

Post-Completion OPT

Eligibility Requirements & Application Process

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in your degree program to off-campus work in your major field (*not your minor*). OPT is authorized by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This authorization can take 2-to-3 months to obtain. The maximum amount of time granted to work on F-1 OPT status is 12 months per degree level, plus a possible H1-B cap-gap extension OR a 24-month extension for degree holders from a STEM field (*Science, Technology, Engineering, Math*).

Eligibility Requirements

- Candidates must have been enrolled as a full-time undergraduate/graduate student for at least one academic year (9 consecutive months)
- Candidates must be in active F-1 status when applying
 - *IELP students are not eligible for OPT*
- Candidates must have completed or is nearing completion of his/her degree program

OPT General FAQs

- Graduates do NOT need to have a job offer in order to apply for OPT
- Graduates CANNOT commence working until their OPT has been approved and they have received their EAD card (Employment Authorization Document) in the mail from USCIS AND only after the official start date, as indicated on the EAD card
- Graduates MUST find a job within 90 days from the designated start of their OPT, otherwise their OPT will be void
- Employment MUST be directly related to the graduate's degree program and be approved by the DSO
- Employers MUST provide an official Offer of Employment letter for graduates and complete and sign the Employment Information Form
- Graduates MUST report to the DSO any changes in employment, address, and general contact information within 10 days of those changes
- Employment can be anywhere within the United States
- Graduates are eligible to work up to 40 hours per week

**If interested in pursuing Post-Completion OPT, please
follow the instructions on Page 2.**

Application Process

Step One:

- Attend an OPT Seminar (usually held each semester or in the Spring semester)
- Collect the OPT packet from the DSO and review the packet thoroughly
- Gather and compile all the necessary documents from OPT Required Document Checklist listed below.
- Download “Form I-765” from www.uscis.gov and complete with help of packet directions
- Consult with the Immigration Specialist/DSO for additional assistance

Step Two:

- Meet with the Immigration Specialist/DSO on campus to discuss your recommendation. The DSO will print out a new I-20 for you, which will include a recommendation for your OPT. You will send a copy of this new I-20 with your application to USCIS.

Step Three:

- Mail the documents listed below to the USCIS. The agency must receive your application no more than 90 prior to your program end date, or no more than 60 days beyond the end date on your I-20. You **MUST** send your application within 30 days of getting the new I-20 from the DSO.

Application Checklist

- 1. *Registered for Graduation (not for packet Office of International Affairs Only) Signature required*
- 2. Form I-765 (**download from www.uscis.gov/i-765**) (*follow instructions on page 6*)
- 3. A copy of the new I-20 that the DSO gives you with the recommendation for OPT
- 4. A copy of I-94 Card (**Print online at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>**)
- 5. A copy of photo page (identification page) and expiration date page of your passport
- 6. A copy of the F-1 visa page of your passport (even if expired) (Canadians won't have this)
- 7. A copy of ALL previous I-20s that have been issued to you with your current SEVIS ID#
- 8. A copy of your previous OPT card or other work card (EAD), if applicable
- 10. Two passport style photographs
- 11. Fee of \$410. Checks may be made payable to the Department of Homeland Security.
- 12. Form G-1145: e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance (*optional*)
- 13. Cover Letter indicating documents included in the OPT application packet (*optional*)