



Brandeis University

The Heller School for Social Policy and Management

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COEXISTENCE

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT)

While planning your practicum/field project you need to consider whether or not you will need to go through the process of CPT or OPT approval.

The [International Students and Scholars Office \(ISSO\)](#) – located in the Kutz building – is available to assist any international students on an F-1 Visa that may need to apply for OPT or CPT approval **prior** to beginning their practicum or internship.

WHAT IS CPT AND OPT?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) allows eligible students to work off-campus. It is a type of employment authorization for an F-1 visa holder that enables a student to pursue work in his/her major field of study under certain circumstances.

- The experience must be an integral (earns academic credit for all students in the major) or required (fulfills a mandatory degree requirement) part of the student's degree program.
- If you will be in an internship or job either here in the States or abroad you must have CPT Authorization BEFORE beginning work. Working without authorization is a violation of your Student Visa Status.
- There are four stakeholders in this process: Your Employer, your Academic Advisor, Brandeis' Registrar Office and your ISSO Advisor.

OPT Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an extension of F-1 student status that allows international students to work in the United States in order to gain practical experience.

- Any OPT employment must be directly related to the student's field of study and commensurate with his/her degree level.
- The OPT must be recommended by the International Student Advisor, and it must be authorized by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (CIS – Division of the Department of Homeland Security).
- Any student seeking to obtain OPT Authorization, should contact the ISSO to make an OPT appointment up to four months before the expected start date of the OPT employment.