

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

I. Instructions for 12 MONTHS of OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

Definition-

Students in F-1 status may apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) part-time during fall & spring semesters or full time during summer vacation or after completion of their studies. OPT allows the student to be employed in his/her field of study for a total of 12 months after each degree level –e.g. BS., MS., Ph.D. OPT used prior to the completion of studies is subtracted from the 12 month total. Note: Curricular Practical Training (CPT) impacts OPT **only** if the student exceeds 12 months full-time CPT. Each period of OPT requested requires a recommendation from a designated school official (DSO) in the International Students and Scholars office, a completed I-765, and a fee of **\$410.00**, to obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Eligibility-

F-1 students are eligible to apply for OPT when they have been in F-1 status for one academic year, and have otherwise maintained their F-1 status. The date for beginning post completion OPT is determined by the date when requirements for the degree program have been met. **This is called the date of completion; it is not necessarily the date of graduation.** The completion date for graduate students could be the date the thesis/dissertation is successfully defended. The completion date for undergraduate students is the last day of the semester in which they complete all course requirements. The application must be filed either **90 days prior** to the end date of the degree program and no later than **60 days after** the end date of the degree program.

Post-completion OPT is now dependent on employment. Post-completion OPT may not accrue more than **90 days** of unemployment under the initial 12-month period of OPT. It implies that the student will be in violation of status if not employed. See additional information on front page of packet – General Information.

WARNING: If for some reason you do not graduate and will be required to enroll in the next semester you must contact ISS immediately. There are major issues when you do not complete your degree on time.

Procedures-

- 1. Within 90 days before or no later than 60 days after the program completion date**, the following items should be submitted through the ISS link.
 - **Student request for Optional Practical Training.** Complete the final semester form with academic adviser signature.
 - **Form I-765.** Item #27 should be (c) (3) (B).
 - **Photocopies of past CPT and/or OPT I-20**
 - **Passport** valid for a minimum of 6 more months.
 - **I-94**, arrival/departure records (the white card or the printout from www.cpb.gov/i94).
 - **Colored photocopy of valid visa** (see instructions in packet)
 - **2 photos** (prepare but don't upload on the ISS link).
 - **Email address that is accessible for OPT duration and phone number** are required
- 2.** If you are eligible and have maintained F-1 status for one academic year, ISS will recommend OPT via SEVIS and issue another Form I-20 noting OPT.
- 3.** Apply to the USCIS online or by mail. The application must be received at the USCIS within 30 days of OPT recommendation in SEVIS **and** within 60 days of your program completion date.

II. Instructions to apply for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Follow directions carefully for proper filing to avoid processing delays.

This handout explains the first step to filing for an OPT. Changes, exceptions, and/or additions to required documents and procedures could occur. Please direct questions to the **Office of International Students and Scholars, Oklahoma State University, 309 Wes Watkins Center, Stillwater, OK 74078-7051, (405) 744-5459 or iss@okstate.edu.**

For best results, organize documents for mailing in the order listed below with item #1 on top.

1. _____ **\$410.00 fee**
Payable to the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**. Either a personal check or a money order is acceptable. **NO CASH**. Please check on USCIS official website for the latest [filing fee](#).
2. _____ **Two photographs**
The photos are the same type as those required for a passport. All photos must be recent with full frontal/passport photos with a white background. Specifications for the photos are given in the instructions for the I-765. Print your name and SEVIS number on back of photos. The ISS will provide a plastic bag for photo mailing. Do not staple, cut or trim photos.
If filing online, attach jpg/jpeg files per USCIS instructions.
3. _____ **Completed and signed form I-765**
When filing by mail, mark NA on any text fields that don't apply to your situation.
Page 2, Items 5b-5f should be our office's mailing address: 309 Wes Watkins Center, Stillwater, OK 74078
Page 2, Item 6 should be checked "No"
Page 2, Item 7a-7e should be your physical address.
Page 3, Item 27 should be **(c) (3) (B)**
Page 7, item 1a. & 1b. enter your name, 3a. enter #3, 3b. enter #2, 3c. enter #26, 3d. enter previous and/or current SEVIS ID#, and any previous CPT/OPT employment.
4. _____ **Form G-1145**
If applying by mail only, you may submit this form with your application so you can receive an email or text message when your OPT packet has been received.
5. _____ **Photocopies of previous EAD(s)**
Send only if applicable
6. _____ **OPT I-20 - Photocopy**
Page 2 of OPT I-20 will show the DSO recommendation for OPT. No F-2 (dependent) I-20(s) should be submitted.
7. _____ **I-20 – CPT/OPT Notations**
USCIS requires a copy of all CPT/OPT I-20s on your current and previous degree levels.
8. _____ **I-94 Copy**
Print a copy of your I-94 from www.cbp.gov/i94. The I-94 must show your most recent entry.
9. _____ **Visa Page**
Make a slightly enlarged colored photocopy of your valid visa page in your passport. If the visa has expired, you need to include a colored copy of your driver's license or passport biographical page.

Filing Location- As of January 8, 2021, USCIS posted the following update on the [Form I-765 launch page](#). It now instructs mail filers to submit these applications to the **USCIS Chicago Lockbox**, at:

U.S. Postal Service (USPS):
USCIS
PO Box 805373,
Chicago, IL 60680

FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:
USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor,
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

It is suggested that all of the above be sent by **priority or courier mail**. You should receive a receipt notice within 3-4 weeks after mailing. Keep this receipt for inquiry about the application. Note: changing your address after submitting your application may delay receipt of the Immigration decision. However, to record a change of address or correction of name, call **1-800-375-5283 (National Customers Service Center)**. USCIS Case Status Service is available now online. To check the status of your application, go to [case status online](#).

If you apply online, you will get your receipt notice immediately after your OPT application is submitted.

Approval and issue of the EAD card may take 90 - 120 days, or can be longer. OPT will begin the date the application is approved by Immigration or the date recommended by ISS. The EAD card will be sent to the ISS address. Upon receipt of the EAD card, ISS will contact you to verify mailing or to collect it from the office. Eship will be the courier for the EAD card mailing. See Eship instructions [here](#) under forms. The EAD card is the picture ID that should be used to complete the Form I-9 required by an employer. The dates on the EAD card will be the Immigration approved dates for your period of authorized employment. **NO OTHER DATES WILL BE VALID.**

III. **Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) PORTAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** Student is required to report within **10-day** the following information:

- Any change in name or address
- The name and address of the employer
- Any change of the name and address of the employer/supervisor
- Any interruption of employment
- A change of immigration status

You must report your employment information within **10-day** of the start date through the SEVP portal. The portal is a tool that those on OPT can use to report the changes above. You will receive an email from do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov with instructions on creating a portal account once your OPT started. If you don't receive your portal activation email within a few days of your OPT start date indicated on your EAD card, contact ISS for your portal reset.