Authorization to engage in optional practical training employment is automatically terminated when the student transfers to another school or begins study at another educational level. (Revised effective 1/1/03; 67 FR 76256)

(C) 17-month extension of post-completion OPT for students with a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree. Consistent with paragraph (f)(11)(i)(C) of this section, a qualified student may apply for an extension of OPT while in a valid period of post-completion OPT. The extension will be for an additional 17 months, for a maximum of 29 months of OPT, if all of the following requirements are met. (Revised 4/8/08; 73 FR 18944)

(1) The student has not previously received a 17-month OPT extension after earning a STEM degree.

(2) The degree that was the basis for the student's current period of OPT is a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in one of the degree programs on the current STEM Designated Degree Program List, published on the SEVP Web site at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis>.

(3) The student's employer is registered in the E-Verify program, as evidenced by either a valid E-Verify company identification number or, if the employer is using a designated agent to perform the E-Verify queries, a valid E-Verify client company identification number, and the employer is a participant in good standing in the E-Verify program, as determined by USCIS.

(4) The employer agrees to report the termination or departure of an OPT employee to the DSO at the student's school or through any other means or process identified by DHS if the termination or departure is prior to end of the authorized period of OPT. Such reporting must be

made within 48 hours of the event. An employer shall consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left the employment or if the student has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the consent of the employer, whichever occurs earlier.

(D) Action of the DSO-Non SEVIS schools . In making a recommendation for practical training, a designated school official must: (Heading revised effective 1/1/03; 67 FR 76256.)

(1) Certify on Form I-538 that the proposed employment is directly related to the student's major area of study and commensurate with the student's educational level;

(2) Endorse and date the student's Form I-20 ID to show that practical training in the student's major field of study is recommended "full-time (or part-time) from (date) to (date)"; and

(3) Return to the student the Form I-20 ID and send to the Service data processing center the school certification on Form I-538.

(E) Periods of unemployment during post-completion OPT . During post-completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment. Students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any post-completion OPT carried out under the initial post-completion OPT authorization. Students granted a 17-month OPT extension may not accrue an aggregate of more than 120 days of unemployment during the total OPT period comprising any post-completion OPT carried out under the initial post-completion OPT authorization and the subsequent 17-month extension period. (Revised 4/8/08; 73 FR 18944) (Added effective 1/1/03; 67 FR 76256)

<http://www.uscis.gov/ilink/docView/SLB/HTML/SLB/0-0-0-1/0-0-0-11261/0-0-0-17197/0-0-0-17800.html> (Accessed 10/12/2012)