Optional Practical Training (OPT) is employment authorization in field of study granted by USCIS. It is available to F-1 students in good academic standing who have been enrolled full-time in their program for at least one academic year. It can be granted at each degree level and can be authorized under three separate application types: (c)(3)(A): Pre-Completion OPT, (c)(3)(B): Post-Completion OPT, (c)(3)(C): 17 month extension.

**Pre-Completion OPT:**
- OPT is available in limited circumstances before the completion of your degree:
  - If you still have coursework remaining, you may be eligible for work authorization part-time while school is in session or full-time during non-required summer sessions or other official university breaks.
  - If you have completed all coursework, and are working on thesis or dissertation only, you are eligible to apply for full-time OPT. You may choose whether to apply for Pre or Post-completion OPT. Please come to The Office of International Education (OIE) and speak with an advisor to discuss this option.
- Note: If you have been authorized for Pre-Completion OPT, any changes in your program completion date must be reported to OIE immediately.
- Pre-Completion OPT authorization does take time away from your 12 months of Post-Completion OPT.
- Speak with an OIE advisor if you would like more information regarding Pre-Completion OPT.

**Post-Completion OPT**
- Post-Completion OPT is authorized by USCIS for a period of up to 12 months after the completion of a degree (Associates, Bachelor’s, Master’s, PhD).
- You apply for OPT in the semester you will complete your degree. Applications are accepted as early as 90 days before your program completion date but must be received by USCIS no later than 60 days after the completion date.
- Your program completion date is the day you complete all degree requirements, not your I-20 end date or your actual graduation date.
  - Ex: You complete all degree requirements in May but do not officially "graduate" until August. Thus, your completion date will be in May, not August because that is when you completed your last degree requirement.
  - Note: In abestinence registration does not count as a "degree requirement." You must apply for Post-Completion OPT before you begin in abestinence registration.
- Your employment start date must begin between your program completion date and the end of your 60 day grace period.
- You may not be enrolled in coursework while on Post-Completion OPT. Any credit-bearing course is considered enrollment and is not allowed while on this type of OPT.
- If you do not complete your degree as expected, you must report to OIE immediately.

**17 Month OPT Extension**
- A one time only 17 month OPT extension is available to students who meet certain requirements:
  - Is currently participating in a period of standard Post-Completion OPT.
  - Has never received a 17 month extension after receiving a STEM degree.
  - Graduated with a degree in an approved STEM (Science, Technology, Math and Engineering) major.
- The approved fields are:
  - A list of UTA approved degree programs is available on our web site at: http://www.uta.edu/oie/services/opt/STEM 17-Month Extension.php
- Must have a job offer from an employer registered with the E-Verify employment verification system.
- Applications for the 17 month STEM extension must be filed with OIE no later than 3 weeks prior to the expiration of the current OPT card.
- Students who timely file (prior to expiration of the 12 month OPT) an application for the 17 month OPT extension will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 is made or for 180 days, whichever comes first.
- The employer must agree to report the termination or departure of the student to the Office of International Education or through "any other means or process identified by DHS."
- An employer must consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left employment, or if the student has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the employer’s consent.
- The employment authorization period for the 17 month extension begins on the day after the expiration of the initial Post-Completion OPT and ends 17 months later, regardless of the date the actual extension is approved.