

Dear UCLA F-1 International Students,

Dashew Center would like to make you aware of a new proposed federal rule that could significantly affect Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT is temporary employment that is directly related to an F-1 student's major area of study. Eligible students can apply to receive up to 12 months of employment authorization upon completing their degree program to engage in employment in the U.S. Students who are in designated Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors are eligible for an additional 24 months of OPT.

On October 8, 2026, the [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) has proposed Optional Practical Training Fees](#) for each F-1 nonimmigrant student to engage in OPT through a Student and Exchange Visitor Program-certified institution. The proposed rule, if finalized, would establish a \$70,000 fee for initial OPT and a \$30,000 fee for subsequent STEM OPT, including certain future OPT applications or extensions to be paid by the university. The proposal is currently under the federal rulemaking process and has not taken effect. Current OPT procedures and fees remain in place at this time.

The Dashew Center is closely monitoring these developments and will share additional guidance as more information becomes available. We recognize that potential changes related to OPT may create uncertainty for students, and we are committed to supporting you throughout this process. Our team will continue to provide timely, accurate, and up-to-date information to help you understand any developments and make informed decisions.

For now, students should continue following the current OPT process. We encourage students to review our [Immigration Updates page](#) and utilize [resources](#) available to you in our UCLA community.

Sincerely,

Sam Nahidi
Director

Legal Resources:

- [Laws to Know](#)
- [Attorney List](#)
- [UCLA Student Legal Services](#)

UCLA Case by Case Support, Wellness, and Psychological Support. Actively enrolled students only:

- [Counseling and Psychological Support \(CAPS\)](#)
- [RISE Center](#)
- [Case Management](#)