Optional Practical Training (OPT) Information

What is Optional Practical Training (OPT)?
OPT provides F-1 students the opportunity to gain employment experience in their academic fields of study for a maximum period of twelve (12) months. It must be:
- Directly related to the student’s major(s) or minor field of study
- Appropriate for someone having the student’s level of education

Who is eligible?
F-1 students enrolled full-time in a degree program for at least one academic year are eligible to apply for OPT. If you have changed your visa status to F-1 within the last year, consult with an ISSO advisor regarding your previous status; you may be able to apply your time in a different status toward the academic year requirement.

What type of employment is available?
- **Pre-Completion** - During summer vacation (full-time or part-time) or during the academic year (part-time only; 20 hours/week maximum).
- **Post-Completion** - After completion of your degree program (must be full-time; 20+ hours and can be paid or unpaid) **This is the most common form of OPT for students.**
- **STEM Extension** - After completion of the first 12 months of OPT, students who have completed degrees in approved STEM fields may be eligible for up to two 24-month STEM extension.

**Note:** Periods of full time pre-completion OPT reduce your 12 month total at a one to one rate and periods of part-time, pre-completion OPT authorization reduce your 12 month total at one-half the rate.

When do students apply?
- **Pre-completion OPT** - You may apply for OPT up to 90 days before the requested employment start date. There is no deadline to apply for pre-completion, but you must be approved and have an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) for OPT before beginning to work.
- **Post-Completion OPT** - You may apply for OPT any time from 90 days before, and no later than 60 days after, your program completion date. Your start date must be within 60 days of your program completion date.
- Your OPT application must be filed within 30 days of the date your OPT I-20 was entered into SEVIS by ISSO (this is the date next to the ISSO’s signature on Page 1)
- After you have completed all course requirements, you should not leave the United States until you have received your EAD for OPT.
When can students begin working?

You can begin to work when:

1. You have received your EAD

AND

2. The beginning date endorsed on the EAD becomes current.

If, after receiving your EAD card, you discover that you have not completed all your program requirements, contact ISSO immediately. Do not risk working illegally. If you are on OPT and you plan to transfer to another school, please be aware that once Towson University releases your SEVIS record, your OPT (and work authorization) will end on the date your record is released to a new school.

What are my responsibilities while on post-completion OPT?

1. You must work more than 20 hours per week
2. The work must be in your field and at your degree-level
3. Report address changes within 10 days on the SEVP Portal
4. Report changes to employment, including the addition of employer, loss of employment, or changes in employer’s name and/or address. This should be done on the SEVP Portal
5. While on OPT, you are only permitted 90 days of unemployment. Once you have gained 90 days of unemployment, you are no longer in status.
6. If eligible for STEM OPT, you must submit completed I-983 to the ISSO no later than 2 weeks before the end date of your OPT.
Completing the I-765

- Disclaimer: Please note that this is not Legal Advice.
- Guidance in this document is for sections that can be confusing or in which USCIS wants information in a specific format. Please fill out ALL sections of the application.
- Please type using the writeable PDF. Be sure to open the PDF in the Adobe Application rather than using a web browser.
- You will need to sign the form by hand on page 4.

Page 1: Part 1

- Select 1.a.

Page 1: Part 2

- Your Full Legal Name is the name on your passport
- 2.a.-2.c. If you have no other names that you have used in the past (maiden names, etc.), write NA
- 3.a.-4.c. If you write NA in 2.a.-2.c, leave these blank

Page 2: Part 2

- This is the address where USCIS will send your Receipt notice and your OPT card
- 5.a. Only enter information here if you are requesting your documents be sent to another person (e.g. a family member or friend)
- 6. Your physical address is where you are living at the time of applying
  - If you answer Yes, leave 7.a-7.e. blank
  - If you answer No, complete 7.a-7.e.
- 8. Leave blank
- 9. Leave blank
- 13.a.
  - If Yes,
    - 13.b. Enter your Social Security number
    - 14. Select No
  - If No,
    - 13.b. Leave blank
    - 14. Select Yes
    - 15. Select Yes
    - Complete 16.a.-17.b.
- 18.a. Enter the country of the passport that you used to enter the U.S.
- 18.b.
  - If you have other citizenship, write that country here
  - If you do not have other citizenship, write NA

Page 3: Part 2

- 21.a. Enter I-94 number for your most recent entry to the U.S., which you can find at: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home#section. If your most recent travel outside of the U.S. was to Canada or Mexico, please check in with the ISSO.
- 21.c. If you have a passport, write NA
Page 3: Part 2, continued.

- 23. Where did you last enter the U.S.? Usually, this is an airport: specify the airport. For Example, if you came in to the U.S. through New York, specify: New York JFK Airport (or New York La Guardia Airport, etc.) If your last arrival in the U.S. was by car, bus, or boat, please check in with the ISSO.
- 24. Enter F-1 student unless you have changed your immigration status while in the U.S.: in that case, you will enter the status in which you last entered the U.S. (e.g. H-4, etc.)
- 25. Enter F-1 student
- 26. Your SEVIS number can be found at the top of your I-20.
- 27. For post-completion OPT, enter ( c ) ( 3 ) ( B ). Write it EXACTLY as it is here, with a lower-case “c” and an upper-case “B.” If you are applying for pre-completion OPT or STEM OPT, please contact the ISSO.
- 28-31.b. If you are applying for post-completion OPT, please leave these sections blank.

Page 4: Part 3

- You must select either 1.a. or 1.b.
- If someone helps you prepare the application (not the ISSO), please select and complete 2.
- 3. You must enter your phone number or NONE (only if you do not have a phone number)
- 4. Enter either your number or NONE
- 5. Enter your e-mail or NA
- 7.a. Sign (by hand) in BLACK ink. Do not type or use a stamp

Page 4: Part 4

- 1.a.-2. Write NA in each box

Page 5: Part 4

- Draw by hand a diagonal line across the page and write N/A (see example)

Page 6: Part 5

- Draw by hand a diagonal line across the page and write N/A (see example)

Page 7: Part 6

- Have you been previously authorized for CPT or OPT, or have you had other SEVIS numbers?
  - If No:
    - Draw by hand a diagonal line across the page and write NA
  - If Yes:
    - For CPT, OPT, or SEVIS #, you will need to document these in sections 3-7. See our attached sample page. If you have only one of these, add it to section 3, and leave the rest of the page blank
    - For CPT Authorizations, indicate the Employer, the dates of the authorization period, whether it was part-time or full-time, and the degree-level at which you completed the CPT
    - For OPT Authorizations, indicate the dates of the authorization, and the level at which it was completed
    - For previous SEVIS ID numbers, indicate the number, the program start and end date, and the category (e.g. Intensive English Language, Au-Pair, Bachelor’s Degree, etc.)
### Part 6. Additional Information

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

| 1.a. Family Name (Last Name) | Potter |
| 1.b. Given Name (First Name) | Harry |
| 1.c. Middle Name | James |

| 2. A-Number (if any) | A- |

| 3.a. Page Number | 3 |
| 3.b. Part Number | 2 |
| 3.c. Item Number | 27 |

**3.d. CPT Authorizations:**
- **Ollivander's Wands Towson Branch:**
- **Gringott's Bank of Baltimore:**
  - 05/28/2018-08/05/2018, Full-time, Master's

| 4.a. Page Number |  |
| 4.b. Part Number |  |
| 4.c. Item Number |  |

**4.d. OPT Authorization:**
- 05/26/2013-5/25/2014, Bachelor's
OPT Photo & Check Guidelines

Photo requirements
You should confirm that your photo meets all the below requirements before you leave the store.

- Neutral expression (no smile)
- Head centered within frame
- 2 inches by 2 inches
- Height of head (top of hair to bottom of chin) should measure 1 inch to 1 3/8 inch (25-35 mm)
- Make sure eye height is between 1 1/8 inches to 1 3/8 inches (28-35 mm)
- Write your name and I-94 number on the back of the photos and place them in an envelope

Actual size sample photo (if printed on 8.5” x 11” paper)

I-765 Fee Payment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account Holder’s Name</th>
<th>Your name (if not account holder)</th>
<th>1234</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Account Holder’s Address</td>
<td>I-94: 1234567890</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: Jan 1, 2018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay to the order of:</td>
<td>Department of Homeland Security</td>
<td>$410.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four hundred and ten dollars and 00/100 cents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dollars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo</td>
<td>For OPT application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Account-holder signature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;: 12345678910 &gt;:</td>
<td>9876 543 21&lt;: 1234</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This sample is a check. It may look different if it is a Money Order or Cashier’s Check. Ask us if you have questions about how to complete it.

- If using a personal check, a name and address must be printed on the upper left of the check.
- Check or money order should be made out to Department of Homeland Security: do not abbreviate this.
- Make sure you write the following on the check or money order:
  - Name
  - I-94 number
  - “for OPT application”
## OPT Application Document Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents required for OPT Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Form G-1145, available at: <a href="https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145">https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145</a>. This form is not required, but if you include this form, you will receive an e-mail or text message when your application has been received by USCIS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Personal check, money order, cashier’s check, or completed G-1450 Authorization for Credit Card Transaction form for $410.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• include your name, I-94 number, and “OPT application” on check, money order or cashier’s check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• G-1450 Authorization for Credit Card Transaction form available at <a href="https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450">https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450</a> if you choose to pay by credit card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Two (2) U.S. Passport-size photos, with your name and I-94 number on the back of the photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Photocopy of your new Form I-20 with OPT recommendation (please sign your new I-20 before you make a copy). <strong>Remember that USCIS must receive this I-20 within 30 days of its creation.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Photocopy of your passport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Photocopy of your visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Photocopy of your most recent I-94 (previous I-94s are not required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. (Optional) Photocopies of all of your previous I-20s, including, if applicable, those from other schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Photocopies of any previously-issued EAD cards (if applicable)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Make a copy of your application before you send it!!!

### Sending your application

We recommend that you send your application with some sort of delivery confirmation or tracking – either by registered mail or by express mail – so that you may confirm that your application was received by USCIS.

**Before mailing, make a copy of your entire application to keep for your records.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If using <strong>USPS (Post Office)</strong>, then mail to:</th>
<th>If using <strong>FedEx or UPS</strong>, then mail to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USCIS PO Box 660867</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas, TX 75266</td>
<td>USCIS, Attn: AOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2501 S. State Hwy 121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Suite 400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPT (Post-Completion) 
I-20 Request Form

Before submitting the request form, you must attend the in-person OPT Workshop or complete the online version of the OPT Workshop. With this form, the ISSO will provide you with a new Form I-20 recommending post-completion OPT. You must submit a copy of this I-20 to USCIS along with the other required application materials.

**To be completed by the student** (please write legibly)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name:</th>
<th>First Name:</th>
<th>ID#:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please indicate your desired employment start and end date:

- **Start Date:** _______ / _______ / _______
- **End Date:** _______ / _______ / _______

Please select one:

- [ ] I attended the in-person OPT workshop on this date: _______ / _______
- [ ] I completed the online version of the OPT workshop on Blackboard

**By signing below, I understand that while on OPT:**

- I must inform the ISSO of my employment information and submit any updates to my employment, address, etc, within 10 days of the change.
- I am only allowed 90 days of unemployment.
- I may not begin my OPT employment until I receive the EAD card and the dates are current.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**To be completed by Faculty/Academic Advisor/Program Director**

In order to process the request for employment authorization, the ISSO needs to confirm when the student is anticipated to complete their degree.

**Student’s anticipated completion date:** (circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>20_______</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisor Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Phone Ext:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisor Name (Printed):</th>
<th>Department:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>