



Post-Graduation Options for F-1 International Students at MSOE

As an F-1 student at MSOE, you have several pathways available to you after completing your degree.

Return to Home Country or Move Abroad

After graduation, you can return home or seek opportunities in other countries. You have a 60-day grace period to leave the U.S., change status, or transfer to a new program.

Start a New Academic Program

You can enroll in a new degree program at MSOE or another school. The start date of your new program must be within 5 months of the end of your current program or of your OPT end date. This path allows for possible new CPT/OPT eligibility if your level of degree changes.

- See [Transferring to a New School](#) for more information on this process at MSOE.

Apply for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

OPT allows you to work in the U.S. for up to 12 months in a job directly related to your major field of study at MSOE. You must attend and OPT workshop and apply to USCIS; you may begin the process up to 90 days before or within 60 days after graduation.

- See [Optional Practical Training \(OPT\)](#) for more information on this process at MSOE.

Apply for a STEM OPT Extension (immediately after OPT completion)

If your degree is in a STEM field, you can extend your OPT by 24 months. Most MSOE degrees qualify. You must be employed by an E-Verify employer and submit a Form I-983 Training Plan.

- See [STEM OPT Extension](#) for more information on this process at MSOE.

Additional Options for F1 Students

There are additional paths that you can pursue post-graduation or after OPT; we recommend you seek advice from an experienced immigration attorney, as our office is not equipped to advise in these areas.

Change of Status to a Different Visa Type

You may apply to switch to another visa category such as B-2 (visitor), O-1 (extraordinary ability), or a dependent visa. Each option has specific eligibility requirements and processes.

H-1B Work Visa (Employer-Sponsored)

This is a temporary visa for skilled workers. You need an employer to sponsor you and must be selected in the H-1B lottery.

Start a Business (While on OPT/STEM OPT)

You may start a business if it aligns with your field of study and you report it properly as OPT employment. Note, you cannot self-sponsor or complete your own Form I983 for STEM OPT, so it might be best to be employed by a structured company.

Marriage-Based Green Card

If you marry a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, you may be eligible for a green card through adjustment



Multicultural Affairs
Student Affairs and Campus Inclusion

The information that is shared here is based on federal regulations and university policies as of January 2026.

of status. The marriage must be genuine, and you can stay in the U.S. during processing.

Note: This publication is not intended to provide legal advice but to provide information on legal matters. If you are looking to work with an immigration attorney for any reasons, please contact [the State Bar of Wisconsin](#). You can also check [this website](#) for advice provided by the Association of International Educators (NAFSA).