

## **OPT and STEM OPT Maintenance of Status Fee FAQs**

### **What is the Maintenance of Status Fee?**

- The Maintenance of Status Fee is a \$125 annual fee for F-1 students who remain in the U.S. in F-1 status after graduation while on OPT or STEM OPT (so \$125 for OPT, \$250 for STEM OPT).

### **Why is there a fee?**

- While you are on OPT or STEM OPT, DePaul University continues to maintain and sponsor your SEVIS immigration record. This requires ongoing compliance and reporting to the U.S. government. The fee helps support ISS services that make this possible.

### **How is this different from other visas?**

- Most U.S. employment visas require employers to pay thousands of dollars in sponsorship and legal costs. With OPT, no employer sponsorship or attorney fees are required. Instead, this fee ensures ISS can continue assisting you with immigration compliance, advising, and post-graduation support.

### **When do I pay the fee?**

- If you apply for **OPT** on or after **October 15, 2025**, you will pay \$125 when you apply.
- If you later apply for a **STEM OPT extension**, you will pay \$250 total (for years two and three) at the time of your STEM application.

### **What if I apply before October 15, 2025?**

- Students who apply for OPT or STEM OPT before October 15 will not be charged the fee retroactively. However, students currently on OPT who apply for STEM OPT after October 15 will be required to pay the \$250 fee at that time.

### **How do I pay the fee?**

- You pay the fee as the first step in requesting the **OPT Recommendation I-20** or **STEM OPT Recommendation I-20** through your ISS Portal.
- Once the fee has been paid and verified, you will complete the OPT/STEM OPT Recommendation I-20 process.

### **Is the fee refundable?**

- No. The fee is mandatory and nonrefundable.

**What happens if there is a problem with the fee process?**

- Please contact [ISS@depaul.edu](mailto:ISS@depaul.edu) for further guidance.

**Who do I contact for further questions?**

- Contact the ISS Front Desk or your ISS advisor.

**How does this benefit me?**

The fee directly supports:

- Continued maintenance of your SEVIS record during OPT and STEM OPT.
- Immigration compliance services to help you stay in good standing.
- Career-readiness programming and resources to support your professional success.