Optional Practical Training (OPT)

I. If you have filed Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Students in F-1 status may apply for pre-completion OPT part-time during fall & spring semesters or full-time during summer vacation. Pre-completion OPT used prior to the completion of studies is subtracted from Post-completion OPT.

II. Instructions for Post-Completion (12-month) Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Definition-
Post-completion OPT is defined as temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major field of study, which is a benefit of F-1 status that permits off-campus employment to begin after the student’s program completion date. 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. 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).

Note: Curricular Practical Training (CPT) impacts OPT only if the student exceeds 12 months full-time CPT.

Eligibility-
F-1 students are eligible to apply for OPT when they have been in F-1 status for one academic year and have 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 may be filed 90 days prior to the end date of the degree program or no later than 60 days after the end date of the degree program.

Post-completion OPT requires employment. Post-completion OPT may not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment under the 12-month period of OPT. Student could be in violation of status if not employed.

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 could be issues if you do not complete your degree on the completion date designated.

Procedures-
1. Within 90 days before or no later than 60 days after the program completion date, the following items should be submitted through Canvas.
   - Student request for Optional Practical Training. Complete the final semester form with signatures from academic adviser and graduate college.
   - 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
   - 2 photos (prepare but don’t upload Canvas).
   - Email address that is accessible for OPT duration and phone number are required

2. You must have maintained F-1 status for one academic year, in order for ISS to 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 by an ISS DSO in SEVIS and within 60 days of your program completion date.
III. 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. Do not staple, cut or trim photos.

3. _______ Completed and signed form I-765 (Download latest USCIS)
   When filing by mail, mark NA on any text fields that don’t apply to your situation. No submission outside of the U.S.
   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 (Download latest USCIS)
   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
If you chose to mail the OPT application, it is suggested that all the listed documents be sent by priority or courier mail that provides tracking. You should receive a receipt notice from USCIS 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 USCIS receipt notice immediately after your OPT application is submitted.

Approval and issuance of the EAD card may take 90 - 120 days (possibly longer). The EAD card will be sent to the ISS office address. Upon receipt of the EAD card, ISS will contact you by email to verify mailing or to collect it in person 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.

IV. 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 and the changes above within 10-day of the start date through the SEVP portal. You will receive an email from do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov with instructions on creating a portal account. 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.