

Spelman College
Gordon-Zeto Center for Global Education
350 Spelman Lane SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30314
404.270.5681

CPT and OPT



Table of Contents

1. CPT and OPT similarities
2. Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Overview and Requirements
3. Optional Practical Training (OPT) Overview and Requirements
4. “Which is it?”
5. Q & A
6. Session Evaluation

CPT and OPT

- Both CPT and OPT require that the proposed employment be related to your field of study (major)
- Both CPT and OPT do not allow you to begin employment prior to completing the first academic year (unless required of the degree)
- Both CPT and OPT require you to have received the authorization to work prior to beginning employment

CPT

CPT authorization requires a job offer

Can only be authorized for:

- Course credit,
- directly related to courses already taken and recommended by academic advisor,
- or an internship fulfillment required to complete a program of study

CPT is only issued prior to graduation (while in enrolled full-time in a program of study)
Part-time and Full-time CPT, full time for more

CPT is authorized by ISSC on page 3 of I-20

CPT application must be signed by your academic advisor

CPT Video

OPT

OPT authorization does not require a job offer

Receive 12 months of OPT per degree level

You can use OPT during or after a program of study (Pre- and Post Completion)

OPT allows work with ANY employer based on student's field of studies

- Can change employers at will
- Can be unemployed up to 3 months total (aggregate)

OPT is authorized by USCIS (costs \$380.00) and a decision can take up to 90 days

If approved, a work permit called an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card is sent

[OPT video](#)

Which is it?

Tysha is graduating in May with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. The graduate program that she wants to enter requires lab experience at a professional level. She has decided that she would like to work for a year before applying to her dream program.

Tysha should apply for _____.

‘Dimeji is a sophomore Communications major. His major requires that he take an internship off-campus. ‘Dimeji found a great opportunity with a local news station, it’s even paid!

‘Dimeji should apply for _____.

Chelsi is in her first semester of graduate Nursing school. The program requires that she complete clinical hours in her first semester. She must rotate several hospitals for one year part-time. The work is paid.

Chelsi should apply for _____.

Question and Answer