F-1 students who plan to work in the U.S. can apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT), a temporary employment authorization that provides an opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to a practical work experience off-campus. If you will be graduating this May and plan on working in the U.S. this summer, you should start preparing to apply for OPT as soon as the applications open, which this year is February 23rd.

Please note that you must be physically present in the U.S. to apply for OPT and you do not need a job to apply for OPT. Do not pay the USCIS fee of $410 until you have a new I-20 from OISS recommending you for OPT.

Here are a few resources to help get you started:

- **Review our website**: You will find detailed information on eligibility, the application timeline, and process on our F-1 OPT page.
- **Attend your OPT Workshop**: At the beginning of February, OISS advisers will hold several OPT workshops to answer your questions and help get you started on the OPT application process. You should have received an email about your workshop details, but please register for your workshop on our website if you have not done so already.

As it can take 90 days or more for USCIS to approve OPT, it is important to apply as early as possible:

- **Are you graduating this May?** The earliest date you can apply for OPT is February 23rd. Start reading our website now and you can sign-up to attend an OPT workshop in early February with OISS so you can apply once the application is open.
- **Are you a continuing student?** You will apply for pre-completion OPT and you can apply as early as 90 days before your requested employment start date.

Get started now!