



Optional Practical Training (OPT)

OPT is considered temporary employment that is directly related to the student's major field of study. It allows students to gain practical experience either while in school (pre-completion OPT) or after program completion (post-completion OPT). Students may apply to USCIS for authorization of temporary employment for optional practical training. The AAU International Student Office will assist students with the application and issuing the appropriate OPT recommendation in SEVIS. Students may not begin optional practical training until the date indicated on the Employment Authorization Documents (EAD/Form I-766).

Conditions and Limitations

1. Students must have been enrolled as a full time F1 student for one academic year prior to participating.
2. Students must maintain a good record of full-time student status in a degree seeking program with a minimum GPA of 2.0. Students enrolled in the personal enrichment program do not qualify for OPT.
3. OPT authorization is limited to a total of 12 months per each higher degree level (12 months each for Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D.).
4. Any employment must be directly related to your major field of study. It is not required to have a specific job offer at the time of your application.
5. Students who are interested in applying for pre-completion OPT, may contact the International Student Office via email at intlservices@academyart.edu. Part-time OPT authorization is deducted at one-half the full-time rate, if it is taken as pre-completion OPT prior to program completion.
6. Students who are planning to apply for post-completion OPT, may submit their application as early as 90 days before the completion date of the degree program and up to 60 days after your degree completion date. We highly recommend that you apply for OPT as early as possible.
7. Students cannot work off campus until they have received their Employment Authorization Document (EAD/I-766), which is issued by USCIS.
8. Students must review the OPT Online Tutorial and submit the OPT I-20 Request Form to apply for post-completion OPT and prior to filing their application with USCIS online at: <http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/student-resources/international-student-resources>
9. Students are required to report their employment information online at: <http://www.academyart.edu/aau-forms/international-admissions/opt-reporting-form.html>
10. Students will be responsible to file their tax return. The International Student Office does not advise on filing taxes, however, more guidance can be found in the OPT Online Tutorial.
11. Students who received a Request For Evidence (RFE), whose application has been pending for more than 90 days, did not receive or lost their EAD should contact the International Student Office for assistance.
12. Authorization to engage in post-completion employment is automatically terminated when students transfer out to another school or begin at another education level.