

# OPT – OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

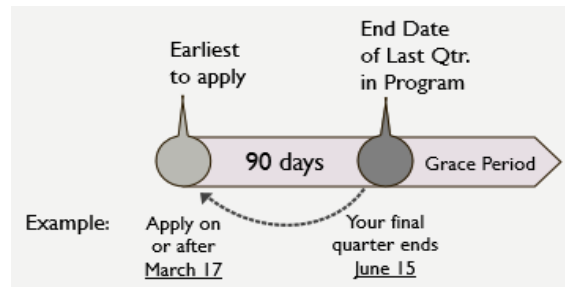
## Guidelines for Eligibility, Approval Process and Work

### **Eligibility Requirements for Post-Completion OPT**

- You have enrolled full-time in the U.S. for at least one complete academic year (9 months)
- You will complete a transfer degree, AAS, BAS, or Short Term Certificate program. *Exception:* Short Term Certificate in General Studies is not eligible. Ask your advisor if you are not sure.
- You have not already done post-completion OPT for the same level of study, or full-time CPT for a year
- You intend to work in a job directly related to your field/focus of study (major)
- Have you violated your F-1 status any time in the past? You might not be eligible yet; check with your advisor.

### **Timeline: Plan ahead!**

It will take a short time to hear from an advisor and prepare your application but it may take 2 – 3 months for your OPT application to be approved after you've sent it to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.



### **Steps to Apply for OPT**

Keep this page for reference!

1. **Attend an OPT Workshop!** Do not wait until your last quarter to do this. A good time to attend would be when you have completed 45 credits of college-level coursework for an associate degree, or are in your 2nd quarter of a Short Term Certificate. Check the e-news or IP Office for dates and times each quarter.
2. **Apply for [Graduation](#) with the Registration and Records Office**
3. **Submit the Graduation Quarter Request e-form in [SCDGlobal](#).**
4. **Submit *Request for OPT* to IEP Office**
  - We recommend that you submit the OPT request form before Finals Week of the quarter *before* your final quarter, then schedule your OPT appointment during the break or in the first few weeks of your final quarter.
  - Complete all information in the *Student Section* of the OPT request form (attached) and submit it to the IP Office reception desk. An advisor will review your request.
5. **Watch Email / Schedule Appointment:** Watch for a message confirming OPT eligibility. Please allow up to one week to process your request. If approved, schedule an OPT appointment with the advisor but be sure to allow enough time for YOU to prepare all the materials needed!
6. **Application materials:** Prepare all the materials listed on the back of this paper. You must have all documents ready when you come for your OPT appointment with an advisor, so do not schedule your appointment too quickly.
7. **OPT Appointment / New I-20:** An advisor will review the application with you, and print a new I-20 with the OPT endorsement listed on page 2. Do not send your application without the new I-20!
8. **Send your application by certified mail to the address listed on back, within two weeks.** USCIS will reject your application if it is not received within 30 days of the date OPT is listed on your SEVIS record.
9. **Final quarter completion (if fail classes, drop a class, etc.):** If you do not complete your program after you have already applied for OPT, notify your advisor immediately! It may be possible to withdraw your OPT application, take the necessary class(es) and re-apply for OPT later. If you do not communicate with your advisor, your OPT may be cancelled and you may fall out of status.

Your checklist of items to prepare is on page 2, together with other information.  
Bring this sheet and all documents with you to your OPT appointment.

**IMPORTANT: You may not begin working in an OPT job until after you have received your EAD card!**

**Materials to prepare** for your OPT appointment are listed below. NOTE: If you do not have all materials ready before the appointment, please reschedule your appointment to the following week.

- Completed Form G-1145:** available online at <https://uscis.gov/g-1145>. This form enables USCIS to send you an email and/or text message to confirm your application has been received.
- Completed Form I-765/** Application for Employment Authorization: available online at <https://uscis.gov/i-765>. This will open a PDF document that you can save on your laptop or cloud account.
  - Type your information directly in the PDF, save, and print all pages, single-sided, when you've finished answering all the questions.
  - Many students are unsure how to fill out certain parts of this form. Your advisor will provide instructions when they send the approval email message.
- \$410 application fee.** Check or money order payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security." On the check Memo line, you can write "I-765 OPT" and your name & I-94 number. The check amount must be exactly \$410. Further details about payment are available online: <http://www.uscis.gov/forms/paying-immigration-fees>
- Two recent color passport photos:** 2" x 2" square; white background; face fully forward. Photos must not be more than 30 days old. Print your full name and I-94 number on the back of each photo, using *pencil* or thin felt-tip pen (not ball-point ink pen).
- Copy of your passport photo page.** Passport must be valid for at least another 6 months. Include copy of renewal page if original passport has expired.
- Copy of F-1 visa** page from your passport. If you changed status in the US, copy of your original visa.
- Printout of electronic I-94**, available at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov> (or copy of the paper I-94 card from passport). See instructions from your advisor for more details.
- Information from all previous SEVIS records, if different SEVIS number from your current one.** You do not need to mail copies of all I-20s, but you will need to provide information such as SEVIS ID number and start/end dates if you have had previous SEVIS numbers and/or CPT or OPT in the past: This includes any previous U.S. school(s).
- Copies of any EADs (work authorization) previously issued to you, if any. (Copy both front and back of the EAD.)
- If you applied for a change of status from J-1 to F-1, include a copy of your USCIS Notice of Action, the DS-2019, and I-94. OR, if you applied for a change of status from other visa categories (e.g. B2), bring a copy of your Notice of Action, original visa, and I-94.
- Copy of I-20 with OPT endorsement. **You will get this from your advisor at the OPT appointment.** (You will keep the original I-20 and send the copy with your OPT application packet.)

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**After your OPT appointment,** send your application packet to the address listed below.

- Send by **certified mail** from a US post office– this will cost is less than \$5 and will provide you with tracking of your OPT packet. Ask the post office how to request certified mail.
- USCIS must receive your application within 30 days of the date your new "OPT I-20" was issued

**For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries,  
regular mail or certified mail option:**

USCIS  
PO Box 805373  
Chicago, IL 60680

*For overnight or courier deliveries (non-USPS):*

USCIS  
Attn: I-765 C03  
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor  
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

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You will receive an **OPT Reminders** sheet from your advisor during the appointment. Keep this paper and refer to it for instructions about what you should do later, after your application has been mailed.

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