



## Applying for Post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

### Eligibility:

- You must be an F-1 student in good standing, enrolled full-time for one academic year.
- You must complete all degree requirements by the time your OPT starts.
- You must not have used more than 12 months of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) at your current degree level.

### Your application must include:

- Completed [I-765 form](#)
- Personal check or money order for \$410, made out to the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security. To pay by credit card, use the [Form G-1450](#).
- Your [I-94](#).
- Photocopy of your last EAD card, front and back (if you have one).
- Photocopy of all previous I-20s with CPT and OPT authorization, if applicable.
- Photocopy of the ID page and visa page of your passport.
- Two passport photos taken no more than 30 days before you submit your application. You can get passport photos at WalMart, RiteAid, and CVS, and elsewhere. *Gently write your name and I-94 number on the back of both photos.*
- I-20 from university recommending OPT. *You must request this from ISSS by submitting the last page of this form.*
- Optional:* If you want updates from USCIS by text or email, fill out the [Form G-1145](#).

### How to fill out the Form I-765:

#### Part 1

1.a. Check “Initial permission to accept employment.”

#### Part 2

5.a. If you are having your EAD card sent to someone else, give their information here. Make sure you check “no” to **6.** and provide your address in **7.**

7. If the destination you listed in **6.** is not your address, please give your address here.

13.a. If you check “no,” answer “yes” to **14.** and **15.** AND give the information requested in **16.a.** through **17.b.**

21.a. Use the 11-digit number on your **most recent** [I-94](#).

27. Your eligibility category for post-completion OPT is (c) (3) (B).

#### Part 6

You must document any previous CPT or OPT authorization. See the following sample page.



**Once you have all your documents for the application:**

- Photocopy or scan your I-765 form (recommended).
- Send your application within 30 days of your OPT I-20 issuance date to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) using private courier service. If they receive your application more than 30 days after your I-20 has been issued, it could be denied.
- Mailing address:

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) First-Class and Priority Mail Express deliveries:  USCIS PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266	For overnight / courier deliveries (not USPS):  USCIS Attn: AOS 2501 S. State Hwy 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067
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**Keep a copy of your mail receipt and money order receipt, if you get one.**

1. Once you have submitted the OPT application:
  - You should receive a receipt within 4 weeks of mailing. Make sure there are no errors in your name and address.
  - You can check the status at [uscis.gov](http://uscis.gov), with your receipt number.
  - Mark your calendar on day 75 after USCIS receives your application. If you have not received an approval (or a “request for evidence”) by that date, call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 and put in a service request because your application is nearing the “regulatory timeframe.” If you have not received approval at 90 days, contact Lora Steiner in ISSS.
  - Do not travel while your application is pending as it may jeopardize your ability to re-enter the United States.



**Once you have been authorized for OPT:**

- Send a scan or photocopy of your EAD card to International Student & Scholar Services.
- Set up your SEVIS portal account and report all changes in employment and unemployment, as well as your address.
- Do not exceed 90 days of unemployment. If unemployment exceeds 90 days in total your OPT is no longer valid.
- If you travel outside of the U.S., to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status, you will need:
  - An unexpired passport
  - A valid F-1 visa
  - An I-20 that has been signed for travel by an ISS advisor within the last six months
  - Your EAD card
  - A letter from your employer stating your job title, job description, begin and end dates, and verifying that your employer knows you are traveling and expects you to return. If you do not have job, do not travel as you may not be permitted to re-enter the U.S.

Frequently asked questions:

***Do I need a job offer to apply for OPT?*** No.

***When should I apply for OPT?*** You can apply up to 90 days before your program completion date, or 60 days after your program completion date. Applications received before or after those dates will be denied.

***What is my program completion date?*** Your program completion date is the last day of the semester in which you complete degree requirements, not your graduation or degree awarded date.

***When can I start working?*** You may start working on the approved date on your EAD card AND when you have received your EAD card.

***Can I be unemployed while on OPT?*** Yes, for 90 days total. If you are unemployed for 90 cumulative days (does not have to be consecutive), you lose OPT status and will have to return home.

***Can I travel while on OPT?*** Yes. We do not recommend traveling outside of the U.S., however, if you have not found a job or are unemployed.

***May I study during OPT?*** Yes—if it is part-time, and not towards a degree. Taking a photography class, for example, or a prerequisite course for a master's program you plan to apply for is allowed. If you are admitted to a new program that would normally require an I-20 for study, you forfeit your OPT.



## Optional Practical Training (OPT) Request Form

This form gives the International Student & Scholar Services office the necessary information to approve Optional Practical Training (OPT) for international students on an F-1 visa.

**Return this page to the International Student & Scholar Services office.**

### A. STUDENT INFORMATION:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email you will use after graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

When do you expect to graduate (semester/year): \_\_\_\_\_

Requested OPT authorization dates\*    *Start date:* \_\_\_\_\_

*End date:* \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Start date must be within 60 days of your program completion date.**

*I have read all of the information in this packet and understand my responsibilities for maintaining my F-1 status while on OPT.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### B. ADVISOR RECOMMENDATION:

The international student is applying to the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services for OPT, which authorizes the student to work for one year in his/her area of study. In order to recommend the student for this benefit, the International Student Services office requires that academic departments certify the date when a student is expected to complete all program requirements for graduation.

Student's major: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected completion date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Date student will complete all required coursework for degree, not graduation date.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name and title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_