International Student Guide Book

August 31 2021-

June 22 2023

Fountainhead Montessori Adult Education

A Montessori Early Childhood

Education Program

Ages 2½ through 6

In cooperation with California State University

East Bay Continuing Education

(Undergraduate)

Fountainhead Montessori

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT   (F-1)

 FMAE is authorized under federal law to issue the I-20 F-1 Student document to nonimmigrant alien students.

If you do not have a U.S Visa - Living Outside the US - Initial Status:

FMAE issues the Initial I-20 document and a Letter of Acceptance to the applicant-student in order to secure an F-1 visa from the United States Embassy in the country of resident. The F-1 Visa allows the student to enter the United States and enroll in FMAE program as a full-time student.

If you have a U.S Visa Status - Living/Visiting/working in the U.S - Change of Status:

FMAE issues the Change of Status I-20 and the Letter of Acceptance to the prospective student. These two documents, in addition to other documents, are submitted to the US embassy for issuance of the F-1 Visa.

PROCEDURE FOR ISSUING AN I-20

1, complete FMAE online application for international students: www.fmtt.org
Please have your documents ready: Passport, Transcripts, Diploma, and evidence of financial support. You will need them for your VISA interview as well.

2, Interview with FMAE officer. Receive email from FMAE, follow the instruction to complete the English pre-test, if you don't have a TOEFL/IELTS score.

3, Pay fees for I-20. I-20 initial fee and FMAE application fee.

4, receive FMAE I-20, pay I-901 fee and schedule appointment to apply for your F-1 VISA.

APPLYING FOR F-1 VISA

Need help with your student visa? Please follow the steps listed below to ensure a smooth and accurate process.

First-time Students in the U.S.

Most international students at FMAE enter on the F-1 student visa. If this is your first time to study in the United States, you will need to sign your Form I-20, pay the SEVIS I-901 fee, and apply for a U.S. F-1 visa through a U.S. consulate or embassy.

1. Sign Your Form I-20
When you receive your Form I-20 from FMAE, please read the "Instructions to Students" on page 3 very carefully and then sign the "Student Attestation" at the bottom of page 1. Your Form I-20 will allow you to apply for an F-1 nonimmigrant student visa.
If you have questions about your Form I-20, or if you will not enroll at FMAE by the date stated on the form, notify the International Student Office immediately by email or by calling +1-9258201343.

2. Pay the SEVIS I-901 Fee
The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) charges a Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) I-901 fee for students beginning a new F-1 program. Most F-1 non-immigrants must pay a fee of $350 (may change). You must pay this fee prior to applying for your F-1 visa and take a receipt of your

payment with you to your visa interview.

How do I pay the SEVIS fee?

Begin by completing Form I-901. The fastest way to complete Form I-901 is online, but a paper Form I-901 can be downloaded and filed by courier. After completing Form I-901, you have several methods of paying the SEVIS fee:

- Online payment. After completing Form I-901 online, you can submit payment using a Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit card, or by using a debit card with a Visa or MasterCard logo. Print the receipt.
- Western Union. View the complete instructions. Complete Form I-901 online and print a copy of the payment coupon you receive. After three business days, check your payment status and print your receipt.
- Check or money order. To pay by check or money order, you'll need to include a paper Form I-901 or a copy of the coupon for Form I-901 after completing it online. View more information about paying by check or money order in FAQs provided by U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Remember to retain a copy of your I-901 SEVIS fee payment receipt. You must take it to your visa interview.

Note: Students with a country of citizenship or country of birth of Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria will need to pay the SEVIS fee using Western Union or by check or money order.

3. Secure a United States Visa

Visit the U.S. Embassy site to locate the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate and to view specific instructions about applying for a nonimmigrant student visa (F-1 visa). At the visa interview, you will need to present:

- DS-160 nonimmigrant visa application receipt. You should complete and submit the application prior to your appointment.
- Your passport

- Form I-20 issued by FMAE

- One passport-sized photo

- SEVIS fee payment receipt

- Visa application (MRV) fee payment receipt number (visit your embassy or consulate website for more information)

- Letter of admission to FMAE

- Proof of English language proficiency

- Proof of financial support for your studies at FMAE

- Proof of your intention to depart the United States after the completion of your studies

- Other documents detailed on the U.S. embassy or consulate website.

View additional information about the visa application process.

If you are a citizen of Canada, Bermuda, the Bahamas, or a British subject in the Bahamian, Cayman, or Turks and Caicos Islands, you will not need a U.S. visa to enter the country. However, you will need to present the SEVIS fee payment receipt at the U.S. port of entry and apply for F-1 status there.

Please note that F-1 student visas cannot be issued more than 120 days prior to the program start date found in section 5, page 1 of Form I-20. Students admitted to FMAE should not enter the country on a tourist visa (B-1/B-2 visa) unless you have discussed this with the Office of International Student. Students who enter the country on a tourist visa may not be able to enroll in their intended term, you need to change your status to F-1.

F-1 Students transferring from a U.S. institution

Students who are already in the United States with in F-1 status must transfer their SEVIS record in order to attend FMAE as a degree seeking student. You are considered "transfer student" for immigration purposes if you:

Have an Active SEVIS record at your current school and in valid F-1 status, and

No more than 5 months has passed from your last date of attendance at your current school OR your last day of OPT (whichever is later)

 If you are an F-1 student transferring to FMAE from a high school, college, or university in the U.S., please ask a Designated School Official (DSO) at your previous school to help you to transfer your SEVIS record to FMAE. Once completed, please email record to info@fmtt.org. FMAE will then issue you a "Transfer Pending" Form I-20 and send it to you by mail. Once you have completed immigration document registration and updated your U.S. address with the International Student Office, you will be issued a new I-20 for "Continued Attendance" at the beginning of your first term at FMAE. If your F-1 visa is still valid, you may continue using this visa. If your F-1 visa is expired, you should apply for a new visa using your FMAE I-20.

You can attend orientation and register for classes while waiting for your transfer I-20 to be issued by FMAE. However, you must receive a transfer I-20 within 15 days of the semester start date at FMAE. Fail to receive a transfer I-20 within 15 days of the semester start date will result in loss of your legal status in the U.S.

Step 1

Notify a Designated School Official (DSO) at your current school that you have been admitted to FMAE. Your SEVIS record need to be transferred to:

Fountainhead Montessori Adult Education Dublin Campus   SFR214F57745000

*Your school does not need to fill out any transfer eligibility or transfer evaluation form.

Step 2

A Designated School Official (DSO) at your current school will transfer your record to FMAE. The transfer date will most likely be the last day of your attendance at your current school. The transfer date should be before or within 15 days of the semester start date at FMAE.

Step 3

A "Transfer I-20" will be issued by International Admissions (Undergraduate students) or Graduate Studies (Graduate students). After you receive the transfer I-20, check your degree level on your new FMAE I-20 to ensure it accurately reflects your current degree level at FMAE.

If you have questions about receiving transfer I-20, please contact:

FMAE International Student Office   info@fmtt.org   1-925-820-1343

F-1 Students transferring out to a U.S. institution Procedures
Your new academic program must start **within 5 months** of:

Your current FMAE semester end date (grades available on your PORTAL), OR your OPT end date: If you are on Post-Completion OPT and you wish to transfer to another school in the middle of your OPT period, your OPT will end on the day our office transfers your SEVIS record. You must begin classes at your new school at the next available term or within five months, whichever is sooner. See **Transfers for F-1 Students** info at **Student and Exchange Visitor Program**

To request your SEVIS record to be transferred to another school, sign and complete the **I-20 Transfer Out Request Form**.

Please note:

1. You must indicate the "**School SEVIS Code**" from your new school. You may find it either on your acceptance letter, or your new school's website for F-1 international students. Check with your new school if you do not know the code.
2. You may decide on the "**SEVIS Release date**" based on your new schools program start date, or your OPT end date if you are on OPT. You may also check with your new school to see when is the latest they must receive your SEVIS record in order to issue you a new transfer I-20. This date is up to you to decide.
3. **Upload a scanned copy of the admission/acceptance letter from the school you wish to transfer to.**

ISO will process your request within 5 business days. Please keep in mind that we will not be able to access your SEVIS record after your record is transferred out. If you change your mind about transferring you must notify our office BEFORE the SEVIS Release date indicated on your Transfer Our Form.

Change of Status

If you are currently in the U.S. in another nonimmigrant status and will change to F-1 within the U.S., you must file Form I-539, your original Form I-20, and other required documentation with USCIS. Students are strongly advised to consult with the International Student Office if considering a change of status application, and to provide a copy of the entire application to the International Student Office prior to submitting it to USCIS. View information about Form I-539.

FAQ

1. Do I need an F-1 (student) visa or status to study at FMAE?

Individuals who are not U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents ("green card" holders) and wish to enter the U.S. to pursue studies at FMAE must apply for and obtain an F-1 student visa. Individuals already in the U.S. in other nonimmigrant statuses that allow study do not have to obtain F-1 status, but will be ineligible for the benefits given to students in F-1 status (see question 14 for more information).

FMAE strongly recommends that students maintain legal status while in the U.S. Not doing so may result in severe hardship. For more information about your status, visit the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) website.

2. Can a nonimmigrant take courses in FMAE?

Individuals in B-1/B-2 status may not take credit-bearing courses at FMAE. (See questions 11 and 12 below for more detailed information.) FMAE strongly discourages individuals from entering the U.S. under a B-1/B-2 visa if they intend to take courses at FMAE. Should you do so, understand that we will be unable to assist in any way should difficulties arise with Citizenship & Immigration Services (CIS). FMAE will not reimburse tuition or fees to individuals who register in B-1/B-2 status and are unable to participate in coursework due to restrictions imposed by CIS. Maintaining legal status is, ultimately, the individual's responsibility.

3. I want to improve my English skills. Does FMAE offer a full-time intensive English language program?
Yes. FMAE offers a full-time, semester-long intensive English program. An I-20 may be issued for this program, so that students pursuing the program may apply for an F-1 visa. More details are available here: Intensive English Language (IEL). Please note that participation in this program does not lead to admission to an FMAE degree program.

4. Can a nonimmigrant enroll in a program of study that will lead to an FMAE degree?

Generally, the ISS office recommends that students who will be pursuing a full-time program of study have F-1 status. Your status should reflect the true nature of your stay in the U.S. But if you wish to keep another status (A-1/A-2, G-1/G-2/G-4, H-1/H-4, J-1/J-2, L-1/L-2), you should complete the I-20 Waiver section of the International Student Financial Statement (ISFS) *and submit it, along with copies of the I-94 and visa in your passport, to ISS.*

If you wish to obtain F-1 status, the fastest and easiest way to do so is by entering the U.S. with an F-1 visa (see questions 6 and 7). Another option is to apply for a change of status in the U.S. Applying for a change of status can be a lengthy process and sometimes results in denial. Even if approved, the next time you travel outside the U.S., an application for an F-1 visa must be presented at a U.S. consulate.

Individuals in B-1/B-2 status may not take credit-bearing courses at FMAE. See questions 11 and 12 for more information. Individuals in F-2 status may not pursue a full-time program of study and will have to apply for a change to F-1 status upon gaining admission to FMAE. If you wish to discuss your situation, you may set up an appointment with an International Student Advisor **after** you have been admitted to FMAE.

For information about your status, visit the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS). It is important that you understand the terms and conditions of your nonimmigrant status; consult your visa sponsor to learn more about the rules affecting your status in the U.S. Your status is your responsibility!

5. How do I get an F-1 student visa?

An F-1 (student) visa is granted by the U.S. Department of State at U.S. consulates around the world. To apply for an F-1 visa, you must present an I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Status to the U.S. consulate along with visa application forms and supporting documentation, your letter of admission from FMAE, and other pertinent documents. The U.S. consulate will decide whether or not to grant you an F-1 visa.

For more information about the visa application process, visit U.S. Department of State. Because all U.S. consulates are outside the United States, it is impossible to apply for an F-1 visa within the U.S.

For detailed information about F-1 visa requirements, a list of consulates, and to download visa application forms, see Obtaining an F-1 Visa on the International Student Services webpage.

6. How do I get an I-20?

In accordance with federal regulations, **you must be admitted to a full-time degree program** before FMAE will issue an I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status. Once admitted, submit your International Student Financial Statement (ISFS) to International Student Services. When all required documentation is received, the I-20 will be issued within five working days of receipt of the tuition deposit.

If you do not wish to obtain an I-20, you must inform International Student Services by filling out and submitting the I-20 Waiver on the back of the International Student Financial Statement (ISFS) after you have been admitted. Non-degree students are ineligible to receive an I-20 form.

7. What is the International Student Financial Statement (ISFS)?

Once you have been admitted to FMAE, the immigration service requires FMAE to obtain documentary evidence of your financial ability to study in the U.S. The ISFS is the only form accepted by FMAE for this purpose. You must provide a detailed account of how you plan to pay for your studies. An estimate of expenses based on one-year's attendance. This amount must be available to you in liquid funds outside or inside the U.S. and may come from a variety of sources.

F-1 regulations severely restrict employment and internships in the U.S. FMAE only offers financial aid to U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents ("green card" holders).

8. I am already in the U.S. with an I-20 from another school; do I need to get an I-20 from FMAE?

If the international student advisor at your current school authorizes it, you may take some courses at FMAE. You will have to maintain status at the school that issued your I-20. If you wish to attend FMAE as a full-time, degree-seeking student, you must transfer your F-1 status prior to beginning study at FMAE. In this case, you **do** need an FMAE I-20 (refer to question 6). The transfer procedure mandated by the U.S. Department of Homeland of Homeland Security (DHS) must be completed before beginning studies at FMAE.

9. What if I am no longer attending that school or have not maintained F-1 status, but am still in the U.S.?

You may not be able to transfer your immigration record to FMAE because you may be out of F-1 status. In this case, it may be best to leave the U.S. and re-enter with an I-20 issued by FMAE. Once admitted to FMAE, you may report to FMAE International Student Services (ISS) to discuss your options.

10. I wish to participate in an exchange program at FMAE. Is that possible? And what type of visa do I need?

Exchange programs are only available to students from foreign institutions that have a formal exchange articulation agreement with FMAE; for more information on FMAE Exchange programs, please visit Study Abroad. Once accepted to participate in an exchange program with FMAE, instructions on how to apply for a DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (J Nonimmigrant) will be provided. The DS-2019 will allow you to apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. Consulate. In accordance with federal regulations, FMAE only issues DS-2019 forms to individuals participating in FMAE exchange programs.

11. If I am already in the U.S. in B-1/B-2 (tourist/visitor) status, may I enroll in credit-bearing courses at FMAE?

Federal regulations prohibit nonimmigrants admitted in B-1/B-2 status from pursuing a program of study. But the immigration service has further determined that an individual in B-1/B-2 status may enroll in non-credit-bearing classes that are short in duration and not the primary reason for the individual's visit to the U.S. At FMAE, the only classes students in B-1/B-2 status may register for are offered by FMAE for AMS credential certificate studies, instead of credit for California State University BA degree or MA degree, as long as the classes begin and end within the period of stay authorized by the immigration service.

12. I entered the U.S. on a B-1/B-2 visa; what should I do once I have been admitted?

It depends. Please read **Quote from SEVIS** below.

13. May I attend FMAE if I am not in legal status in the US?

Yes! The course work you complete will count towards a degree, and you will receive a diploma upon completion of the prescribed curriculum. However, you will not be eligible for internships or employment options normally available to students in F-1 status. FMAE International Student Office cannot assist you in matters regarding your stay in the U.S. as FMAE only maintains the immigration records of students in F status.

14. What benefits are available to F-1 students?

Federal regulations allow students in F-1 status to be employed on campus up to 20 hours per week while attending school full time. Internships and off-campus employment of any kind are prohibited during the first year in F-1 status. After one year in F-1 status, students may apply to the immigration service for permission to engage in paid or unpaid, non-credit or credit-bearing internships, or under very special conditions, off-campus employment. If employment authorization is granted, it will be quite limited. Individuals in valid F-1 status are allowed easy travel while in the U.S. For a comprehensive description of the terms, conditions, and benefits for F-1 status

15. How does the FMAE International Student Office assist students?

FMAE International Student Office assists all admitted nonimmigrant students (ISO) with matters pertaining to their nonimmigrant status while studying at FMAE. Other matters, like admission to FMAE, residency, and transferability of credits, must be addressed by the Office of Admissions.

ISO attempts to provide accurate and current information impacting nonimmigrant study. Federal regulations and procedures change periodically, and understanding the terms and conditions of status is your responsibility. For the latest information on all immigration matters and particularly those pertaining to study, consult the USCIS and DHS Study in the States websites.

16. What is an immigration lawyer and what do they do?

Immigration lawyers are licensed attorneys who specialize in the field of immigration law. They function as the client's advocate and can represent them before immigration agencies, both in immigration court as well as in filing applications for immigration benefits. The lawyer can give general advice and can discuss immigration options. Like all lawyers, immigration lawyers are required to keep client discussions confidential in accordance with their professional ethical and legal obligations. You may seek help from lawyer for your status change. Or, FMAE can assist you to prepare with extra fee.

Quote from SEVIS:

Changing to a Nonimmigrant F or M Student Status

Is it permissible to enroll in school while in a nonimmigrant status other than student status?

It depends. Some statuses permit you to enroll in school, while other statuses do not. For example, the regulations at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(b)(7) specifically prohibit a course of study in the United States while in B-1 or B-2 status. However, no such prohibition exists for those in E status, so individuals in that status can enroll in school as long as it does not interfere with their ability to maintain their E status.

Individuals in a nonimmigrant status that prohibits enrolling in school must first acquire F-1 (academic student) or M-1 (vocational student) status. Enrolling in a course of study while in a status that does not permit such activity will result in a status violation. Individuals who have violated their nonimmigrant status by enrolling in a course of study are not eligible to extend their status or change to F-1 or M-1 status.

Changing to F or M Status from Another Nonimmigrant Status

If you are in the United States in valid nonimmigrant status for a purpose other than to attend school and wish to change your nonimmigrant status (PDF) to a student status while remaining in the United States, you must meet the criteria below and submit an application with USCIS to change your status.

In general, you may apply to change your nonimmigrant status while remaining in the United States if:

- You were lawfully admitted to the United States in a nonimmigrant status;
- Your nonimmigrant status remains valid;
- You have not violated the conditions of your status; and
- You have not committed any crimes or engaged in any other actions that would make you ineligible for change of status.

Until you receive notice of approval from USCIS, do not assume the requested status has been approved. Before USCIS may approve your application, you must take the following steps:

- Apply to and receive acceptance from a U.S. Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified school.
- Obtain an initial Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status, from the SEVP-certified school. The Designated School Official (DSO) should give change of status in the Issue Reason section of the Form I-20.
- Pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee.
- File a Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status, with USCIS.

Not all nonimmigrant classifications are allowed to change to student status. Read the Form I-539 instructions carefully to ensure that your category is eligible.

What if My Current Status Doesn't Allow Me to Enroll in Classes?

If you are requesting to change from another nonimmigrant status to F or M student status and your current nonimmigrant status does not permit you to enroll in classes, do not enroll in classes or begin

your studies until USCIS has approved your change of status. If USCIS has not adjudicated your change of status at least 15 days before the program start date on your Form I-20, contact the designated school official (DSO) at your new school. If USCIS does not grant your request to change status prior to the start date of classes, you may need to defer attendance and wait until the following term in order to begin your studies at the school in F or M status.

Please note that if you are applying to change status to M status, you must maintain a valid nonimmigrant status while your Form I-539 change of status application is pending.

We encourage all students and prospective students to work closely with their DSO to coordinate the timing of applying for change of status and enrolling in a course of study.

NOTE: If you are an M-1 student, you may not change to F status while you are in the United States.

What if My Change of Status Application to F-1 Nonimmigrant Student is Still Pending Within 30 Days of My F-1 Program Start Date?

Due to processing times, you may have to request that your DSO defer the F-1 program start date to the following academic term or semester because USCIS did not make a decision on your Form I-539 change of status application before your originally intended F-1 program start date. If your COS application is approved, your change of status to F-1 will be effective as of the date of approval. You are not required to obtain status all the way up to the date that is 30 days before your program start date ("bridge the gap"), provided that your nonimmigrant status is unexpired at the time of filing the change of status to F-1 application, and you otherwise remain eligible for a change of status.

What if My Change of Status Application to F-1 Nonimmigrant Student is Approved More than 30 Days Before My F-1 Program Start Date?

If we approve an application more than 30 days before your program start date, you must ensure that you do not violate your F-1 status. An example of a violation would be engaging in employment, including on-campus employment and practical training, more than 30 days before the program start date as listed on your Form I-20.

Leaving the United States to Become an F-1 or M-1 Student

You may consider consular processing if you are concerned about maintaining your nonimmigrant status to within 30 days of your M-1 program start date (which may be deferred as described above) or are otherwise not eligible to change status to F-1 or M-1 status in the United States. You will need to do the following:

- Apply to and receive acceptance from a SEVP-certified school.
- Receive a new initial Form I-20 from your designated school official (DSO).
- Pay the I-901 SEVIS fee.
- Apply at a U.S. consulate or embassy for an F-1 or M-1 visa to travel to the United States in order to seek admission as a student.
- If you are from a country where no visa is required, such as Canada, you may proceed directly to a U.S. port of entry or a U.S. pre-clearance/pre-flight inspection station and apply for admission to the United States as an F-1 or M-1 student.
- Once admitted by an immigration officer in F-1 or M-1 status, you may begin your studies.

For more information about consular processing, please visit the Department of State Travel page. For information about SEVP, please visit the ICE Student and Exchange Visitor Program page or the DHS Study in the States page.

Helpful Websites

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS)
U.S. Department of State (DOS)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

PRACTICAL TRAINING

If you are an F student, you have the option of <u>training in the United States</u> by engaging in practical training during your program or after it ends. Practical training can provide valuable work experience by sharpening and adding to the skills you are learning in school. There are two types of practical training available for F-1 students: curricular practical training (CPT) and optional practical training (OPT).

CPT See APPENDIX 2

- CPT is integral to your major and the experience must be part of your program of study.
- When you enroll at the graduate level, your designated school official (DSO) may authorize CPT during your first semester if your program requires this type of experience. Ask your DSO for details.
- Your DSO will provide you a new <u>Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status,"</u> that shows that the DSO has approved you for this employment.
- You can work on CPT either full-time or part-time.
- CPT requires a signed cooperative agreement or a letter from your employer.
- If you have 12 months or more of full-time CPT, you are ineligible for OPT, but part-time CPT is fine and will not stop you from doing OPT.
- <u>SEVIS/DHS regulation</u>

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization is available to F-1 students entering the Practicum/Internship/Student Teaching.

The Practicum is a requirement for the American Montessori Society Teacher Credential. Implementation of the Montessori philosophy and the Montessori curriculum is the purpose of the practicum/student teaching leading to mastery of the MACTE competencies.

The Practicum is defined by a minimum duration and schedule:

- Minimum of 3 hours per day,

- Five days per week - Monday through Friday,

- Nine consecutive months - September through May,

Request for the CPT in order to begin the Practicum occurs at the successful completion of the academic curriculum classes. All financial obligations must be fulfilled.

General Requirements:

- Completion of the core course components

- Academic standing with all coursework graded with "B" or higher

- Financial accounts current

- Active F-1 status

Specific Guidelines

Two semesters of CPT Practicum are required.

- A student must complete CPT by the expected completion date (June 30th) on the I-20.

- An I-20 is not extended for the sole purpose of extending the CPT.

- The FMAE Office is authorized by the US Government to apply for curricular practical training (CPT) for a specific employer and for a specific period of time of no more than 12 months.

- Employment may not begin before the first day of authorization and may not extend any later than the last day of authorization.

- In order for FMAE to authorize CPT, the student create the AMS Recommendation form in the student's web-based file with school practicum site, and supervising teacher information.
- And an offer letter from the employer.

Procedure:

- Select a Montessori school that qualifies as a practicum school. (Refer to the Student Handbook).
- Email all required employment letter and a cover letter requesting CPT to FMAE. Pay the non-refundable CPT I-20 Fee of $200.00 to FMAE's ISO.
- The CPT authorization is added to the student's I-20.
- Three copies of the CPT are issued to the applicant. All copies are required to be signed by the applicant:
- One copy is required to be given to the employer
- One copy is the applicant's
- One copy is for Social Security

Note: I-20 students cannot enroll in Practicum coursework until CPT is issued.

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) – CHANGE OF SITE

Specific Requirements:

- Change of employment may not begin before new CPT is approved and may not continue after completion date listed on I-20.
- The student must obtain:
    - A new offer letter from the employer that includes:
    - Site Agreement
    - Copy of site's AMS Membership or State Licensing
    - Supervising Teacher Information and Agreement
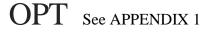   - Copy of Supervising Teacher's Montessori Credential

Procedure:

- Take listed documents above to the new employer, preferably when you go for your initial interview, for completion.
- Request a letter of offer from the employer, on letterhead stationery. (Details are listed above)
- Email all required documents listed above and a cover letter requesting a new CPT to FMAE and mail payment of $200.00 for the new CPT Fee of $200.00.
- If FMAE's international student adviser determines that the applicant has met all previous financial obligations, and all required documents have been submitted, a new CPT authorization is added to the learner's I-20.
- Three copies of the new CPT are mailed to the applicant. All copies are required to be signed by the applicant:
    - One copy is required to be given to the new employer.
    - Two copy are for the student.

CPT Offer Letter Sample:

COMPANY/ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD

- **Today's Date**

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- **Student Name**
- **Student Address**

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- RE: Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Offer Letter

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- Dear **Student Name**,

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- This letter confirms your offer of practical training with **Company/Organization Name**. The dates of your practical training offer are from **START DATE** to **END DATE**. You are expected to work an average of **#** hours per week. The details of your position are stated below.

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- **Position Title**:

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- **Position Description** (must directly relate to the student's major):

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- **Physical Address of Work Location**:

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- **Supervisor Name**:

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- **Supervisor Contact Information (phone/email)**:

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- We are excited for you to join **Company/Organization Name**.
- Sincerely,
- **Signature**

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- **Your Name**
- **Your Title**

YOUR COMPANY/ORGANIZATION CONTACT INFORMATION

OPT See APPENDIX 1

- OPT must relate to your major or course of study.
- You can apply for 12 months of OPT at each education level, (i.e., you may have 12 months of OPT at the bachelor's level and another 12 months of OPT at the master's level).
- Your DSO will provide you with a new Form I-20 that shows the DSO recommendation for this employment.
- For work authorization, you must mail a completed Form I-765, "Application for Employment Authorization," to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and pay a filing fee. USCIS will send you a Form I-766, "Employment Authorization Document," (EAD) upon approving your Form I-765.
- Wait to start work until after you receive your EAD.
- While school is in session, you may only work 20 hours per week.

Reduced Course Load (RCL)

There are very few exceptions to the full-time course load rule. Students must request approval from an F-1 international student advisor at OIP before dropping below full-time academic status.

To obtain approval, students must submit a signed and completed Reduced Course Load (RCL) form to OIP. The RCL form must be signed by the student and the student's academic advisor (except RCL due to the medical condition). Students who drop below a full course of study without the prior approval from OIP will be considered out of status and must be reported in SEVIS. The students SEVIS record will be terminated and they will lose F-1 status and their employment eligibility and other benefits.

Academic Difficulty

Who is eligible

RCL due to the academic difficulty is only available for students who are attending school in the US for the first time. This is a one-time only exception. Continuing students who have been attending SF State and the new students who transferred from another 4-year and 2-year institutions in the U.S. are not eligible for this exception. Students who wish to request RCL due to academic difficulty must meet with an F-1 international student advisor at OIP and submit the RCL form in person. The RCL form must be signed by both the student and by the student's academic advisor. Permission from OIP MUST be obtained by university's withdrawal deadline posted on Registrar's website.

What do you need to know

Federal Immigration regulations define academic difficulty as:

Initial difficulty with English Language or reading requirements (First semester in the U.S. only); or Unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods (First semester in the U.S. only); or improper course placement. In some cases, students may be required to provide OIP with written proof from academic advisor explaining how they were misadvised. Written proof must be printed on the department letterhead and sign by the academic advisor.

Once the RCL is approved, students must:

- Register for at least 6 units (for Undergraduate) or 4 units (for graduates) in the approved semester.
- Resume a full course of study in the next available Fall/Spring Semester in order to maintain legal student status.
- Will not be eligible for a second RCL due to academic difficulty authorization.
- Will be eligible for other type of RCLs in the future.

How to request RCL due to academic difficulty

1. Review the RCL due to academic difficulty information above and download **RCL due to academic difficulty form**

Who is eligible

Students may receive RCL due to medical condition if they have temporary illness which prevent them to maintain full-time study.

What do you need to know

- Students must request an **U.S. licensed medical doctor (MD), doctor of osteopathy (DO),** or **licensed clinical psychologist** to complete the RCL due to medical condition form, or attach an original letter from the doctor (on the doctor's original letterhead stationary) substantiating the student's illness or medical condition (this means a brief but detailed description of the student's medical condition/illness). **The doctor's letter must also recommend that the student enrolls in either 0 units or in a part-time course of study for this semester.**
- **If the student is not planning to enroll full-time due to medical condition**: The RCL due to medical condition must be approved by OIP within 2 weeks of the semester start at SF State.
- **If the student is enrolled full-time and a medical condition occurs during the semester:** Contact an F-1 international student advisor at ISO immediately.
- A reduced course load or withdrawal from FMAE due to a medical condition cannot exceed a total of more than 12 months (3 academic semesters) at each degree level. If you have filed RCL due to medical condition in the U.S. before, speak to an F-1 advisor to determine your eligibility.
- A separate RCL due to medical condition must be completed and approved each semester if more than one semester of RCL due to medical condition is needed.
- The student must resume a full course of study in the next available semester in order to maintain legal student status unless another RCL due to medical condition is approved.
- RCL due to medical condition will only be considered if the request is submitted BEFORE the end of the semester in which the student wishes to be part-time.
- RCL due to medical condition cannot be approved retroactively.

When to submit RCL due to the medical condition:

STATUS	ACTION	DEADLINE
Will not enroll full time at the start of the semester due to medical condition	Must submit Medical RCL form by deadline or Medical RCL will not be approved / I-20 will be terminated	Semester Add Drop Deadline
Enrolled full time by add/drop deadline, but will need to withdraw from courses during the semester due to medical condition	Must submit Medical RCL form and receive approval before deadline/ before withdrawing from courses	Last day of Finals

How to request RCL due to medical condition

1. Review the RCL medical condition information above and download the **RCL due to medical condition Form**
2. Email **INFO@FMTT.ORG** to schedule an virtual appointment with an F-1 international student advisor

Completion of Study

Who is eligible?

Reduced Course Load (RCL) completion of study is used for

- International Students in their last semester to complete the remaining **required** courses for their program of study at SF State

What do you need to know

- It is a one-time only exception.
- It can only be approved for summer semester of your first academic year.
- All your remaining courses must be taken at FMAE. No concurrent enrollment at another institution is allowed.
- If you only have **one course** to complete the program in the summer for your AMS credential, which is Art Music and Movement, you can take it during your Practicum year.
- All the remaining courses must be FMAE graduation requirement. This RCL will not be approved for students who wish to take non-required courses for other purposes (i.e. raise GPA or just for personal enrichment).

How to request RCL due to completion of study

1. Review the RCL Completion of Study information above and download **RCL due to completion of study form**
2. Reach out to ISO advisors to obtain signature on RCL form to confirm major units needed for graduation,
3. Email the RCL form with signatures to info@fmtt.org from your
4. We accept digital signatures, scanned copies, and high resolution/clear pictures of the completed form. You will receive a confirmation email from ISO within 5 business days.

You RCL form must be signed by one of your committee members. Also, you must also complete the following steps before submitting the RCL form to ISO:

1. Clear the Health Insurance Hold: Purchase and maintain **FMAE sponsored health insurance** for the entire semester, and

2021-2022 Academic Phase

2021 Fall Quarter	2022 Winter Quarter	2020 2Spring Quarter	2022 Summer Quarter
Course Development: Philosophy Fridays, 8:30-5:30pm 9/3, 9/10, 9/17, 9/24, 10/1 **Philosophy** Saturdays, 8:30-5:30pm 9/4, 9/11, 9/18, 9/25, 10/2 **Course Development: Practical Life** Fridays, 8:30-5:30pm 10/8, 10/15, 10/22, 10/29, 11/5 **Practical Life** Saturdays, 8:30-5:30pm 10/9, 10/16, 10/23, 10/30, 11/6 **Course Development: EC Administration** Fridays, 8:30-5:30pm 11/12, 11/19, 11/26, 12/3, 12/10 **EC Administration** Saturdays, 8:30-5:30pm 11/13, 11/20, 11/27, 12/4, 12/11	**Course Development: Sensorial** Fridays, 8:30-5:30pm 1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28, 2/4 **Sensorial** Saturdays, 8:30-5:30pm 1/8, 1/15, 1/22, 1/29, 2/5 **Course Development: Language** Fridays, 8:30-5:30pm 2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11 **Language** Saturdays, 8:30-5:30pm 2/12, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12	**Course Development: Mathematics** Fridays, 8:30-5:30pm 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 4/8, 4/15 **Mathematics** Saturdays, 8:30-5:30pm 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16 **Course Development: Natural Science** Fridays, 8:30-5:30pm **Physical & Life Sciences** 4/22, 4/29, 5/6, 5/20 **Social Studies** 5/13 **Natural Science** Saturdays, 8:30-5:30pm **Physical & Life Sciences** 4/23, 4/30, 5/7, 5/21 **Social Studies** 5/14	**Course Development: Art, Music & Movement** Wed. & Fri., 8:30-5:30pm **Art** 5/25, 5/27 & 6/1 **Music** 6/3 **Movement** 6/8 **Art, Music & Movement** Sat. & Sun., 8:30-5:30pm **Art** 5/28, 5/29 & 6/4 **Music** 6/5 **Movement** 5/22 **Course Development: Child Development** Fridays, 8:30-5:30pm 6/17, 6/24, 7/1, 7/8, 7/15 **Child Development** Saturdays, 8:30-5:30pm 6/16, 6/23, 6/30, 7/7, 7/14 **Montessori EC Overview** Sundays, 8:30-5:30pm 7/25, 7/26, 8/1, 8/8, 8/15 **Course Development: Child, Family & Community** Fridays, 8:30-5:30pm 7/24, 7/31, 8/7, 8/14, 8/21 **Child, Family & Community** Saturdays, 8:30-5:30pm 7/21, 7/28, 8/8, 8/4, 8/11, 8/18 **Montessori Teacher Assistant** M-F, 8:30-5pm – 40 lab hours Dates:8/3,8/9,8/10,8/16,8/17

2022-2023 Practicum Phase

Mandatory '22-'23 Interns Orientation 6/11/2022: 8:30am-4:00pm

Practicum I : Seminars: 8:30-17:00	**Practicum I :** Seminars: 8:30-17:00
9/17/22, 10/7/22, 10/23/22	5/6/23, 6/11/23

Internship – 540 hours

Child Study Oral Presentation, Synthesis Presentation & Graduation 10:00-4:00pm 06/11/2023

Classroom Leadership 8:30-5:30pm

1/7/22, 1/21/22, 2/4/22, 2/18/22, 3/4/22, 1/8/22, 1/22/22, 2/5/22, 2/19/22, 3/5/22

TUITION & FEES

All fees are paid directly to Fountainhead Montessori Adult Education (FMAE). It is important that you keep copies of the enrollment agreement, receipts or any other information that documents the monies paid to the school. Payments should be paid by credit card, e-check through student's portal or by check. Transaction fee may apply.

Course Costs
Tuition for the whole program is $10,890.   There is a $25 late fee charge of you pay on the first day of class.

Course

1. FMAE 202: Child Development
2. FMAE 101: Philosophy
3. FMAE 102: Practical Life
4. FMAE 103: Sensorial
5. FMAE 104: Language
6. FMAE 105: Mathematics
7. FMAE 106: Natural Sciences
8. FMAE 107: Art, Music & Movement
9. FMAE 108: Classroom Leadership
10. FMAE 109: Practicum I: Seminars
11. FMAE 110: Practicum II: Supervised Year-Long Project
12. FMAE 203: Child, Family, and Community
13. FMAE 204: Early Childhood Education Administration
14. FMAE 301: Montessori EC Overview
15. FMAE 302: Montessori Teacher Assistant
16. FMAE 202CD: Course Development: Child Development
17. FMAE 101CD: Course Development: Philosophy
18. FMAE 102CD: Course Development: Practical Life
19. FMAE 103CD: Course Development: Sensorial
20. FMAE 104CD: Course Development: Language
21. FMAE 105CD: Course Development: Mathematics
22. FMAE 106CD: Course Development: Natural Sciences
23. FMAE 107CD: Course Development: Art, Music & Movement
24. FMAE 108CD: Course Development: Classroom Leadership
25. FMAE 203CD: Course Development: Child, Family, and Community
26. FMAE 204CD: Course Development: Early Childhood Education Administration

College credit is for California State University East Bay Teacher Education Department.

Other Fees *(Non-refundable)* Amount Due

1. Initial Registration Application $100
2. Re-enrollment (if student has been inactive for 6 months) $100
3. Late Assignment Submittal $25/each
4. AMS Credential Fee (During Practicum Phase) $250
5. MACTE Fee (During Practicum Phase) $188
6. S-Directed Practicum Fee $600
7. Transportation Fee (During Practicum Phase) $0.58/mile
8. Student Tuition Recovery Fund $0/Qtr.
9. Returned Check $35/check
10. Late Registration Fee $25/class
11. Installment Payments Plan Fee (if approved) $25/installment
12. Transcript Fee (first one is free) $5/each
13. Electronic Tuition Transaction Fees
    2.6% of amount for credit card, 0.75% of transaction for e-check, 2% of transaction for Alipay

Class Supplies
Students are responsible for purchasing and print their own: Pictures, Books, Album, Binders, Sheet-Protector or other supplies as needed.

International Student Fees may apply *(Non-refundable)***:**

Transfer-In (from other schools' F-1) Application Fee: $100.00

I-20 issuance initial fee: $200.00

Dependent F-2 initial fee: $800.00/ each

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) I-20 Processing Fee: $200.00

Change of Practicum Site Fees for new CPT fee: $200.00

Transfer-out Fee: $100.00

Change of visa status to an F1 student visa legal fee: $900

Request for Evidence (RFE) preparing fee: $200

California State University East Bay credit fee for BA degree: $2,412

Estimated FMAE Total Cost

The estimated cost of the entire for an AMS Montessori Credential is $11,428
Break down:
Tuition $10,890 (All required courses)
Application fees: $100
AMS/MACTE fees: $438

APPENDIX 1: OPT

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINGING (CPT)	OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)
CPT requires a job offer	OPT does not require a job offer
CPT requires enrollment in an internship class in which on-the-job training is required and for which course credit is received. Student **must** be enrolled in the internship class at the same time they are working	OPT does not require you to enroll in an internship class
CPT authorized during the summer or winter would require the student to pay summer & winter tuition	OPT does not require the student to pay for class registration, but U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires a filing fee (it is $410 as of December 2019)
CPT is authorized for a specific employer for work related to student's major field of study	OPT allows work with ANY employer based on the student's major field of study
CPT is authorized by ISO within 5 business days	OPT is authorized by USCIS in 90 - 120 days (after preliminary processing by ISO)
CPT work permit is granted on the I-20 (page 3)	OPT work permit is called the EAD (Employment Authorization Document)
CPT may only be issued for work before graduation	OPT allows for employment both before and after graduation
CPT usually does not affect OPT as long as CPT is authorized for less than 12 months of full-time employment (more than 20 hours per week). Part-time CPT (20 hours per week or less) is never deducted from OPT. **NOTE:** if you work total 4 months of full-time CPT, you will still have 12 months of OPT	OPT authorized part-time (20 hours or less per week) is deducted at half-time rate, but full-time OPT (more than 20 hours per week) is deducted at full-time rate from the 12 months of OPT. **NOTE:** if you received 6 full-time months of OPT before graduating you will only have 6 months of OPT left after graduation

OPT Facts

 What is OPT?

Purpose

- Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a temporary employment authorization benefit for F-1 students who have been maintaining F-1 status in the U.S.
- **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** reviews and approves OPT applications. The current filling fee is $410 and an average 90 - 120 day processing time. USCIS will mail

students an **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)** card once their OPT application is approved. The EAD is the student's official work authorization in the U.S.

- Eligible students can apply to receive 12-months of OPT for each degree level completed in the U.S.

Types of OPT

- **Part-time:** Students are allowed to work less than 20 hours per week
- **Full-time:** Students are allowed to work more than 20 hours per week

Students may be eligible to participate in OPT in two different ways:

PRE-COMPLETION OPT (PRE-OPT)	POST-COMPLETION OPT (POST-OPT)
OPT authorization/Form I-765 Eligibility Category (c)(3)(A) • **Vacation OPT (part-time or full-time):** Takes place during summer or winter vacation. • **While School-in-Session OPT (part-time only):** Takes place during Spring or Fall semester while students are studying full-time OPT time used before completion of studies will be deducted from the total 12 month period available. Two months of part-time OPT equals to one month of full-time OPT. For example: If a student has been approved for 4 months of part-time pre-OPT, they will have 10 months of full-time post-OPT remaining.	**OPT authorization/Form I-765 Eligibility Category (c)(3)(B):** • **Full-time ONLY** • Start Date: takes place within 60 days of the day students complete their program. The program completion date is the "Grades Available on FMAE PORTAL" posted by **FMAE's Registrar's Office**. • **Graduate students:** Eligible to apply for full-time Post-Completion OPT if they have completed all of the course requirements except for the **Culminating Experience** course. Graduate students on approved Post-Completion OPT cannot work on campus.

Eligibility Requirements

Students must meet the following criteria to be eligible to apply for OPT:

- Be in valid F-1 status
- Be physically in the U.S.
- Fulfilled one-year full-time requirement.
    - Must have been enrolled full-time for at least one full academic year (two consecutive academic semesters) in the U.S. prior to their proposed OPT start date (excluding Summer and Winter session)
- Have not completed more than 364 days of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT), nor have been approved for 12 months of OPT at the current degree level
- Meet the "when to apply" time frame

Attention

- Students do not need a job offer or a Social Security Number to apply for OPT
- Students seeking credential/certificate programs should enroll in all courses before their last degree requirement. No academic course enrollment is allowed during OPT.

When to Apply

PRE-COMPLETION OPT (PRE-OPT)	POST-COMPLETION OPT (POST-OPT)
Students can apply as early as 90 days before their requested Pre-OPT start date. For example, if a student wish to start OPT on June 15, they should request a new I-20 with OPT recommendation on or after March 15. Note: If USCIS processing time cuts into the Pre-OPT start date, students may not receive the full requested Pre-OPT duration.	Students can apply as early as 90 days before their program completion/graduation date Note: If USCIS processing time cuts into the Post-OPT start date, students may not receive the full 12 month Post-OPT duration.

OPT Authorization Process Timeline

Here is a glance of the typical timeline from the day a F-1 student begins their Post-OPT request to the approval date and beyond (ISO cannot guarantee the USCIS process timeline):

Phase 1: During students' last semester

1. Student reviews OPT resources
2. Student downloads OPT Request Form and chooses a start date
3. Student emails OPT Request form to Academic Advisor/Graduate Advisor for signature to verify graduation
4. Student receives signed OPT Request form from Academic Advisor/Graduate Advisor

Phase 2: By the "first day to request OPT recommendation from ISO" date

1. Student emails signed OPT Request form to info@fmtt.org
2. Student prepares OPT Application while waiting for new I-20
   - F-1 advisors prepare OPT Requested I-20 *(10 business days)*
3. Student files for OPT request on USCIS website
4. Student receives OPT application digital pending receipt *(immediately after filing and paying online)*
5. Student receives OPT application paper pending receipt *(4-8 weeks after online file)*
6. Student receives OPT approval notice *(60-120 days from online file date)*
7. Student receives Employment Authorization Document (EAD) *(within 2 weeks after approval notice)*
8. Student receives Social Security Number (SSN) *(within 2 weeks after EAD received date)*

Phase 3: OPT/EAD start date begins

1. Student receives SEVP Portal log in directly from SEVP
2. Student creates a SEVP Portal log in
3. Student begins work & reports employment on SEVP portal within 10 days
   - Otherwise begin counting unemployment days

Phase 4: OPT/EAD end date

1. Student is on 60 day grace period
2. Student leaves the U.S. or transfers out
3. Student F-1 status is completed at FMAE

*ISO and USCIS processing time is subject to change.

How to Calculate Unemployment Days

USCIS typically authorizes a 12 month Post-OPT period (may be less depending on process time). Out of the OPT valid dates per the EAD, students cannot accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment days overall.

"If EAD is valid from 7/30/2021 to 7/29/2022, students can't be unemployed for more than 90 days between 7/30/2021 to 7/29/2022."

- Unemployment days start counting from the actual EAD "valid" start date if no employment is reported on the SEVP portal on day 1
    - It does NOT start counting from the day the student applied for OPT
    - It does NOT start counting from the initial requested OPT start date (if different from EAD start date)
    - It does NOT start counting from the semester finals end date
    - It does NOT start counting from the program end date on their I-20
    - It does NOT start counting while OPT is pending
    - It does NOT start counting if OPT is approved and EAD is received before EAD valid start date
    - Any days of unemployment throughout the whole EAD valid dates are counted, NOT just the first 90 days of OPT.
    - Any days of unemployment throughout the whole EAD valid dates are counted, including any days between an offer letter and the actual future employment start date.
        - For example, if a student has an EAD start date on August 1 and they receive a job offer letter on August 5 for a August 20 start date. The student will use up 19 days of unemployment (from August 1 to August 19).
    - Any days of unemployment between job changes are counted towards unemployment days
    - Any days without employment reported on SEVP portal are counted towards unemployment
        - If a student forgets to report their employment on the SEVP portal, the days are counted as unemployment days

Number of Hours Per Week

- If authorized Post-OPT, students must work at least 20 hours per week in a position that is directly related to their major of study, report their employment in SEVP Portal to be considered employed and have maintained F-1 status.*
- ****For the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) considers students who are working in their OPT opportunities fewer than 20 hours a week as engaged in OPT. However, there is no extension of the 90-day unemployment limit during COVID-19.***

Exceeding Unemployment Days

If students accumulate 90 days or more of unemployment, they are in violation of their F-1 status & OPT status

- The OPT authorization will be automatically terminated by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP).
    - SEVP portal calculates unemployment days based on SEVP portal reporting. If a student forgets to report their employment, their records may be automatically terminated if the number of days of "unemployment" exceed 90 days
    - Since the termination is done by SEVP, they will receive an email notification from SEVP, not from ISO.

Students who exceed 90 days of unemployment days do not have access to the 60 day grace period.

- To avoid violating F-1 status and termination of SEVIS record, **prior** to reaching the 90-day unemployment limit, students should depart the U.S., or transfer their SEVIS record to another school.
- Students should email info@fmtt.org with their specific date they left the U.S. and request ISO to end their OPT before exceeding unemployment days.

Types of Jobs Allowed Under OPT

Relation to Major

- Student jobs must be directly related to their current major(s), not minor. It is their responsibility to be able to connect their OPT job to their major. If the relationship between their job and their major(s) is called into question by SEVP in the future, the burden of proof is on them to demonstrate the relationship.
- The F-1 international student advisors at ISO won't be able to advise students on specifically what jobs do/do not qualify as advisors are not experts in their field of study. They may use the following link to learn more about What Can I Do With This Major.
- It is recommended that students maintain evidence for each job: the position held, duration of that position, the job title, contact information of their supervisor or manager, and a description of the work. Students can also have multiple OPT employment but all of them must be directly related to their major.

Types of Employment Allowed

- **Paid employment:** Students may work part time or full time
- **Multiple employers:** Students may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to their major.
- **Short-term multiple employers (performing artists)**: Musicians and other performing artists may work for multiple short term employers (gigs). The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing a list of all gigs.
- **Work for hire:** This is also commonly referred to as 1099 employment where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than employment relationship. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods and the name and address of the contracting companies.
- **Self-employed business owner:** Students may start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, students must work full-time. They must be able to prove that they have the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to their major.
- **Employment through an agency**: Students must be able to provide evidence showing they worked an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.
- **Unpaid employment**: Students may work as volunteers or unpaid interns, where this does not violate any labor laws. If requested by DHS, students must be able to provide evidence from the employer that they worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment.

Types of Employment NOT Allowed

- **Employment not directly related to a student's major**
- **On-campus "Student" Employment**
  - When recommend OPT, ISO shorten the program end date on the I-20 to reflect OPT applicant's degree program completion. F-1 students can not pursue on-campus employment beyond the I-20 end date.
  - Graduate students who are still working on Culminating Experiences but have applied for OPT will also have shortened I-20s, therefore, cannot presume on-campus employment after program end date on the I-20.

Start Dates:

PRE-COMPLETION OPT (PRE-OPT)	POST-COMPLETION OPT (POST-OPT)
• Students can pick any date as long as their Pre-OPT period ends before their program completion date.	• The requested OPT start date must be within 60 days of the program completion date. For example, if a student's program completion date is June 3, the requested OPT start date must begin between June 4 to August 2.

Students may not receive a full 12 months of OPT if they apply for OPT less than 30 days before the "**Grades Available on FMAE portal**" or USCIS process time delays the OPT start date.

Things to consider for Post-Completion OPT start dates:

- **Graduation:** Will the student graduate? If a student applies for Post-OPT and learns they cannot graduate, they will need to withdraw their Post-OPT application (if eligible) and apply again (and pay again) when they are actually graduating. Students should not withdraw their Post-OPT application before speaking with a F-1 Advisor. Students who do not know if they will pass their courses should wait to apply for their Post-OPT.
- **Job Offer:** Does the student have a job offer with a specific start date? If not, how long do they expect their job search process to take?
- **Wait Time:** Will the USCIS time cut into the requested OPT start date? If so, students may lose OPT days and will not receive the full 12 month time frame.
- **Finances:** If a student chooses a later start date, and the OPT is approved early, the student may not begin working until the EAD start date has begun. Does the student have enough funds to afford a longer break between school and employment?
- **Insurance:** Students are not required to purchase insurance while on Post-OPT. However, if a student is interested in purchasing insurance, they must submit the request within 30 days of the current student insurance end date. If students are hoping to have insurance coverage through an employer, but choose a later start date, they would have a gap in insurance coverage.

F-1 advisors cannot decide on a start date for a student, since it depends on a student's personal circumstance. Students are encouraged to review the questions above and other considerations before making a decision.

End dates:

- Post Completion OPT end dates are based on desired start dates. It is automatically calculated as 1 day before, one year later. For example, if a student chooses July 15, 2021 as their start date, their end date will be July 14, 2022.
- If a student have used pre-completion OPT days, they will need to deduct the number of approved pre-completion OPT dates from the post-completion OPT dates.

Applying for OPT

- **Review the OPT resources above carefully**
    - Understand the OPT responsibilities
    - Choose a desired OPT start date
- **Keep a note of the date of completion to fill OPT request form**

- **Download the Optional Practical Training (OPT) Authorization Request Form** (Fillable PDF, updated in August 2021)
- **Fill out**
  - Page 1: "Student Information" & "OPT request Information"
  - Page 2: "Applicant Requirements and Responsibilities" & "Acknowledgement and Student Signature"
  - ISO accepts digital signatures, scanned copies, and high resolution/clear pictures of the completed form and documents.
- **Reach out to an Academic Advisors to obtain signature on OPT Request form to confirm graduation.**
  - ISO accepts digital signatures, scanned copies, and high resolution/clear pictures of the completed form and documents.

- Once the student has received their academic advisor/graduate advisor signature, email the form with both signatures (student & academic advisor) to **info@fmtt.org** (after the "first day to request OPT recommendation from ISO" date)
- An F-1 international student advisor will review then student's request. If eligible, they will be issued a OPT Requested I-20 within 10 business days.
- While a student is waiting for their "OPT Requested I-20", they should begin to prepare the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization.

As of April 12, 2021, USCIS has authorized students to file for Post Completion OPT (C)(3)(B) online.

Additional Resources

- **USCIS Form I-765**
- **How to create a USCIS online account**
- **Tips for filing online**

Waiting for OPT Approval

I-797C Notice of Action

- USCIS will provide the OPT receipt right after an online file, but will also mail a **paper I-797C notice** to students' address. The receipt number (usually starts from "**IOE**") is printed on the I-797C notice. If students do not receive any I-797C notice after mailing the application, request the receipt letter to be sent to the student by using the **USCIS online tools.**

Request for Evidence (RFE)

- (If applicable) If there is a problem with the application, USCIS will send them "Request for Evidence (RFE)" to ask more supporting documentation. An RFE does not mean that their application has been rejected. It simply means that they need to provide the missing documents before their EAD can be issued. USCIS give applicant 30 days to respond to the RFE. Their OPT application will be denied if they fail to respond to the RFE. Unfortunately, receiving an RFE will delay the processing of their OPT application. Reach out to a F-1 Advisor at **info@fmtt.org** before responding to the RFE.

Communication between students and SEVP

- Typically, the student should use these tools. USCIS will not talk to a P/DSO about a student case unless the student has filed a release or is present on the call. USCIS Contact Center: **https://www.uscis.gov/contactcenter**
- The "preferred email" on each students' FMAE Student Center is also the email address on their SEVIS record.
- If students checked their FMAE email as their "preferred email", the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will be sending important communication to their FMAE email. If students want to change their "preferred email", see "Update Contact Information" under "After OPT Approval" section below to update their preferred address.
- Students must make sure to continue to check their FMAE email and personal email after graduating to avoid missing important information from FMAE and SEVP.

 Check Case Status During USCIS Processing Time

Case Status

Students can check the status of their OPT application by entering their receipt number at USCIS' check your case status.

- The receipt number (usually starts from "IOE") is provided after the online file and printed on the I-797C notice.

The typical updates on the case status are:

- Your case has been received
- You have been sent a RFE (not common)
- Your RFE has been received (only if a RFE was requested)
- Your case has been approved
- Your EAD has been mailed

Process Time

The standard processing time for USCIS to approve and mail the EAD is 60 - 120 days or longer.

- See **current USCIS Service Center Form processing time**.

While OPT is pending, students are in valid F-1 status to wait in the U.S.

- Students are not using their 60 day grace period while OPT is in pending status.
- Students are not using their 90 day unemployment days while OPT is in pending status.

Special Cases

Non-Properly Filed Applications

- If a students' application is returned/rejected by USCIS for any reason, they must contact **info@fmtt.org** as soon as possible to request a new OPT requested I-20. Students must send the new I-20 with their OPT application to USCIS immediately! Their prior OPT requested I-20 will not be valid to be re-sent to USCIS.

Withdraw Applications

- If a student wishes to withdraw their application for any reason, they must contact **info@fmtt.org** as soon as possible to discuss how to maintain their F-1 status. Students should not withdraw their application before speaking with an F-1 advisor.

- USCIS will mail you an I-797 Notice of Approval (It is different from I-797C notice) letter and EAD card at your mailing address. These can come separately or at the same time. Do not start working until you receive the EAD, and the "Valid Date" on the EAD has started.

Rejected

- ISO recommends students to file their OPT applications online. Online filing are typically not "rejected" since applications cannot be submitted until payment is processed.
- Rejected applications are for mail-in filing where physical mail is returned by the USCIS Lockbox prior to processing.
- Rejected applications are not considered properly filed, and do not establish or retain a filing date.
    - Examples for rejections: missing/incorrect payments attached with mail-in application, missing signatures on the I-765 paper file.
- If still within OPT eligibility time frame, student may request a new OPT I-20 by contacting info@fmtt.org and resubmit a new I-765 application and fee to USCIS.
    - Mail-in Applications returned for application fee issues appear to have a "case number" on the rejection notice. However, the OPT application has not been accepted/receipted.
- Students whose OPT application is rejected after the applicable filing deadline is closed (i.e., after the 60-day grace period) are not eligible to refile, and must either depart the United States or take other actions to preserve or re-establish status (such as applying for a new program and travel/re-entry or reinstatement). Students in this situation should consult an experienced immigration lawyer.

Denied

- Applications have undergone review by a USCIS adjudicator and the adjudicator has found the applicant ineligible for benefits.
- Denied applications may be eligible to file for Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion if within eligible time frame.
- Students whose OPT application is denied after the applicable filing deadline is closed (i.e., after the 60-day grace period) are not eligible to refile, and must either depart the United States or take other actions to preserve or re-establish status (such as applying for a new program and travel/re-entry or reinstatement). Students in this situation should consult an experienced immigration lawyer.

Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion

- The denial of a Form I-765 cannot be appealed.
    - If the student believes that new facts or situations bear on the outcome of the decision, the student may consider filing a **motion to reopen.**
    - If the student believes that USCIS did not properly apply the law or policy to the facts, the student may consider filing a **motion to reconsider.**

Motion to Reopen

- Motions to reopen are filed on Form I-290B with the proper fee, and must be signed by the student.
- Form I-290B instructions summarize the required bases for filing a motion to reopen.
- Students in this situation should consult an experienced immigration lawyer.

Motion to Reconsider

- If the denial is due to USCIS error, a motion to reopen should not be filed.
    - Students should email the denial notice & a letter of explanation of the error to info@fmtt.org. ISO will forward the request to the USCIS Service Center to open the case internally.
    - Students should contact the **CIS Ombudsman's office** for assistance

- - - Note: that seeking internal resolution from USCIS Service Center does not stop the regulatory timeframe for filing a motion. The CIS Ombudsman's Office generally advises filers to pursue USCIS' appeal/motion options in conjunction with their outreach, to preserve that option. The student should be made aware of and consider both options carefully and consult an experienced immigration lawyer, if needed.
- If re-filing the application is required, student must request a new OPT I-20 by contacting info@fmtt.org and resubmit a new I-765 application and fee to USCIS.

What Happens if my OPT is approved early?

- After reviewing her academic progress with her academic advisor, Jane is confident that she will pass all her classes and complete her studies. On February 18, Jane mails her application for Post-OPT to USCIS. She is completing her program on May 18 and chooses June 30 as the OPT start date because she has a job offer beginning that day. She receives the EAD on May 15. Jane's employer is pleased to see proof of the work permission early even though she cannot start working until June 30, as noted on the EAD. Jane is in legal F-1 status and can decide to stay in the U.S. or travel outside of the U.S. before her EAD start date. If Jane did not find a job yet, she is still in legal status to stay in the U.S. to find a job between May 15 to June 30. Her 90 day unemployment days would begin to count starting on June 30.

What Happens if my OPT is approved late?

- John does not have a job offer or time to search for one until after he finishes school. He chooses the latest date possible to start his Post-Completion OPT -- July 17 -- which is the 60th day after his program completion date: May 18. He knows that he will be legal to stay in the U.S. as long as he has submitted the OPT application on time. John finally mails his OPT application on June 15. On July 17, John still hasn't received his EAD, so he cannot work. He receives his EAD on September 15 and it expires the following year on July 16 (14 months from May 18). John has lost 2 months of his 12 month OPT because his application was submitted late and approved after the latest available OPT start date.

F-1 students do not need a job offer in order to apply for OPT

- Once a student's OPT is approved and the EAD start date has begun, there is a 90 day unemployment time frame to find a job.
- While a student is waiting for their OPT approval, they may begin their job search and interview process.
- F-1 students may accept employment before their OPT is approved and EAD has started, but may not begin their work until the EAD start date.

Career Resources

- **FMAE** provides resources for current student and alumni with their job search process. Services include but are not limited to:
  - Resume Review
  - Cover Letter Review
  - Linkedin Review
  - Job Search Strategies
  - Interview Preparation
  - Networking
  - Job Fairs & much more!
- Make an appointment with a career counselor.

Beware of Scams

- You should be aware of potential job posting scams. We encourage you to use common sense and caution when applying for jobs. If a potential employer asks you to participate in an activity that makes you uncomfortable in any way, don't do it. If the benefit sounds too good to be true, ask questions and do research about this employer online before committing to anything.

After OPT Approval

 What to Expect from USCIS After OPT is Approved

Approval Notice

- USCIS will mail students an I-797 Notice of Approval (It is different from I-797C notice) letter at their mailing address.

Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

- USCIS will mail students an EAD at their mailing address. Students will not be authorized to start working until they receive the EAD, and the "Valid Date" on the EAD has started.
- Students can start working from the "Valid From" date printed on their EAD. Students may not begin to work if they have received their approval notice but do not have their EAD card on hand.
- If an EAD card is lost or has an error, review the USCIS "**Replace an EAD**" resource.

Social Security Card

- (If applicable) if a student requested a SSN on the Form, I-765, the Social Security Administration would receive the information from USCIS and automatically issue a SSN for the OPT student.

SEVP Log In

- Once a student's EAD card begins, they will receive their SEVP log in. Students who do not receive their log in information with 1 week after their EAD start date should email info@fmtt.org with their full name, FMAE ID, and a notice to "request SEVP log in email after OPT start date"
- All students should create a log in once the email is received, regardless of if the student has a job yet. The link will expire if not used.
- See " SEVP Portal and OPT Reporting Examples" resources below.

Lost/Incorrect EAD

LOST EAD

Option 1:

- Student may check the mailing address accuracy on I-765 online file and opens inquiry with the USCIS Contact Center using the USCIS Self Service Online Tool at **https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do**
- When USCIS receives the returned card from USPS, they will reissue the card to the updated address.
- Student should allow 21 days for card to be returned to USCIS, and an additional 30 days for reissuance before re-inquiring with USCIS.
- If still not received 30 additional days after 2nd inquiry, student should contact USCIS for proof that the card has been returned to USCIS and then can file with the CIS Ombudsman to escalate reissuance.
- The student CANNOT work during this time period.

Option 2:

- Student files new I-765 application for replacement EAD.
- New I-765 and filing fee are sent to USCIS. Copies of I-797 approval notice and I-20 showing original OPT recommendation are generally sent as best practice.
- Student receives receipt for replacement card filing. Student may work up to 90 days with this I-797 receipt while awaiting replacement card. (**https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/40-completing-section-2-form-i-9**)

In all cases, the student's address must be able to accept mail categorized as "first class or higher"; student must be listed as physically residing there with USPS or have indicated the person living at the residence in the c/o mailing address on the I-765.

CORRECTING AN ERRONEOUS EAD

Possible mistakes may include: name, birthday, start and/or end date. A typical error is an EAD end date that exceeds 12 months, or that ends more than the regulatory OPT completion limit of 14 months beyond the student's program end date. Students should review dates for accuracy and correct any errors, even if the error appears to grant more than the regulatory permissible amount of time.

Option 1: If the error is made by USCIS:

1. Student completes the online typographical error form here: **https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/displayTypoForm.do**
2. Follow directions received via email.

Option 2: If the error is made by the student:

1. Student must apply for a replacement EAD card online
2. New application includes:
   - New Form I-765 and Form I-765 filing fee online
   - Letter of explanation describing the error
   - Copy of incorrect original EAD
   - A new I-20/OPT recommendation is NOT required, as the OPT has already been approved.

If the student has an offer of employment, they may be able to complete the I-9 requirements with the incorrect EAD, depending on the specific error (such as birth date) and the requirements of the employer. If so, they can work while waiting for the replacement EAD if they can complete the I-9 process before returning the EAD.

Maintain F-1 Status on Post-Completion OPT

OPT is an F-1 Benefit:

- Even though a Post-OPT student is not attending classes, they are still in F-1 status while they are on Post-OPT. They are required to maintain their F-1 status in order to legally working in the U.S.

To maintain F-1 status, students must:

- **Maintain Accurate Contact Information with FMAE**
  - Students must ensure their contact information on FMAE Student Center is accurate, including preferred email, mailing address, and phone, and check their personal and FMAE email weekly. See the "Update Contact Information" resources below.
  - Students may continue to contact F-1 international student advisor at **info@fmtt.org** for travel & OPT related advising.
  - Students do not need to report their employment to ISO.
- **Maintain Accurate Contact & Employment Information on SEVP Portal**

- Students must report their personal contact and employment information directly to the **Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) portal**. See the " SEVP Portal and OPT Reporting Examples" resources below.
- **Maintain employment (not exceed 90 days of unemployment days)**
  - See the "90 Days Unemployment Limit and Consequence of Exceeding Limit" resources below

SEVP Portal and OPT Reporting Examples

What is SEVP Portal?

- **The SEVP Portal** is a tool for students to report their employer information directly to USCIS. Students on OPT do not need to report employment to ISO. Unemployment days are automatically calculated based on SEVP portal employment reporting.
- Students can report their U.S. address, phone number, and employment information at SEVP Portal.
- Students must report any changes within 10 days of change.

When will students create a log in?

- Once a student's EAD card and OPT start date begins, they will receive their SEVP log in email from SEVP (*do-not-reply.sevp[at]ice.dhs.gov*) at their "Preferred email" in their FMAE Student Center with instruction and a special link to create a SEVP portal account.
- All students should create a log in once the email is received, regardless of if the student has a job yet. The link will expire if not used.
- Students who do not receive their log in information within 1 week after their EAD start date should first check their spam or junk mail folder. Students who do not receive their log in information with 1 week after their EAD start date should email info@fmtt.org with their full name, FMAE ID, and a notice to "request SEVP log in email after OPT start date"
- Visit the **SEVP Portal Help** on **Study in the States**' website for further instruction or assistance.

How To Report Employment?

- Students should utilize the template below to report their employment. They may work for multiple jobs while on OPT as long as each employment is directly related to their major and is reported on the SEVP portal. Students who end employment must update the SEVP portal with the employment end date. Unemployment days are automatically calculated based on SEVP portal employment reporting.
- You may use the following link to learn more about **What Can I Do With This Major**. Please review page 25-33 of the **SEVP Portal Student Guide** (PDF) to report your employment, and use the following template in the "Relation of Study" section of the SEVP Portal:

"My major is (MAJOR), concentration in (CONCENTRATION). My job is directly related to my major because I will work an average of (NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK) as a (JOB TITLE) at a (COMPANY TITLE), where I will (JOB DUTIES). On a daily basis, I use the knowledge I gained in my (MAJOR COURSE TITLES). My duties directly utilize the skills and knowledge I acquired from my coursework and degree at FMAE."
Here are some examples:

Example Number 1:

My major is Engineering, concentration in Electrical Engineering. My job is directly related to my major because I will work an average of 40 hours per week as an Electrical Engineer at ABC Corp, where I will analyze client requirements for electrical systems and provide them with cost estimates of such systems. On a daily basis, I use the knowledge I gained in my electrical circuit theory courses. My duties directly utilize the skills and knowledge I acquired from my coursework and degree at FMAE.

Example Number 2:

My major is Business, concentration in Accounting. My job is directly related to my major because I will work an average of 35 hours per week as a Book keeper at XYZ Mortgage Company, where I will manage the book keeping and re-imbursement process for staff. On a daily basis, I use the knowledge I gained in my cost accounting and financial reporting courses. My duties directly utilize the skills and knowledge I acquired from my coursework and degree at FMAE.

Example Number 3:

My major is Music, concentration in Instrumental Performance. My job is directly related to my major because I will work an average of 30 hours per week as a harp player and instructor, where I will play harp in patient rooms and conduct hands-on harp beginner workshops for long-term patients. On a daily basis, I use the knowledge I gained in my music therapy courses. My duties directly utilize the skills and knowledge I acquired from my coursework and degree at FMAE.

Travel Outside the U.S. During OPT
See "**Travel While on Post-Completion OPT"** information.

Health Insurance Coverage During OPT
Students on Post-Completion OPT are not required to purchase FMAE sponsored insurance. However, OPT students are eligible to purchase this plan as long as you make the purchase within 30 days of your previous insurance expiration date. For example, if your current insurance will end on August 9, you must purchase new coverage by September 9.

To purchase insurance, complete Relation's OPT Enrollment Form:

FAX or MAIL the application with your EAD or I-20 with OPT request (if your application is still pending) to Relation. Do not apply online nor EMAIL the application.

Change U.S. Address, Phone Number, and Email Address

Preferred Email

- Students' "preferred email" on their FMAE Student Center is also the email address on their SEVIS record. For example, if they checked their FMAE email as their "preferred email", the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will be sending important communication to their FMAE email. Students must make sure to continue to check their FMAE email and personal email after graduating to avoid missing important information from FMAE and SEVP.

U.S. Address

- Students can change their U.S. address and phone number at SEVP Portal, but not their email address. Their email address at SEVP must be updated by ISO. Their FMAE Email will be discontinued after they graduate, therefore, we recommend students to update their address when they receive notification from FMAE ITS about their FMAE email account closure.

Update Email on SEVP Portal

Please follow the steps to update your email at SEVP Portal:

Step 1: Login to your FMAE student center. Change your "Preferred" email address from your FMAE email account to "Other". Make sure your "Other" email is the email you want to use for SEVP Portal.

Step 2: ISO will update your email address in the SEVIS database in 24 hours.

Step 3: SEVP Portal locks your account, and sends an email from "*Do-not-reply.sevp[at]ice.dhs.gov"* to your new email account with a temporary password

Step 4: Enter your new email address and temporary password to log in. You can reset your SEVP Portal password.

You can also review the **SEVP PORTAL: CHANGING YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS VIDEO** at Study in the States website.

After OPT Ends

60 Day Grace Period
Students will have 60-day grace period after the "Valid Until" date on the EAD. They must leave the U.S. or transfer to another school to continue their F-1 status within the grace period.

Going Back to School
If students wish to pursue study at a different U.S. institution, follow the **I-20 Transfer Procedures** instruction and request their SEVIS record/I-20 to be transferred to their new school.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Can I Start Working Before My OPT Application is Approved?
No. If their OPT application hasn't been approved, this means they do not have any authorization to work in the U.S. Do not start working before they have the EAD in their hand.

Can I Change Employers?
Yes. Make sure to report their new employer at SEVP Portal.

Can I Work On Campus While on OPT?
No. When recommend OPT, ISO shorten the program end date on the I-20 to reflect OPT applicant's degree program completion. F-1 students can not pursue on-campus employment beyond the I-20 end date. Graduate students who are still working on Culminating Experiences but have applied for OPT will also have shortened I-20s, therefore, cannot presume on-campus employment after program end date on the I-20.

When Can I Get a Social Security Number?

Students can apply for OPT and SSN together (on the I-765 form). Their SSN card should arrive within 7 business days after receiving the EAD.

Can I Enroll in Academic Courses While on OPT?

Do not enroll in any academic courses: Students can only take recreational/avocational classes (Yoga or Wine tasting classes…etc) while on Post-OPT. They cannot enroll in any academic degree nor certificate programs while on Post-OPT.

If students plan to obtain a higher degree and their academic program will start before your OPT end date, students must request their SEVIS record **to be transferred to your new school**. Their OPT will end on the date FMAE transfer their SEVIS record out.

What Happens if I Fail a Class During My Last Semester After Applying for OPT?

Contact an F-1 international student advisor as soon as possible if students believe they will fail a class after they have applied for OPT.   In some cases, they may be able to withdraw their OPT application. In other cases, they will continue their OPT and work part-time, while they complete their studies. Their OPT time will not be extended.

APPENDIX 2: CPT

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for F-1 Students

Overview

If you wish to accept employment off-campus, you should pursue Curricular Practical Training (CPT). CPT is defined as employment which is an integral part of an established curriculum, including: "alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school." Source: [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)]. CPT is available only prior to the completion of your degree program and you must have a job offer at the time of application. CPT employment may not delay completion of the academic program.

Students must maintain full-time enrollment during CPT. The full-time enrollment requirement means that most students have to limit their CPT during the academic year to local jobs or to working for their employer remotely, usually on a part-time basis. There are some exceptions, notably PhD students who have completed all their coursework and are now registered for dissertation/research hours only. However, such exceptions are rare. Although full-time CPT is allowed during the fall and winter semesters, the full-time enrollment requirement makes employment outside of the Ann Arbor area highly impractical in most situations.

Types of CPT

There are two types of CPT: required and optional. Required CPT is when the academic program mandates practical work experience for all students in order to graduate. Optional CPT is work experience directly related to your field of study that is not required.

Requirements for Non-Required CPT

- You must be enrolled in a CPT course. Designated CPT course are set up and approved by the FMAE.
- Notes regarding CPT course enrollment:
- CPT employment takes place starts in Fall Semester during the Practicum year, you must be registered for the CPT course during that term.
- If your CPT employment takes place during the spring/summer term, you may register either in the preceding winter term or during the spring/summer term.
- Failure to complete the CPT course will result in your falling out of legal F-1 status.

Part-Time vs. Full-Time CPT

Part-time CPT: Employment for 20 hours or less per week is considered part-time. You must be simultaneously enrolled in classes full-time and be physically present on campus in order to maintain lawful F-1 status during fall and winter terms.
Full-time CPT: Employment for more than 20 hours per week is full-time. Please be aware that 12 months or more of full-time CPT will eliminate your eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT).
Eligibility Criteria
To be eligible for CPT, you must:

- Have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis while physically present in the US for one academic year (i.e. three full consecutive terms) unless your academic program requires immediate participation for all students.
- Be in lawful F-1 status
- Have FMAE approved health insurance
- Have a job offer
- Not be enrolled in an intensive English language training program
  NOTE: CPT is processed and authorized term by term. Contact DSO regarding your department's specific guidelines and follow those guidelines for CPT applications. Please note that your department has discretion in recommending CPT.

CPT During Practicum Year

During your final year of study, you must be enrolled at the FMAE and physically present on campus in Dublin CA in order to comply with F-1 requirements. If you are enrolled part-time because you do not need a full course load to complete your remaining degree requirements, you must receive Reduced Course Load (RCL) authorization from the International Student Office.

If you are in compliance with these enrollment and physical presence requirements, then you may pursue CPT during your final term of study. Please note that the latest possible end date for CPT authorization during the final term of study is the last day of your **FMAE program.**

Documentation Needed to Apply

- CPT Authorization Request Form
- Practicum Site Agreement
- Practicum site Map and Info.
- Photocopy of your current I-20
- Photocopy of paper or print-out of electronic Form I-94
- Print out of your unofficial transcript
- **Please ensure all documents are complete- the ISO will not accept invalid or incomplete CPT applications.**
- You will receive an e-mail once your CPT I-20 is ready. No work, paid or unpaid, may take place until your CPT I-20 is printed.
- Be sure to sign and date your CPT I-20 and keep all I-20s permanently in your personal files.

If any details of your training opportunity change, please e-mail documentation verifying the changes to INFO@FMTT.ORG so that we may update your CPT accordingly.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Address Notification Requirement

You are required to update your address in student portal within 10 days of any change while you are in F-1 status.

CPT and Unpaid Internships

It is not uncommon for students to confuse unpaid internships with volunteering (and therefore conclude that no work authorization is necessary for engaging in an unpaid internship). However, there is a difference between volunteering and engaging in an unpaid internship. Volunteering refers to donating time with an organization whose primary purpose is charitable or humanitarian in nature, without remuneration or any other type of compensation. Internships, both paid and unpaid, are primarily offered by the private sector and related to the intern's major field of study. The U.S. Department of Labor has guidelines for those seeking an unpaid internship: https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm

The following six criteria must be met for an internship to be considered a legitimate unpaid internship (and not employment below minimum wage, in violation of Department of Labor laws):

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation on the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
- The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
- The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
- The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
- The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship

Do F-1 students need CPT authorization to participate in unpaid internship?

CPT authorization is strongly recommended for all unpaid internships, whether the student does or does not need to provide employment authorization documents to the company. The F-1 regulations are written in such a way that CPT is an authorization to do practical training as part of the curriculum for the academic program, and as such is significant in more ways than simply for the employer to verify employment eligibility. CPT authorization is more than just permission to get paid.

You should have CPT authorization for unpaid internships for the following reasons:

- CPT authorization by the university serves to demonstrate that this practical experience is part of the curriculum.
- CPT authorization is a way of reporting in SEVIS the student's activity, employment, and location where they are working and therefore maintaining their status.
- If ever a student is doing a job on an unpaid basis that someone would be hired and paid for, employment authorization in the form of CPT, OPT, etc. is advised.
- If the unpaid internship at some point changes into a paid one (or if your employer decides to compensate you for your work in any way – for example, give you a monetary gift), you won't be able to

accept the payment if your internship was not authorized as CPT. Please keep in mind that F-1 students cannot be retroactively remunerated or in any way compensated for work done in an unpaid internship if they did not obtain work authorization prior to when the work was performed.

Based on the above, we recommend that you apply for CPT authorization if you have an internship offer (paid or unpaid) that meets CPT eligibility criteria.

If the position is unpaid and for some reason it is not possible for you to obtain CPT authorization, please make sure that your prospective supervisor is aware of U.S. Department of Labor regulations concerning unpaid internships and that you have assurances (preferably written) to that effect before you accept the position. We also recommend that at the end of your internship you ask your employer to provide you with a letter confirming that there was no remuneration or any other type of compensation provided in any form during the dates you were participating in the internship. Please keep such a letter for your permanent records.