A new policy has been implemented allowing F-1 students to work without jeopardizing their immigration status.

Policies for Curricular Practical Training and Optional Practical Training (Effective July 15, 2005)

The policy described below will allow F-1 students to work without jeopardizing their immigration status. The primary route to employment will be OPT, with only very limited access to CPT options 2 and 3.

Departments may adopt more restrictive policies if they choose to do so. Students are not eligible for CPT/OPT in their first semester of study at the University of Houston. Students with a grade point average less than 3.0 are not eligible for CPT/OPT.

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

- CPT as practicum/internship will not be allowed.
- CPT as COOP is allowed only for MEE- Telecommunications students.
- 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.

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

- 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.
[1] https://www.egr.uh.edu/academics/graduate-programs-policies/practical-training