INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Arriving On Campus

- All international students attending the University of Houston must contact the International Student and Scholars Services Office (ISSSO) upon campus arrival. In addition, International students are required to attend an orientation program. For more information contact ISSSO at:

  302 Student Service Center 1
  Houston, TX 77204-3024 USA
  Phone: (713) 743-5065
  Fax: (713) 743-5079
  http://www.issso.uh.edu

Maintaining F-1 Status

- Students must be enrolled full-time (9 hours for graduate students).
- Students are not allowed to work, unless they have CURRENT permission from and International Student Counselor or the Department of Homeland Security (Pg. 3 on the I-20 or an Employment Authorization Card).
- Students must carry current documentation (i.e. passport, I-20).
- Keep the ISSSO up to date on address/contact information/ major life changes.

Optical Practical Training (OPT)

- Optional Practical Training is not permitted for students during their first semester at the University of Houston or for students with a GPA below 3.0.
- Post-Completion OPT is allowed for students who have completed their degrees, including submission of their thesis/dissertation for binding for MS and PhD degrees.
- Pre-completion Part-time OPT is allowed for unsupported F-1 students during any semester but is limited to 20 hours per week. Time used is deducted from the one year eligibility at half the rate. Students must meet all applicable INS regulations regarding their status as a student.
- Pre-Completion Full-time Summer OPT is allowed but students can work full-time during the summer only. Time used is deducted from one year of eligibility. Students cannot hold a full-time OPT and be a supported student simultaneously.
- Pre-completion full-time OPT with only thesis or dissertation remaining is allowed for non-supported students, with approval of thesis/dissertation advisor. All coursework, along with department requirements, like screening exams, qualifying exams, and thesis/dissertation proposals must be completed for students to be eligible.

- For students wanting to participate in OPT, they will need to:
  - Submit a copy of their EAD card to ISSSO.
  - Actively search for employment (Visit UCS for resources and information).
  - Update ISSSO and UH PeopleSoft ‘SEVIS’ address type of their new address when they move.
  - Using the OPT Self Report, submit the employer’s information including name, address, and the duration of employment to ISSSO.
  - Create a folder for the student’s records only to maintain their ‘Personal Portfolio’. In this folder, keep evidence of OPT employment that is:
    - Directly related to major
    - A minimum 20 hours/week
    - Paid or unpaid

- According to the federal regulations [8 CFR 214(f)], F-1 students are responsible for reporting the address,
employer’s name and address, and any periods of employment and unemployment while on OPT. ISSSO is responsible for updating the student’s SEVIS record to reflect these changes. This reporting responsibility is an on-going requirement.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- CPT as practicum/internship or COOP will not be allowed. CPT as Dissertation or Thesis Research will be allowed, but to be eligible, a student must provide a letter from the employer verifying that the corporation is involved in the research and that the offer of employment is predicated on the need for access to their facility for purposes of data collection. The letter must be countersigned by the student’s advisor to show approval of the CPT.