Post-completion OPT and STEM-OPT

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS
309 Wes Watkins Center
405-744-5459

7/23/2021
What is Post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

Defined as “temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major field of study”

Eligibility for OPT

- Post-completion OPT authorization is based on completion of coursework for students.
- An F-1 student in a good academic standing:
  - No “I” (Incomplete) grades
  - Undergraduate GPA: 2.0  Graduate GPA: 3.0
- Must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis at an SEVP approved school for one academic year.

- Post-completion OPT is available after the completion of each educational level – BS, MS, PhD
In Preparation for Post-completion OPT

Is this semester your final semester?
- Confirm with academic advisor
- The student and academic advisor need to complete and sign the Final Semester Form before the OPT application

Final Semester Enrollment
- Per immigration regulations, students that are in their final semester are not required to take a certain number of credit hours.
- If you are a Master’s or PhD student with an assistantship, please consult the Graduate College for requirements in order to keep your assistantship.
  Caution: Under-enrollment and failure to graduate can result in loss of OPT
In Preparation for Post-completion OPT

1. ISS will provide a link to apply for OPT.
   Check listserv for application link or contact
   ISS@okstate.edu and request the OPT link.
   Take the Quiz from the link in the email.

2. PowerPoint presentation is available for your reference
   You must successfully complete the quiz and score 9/13 or above in order to pass the quiz.

3. After passing the quiz, a link with OPT instructions would be sent to you by ISS via email.
   The Final Semester Form will be included in the email.

(#4-5 on next slide)
In Preparation for Post-completion OPT

4. Follow those instructions to upload the required materials on the ‘OPT Packet Creation’ Form.

5. Upon receipt by ISS, a DSO recommends OPT and issues the OPT I-20.

6. Submit your application* to USCIS (including the OPT I-20).

*ISS does not submit your application to USCIS
Post-completion OPT Requested Dates

- File up to **90 days before** the end date of the degree program
- File no more than **60 days after** the end of the degree program
- Students who have a GPA requirement in order to graduate may choose to apply during the 60 day grace period
- Students who are missing the thesis deadline during the semester may choose to wait and apply during the 60 day grace period
Post-completion OPT

Requested Dates

- **Requested OPT start date** cannot be more than 60 days after the program end date
- **Requested OPT end date** cannot be more than 12 months after start date
- **EAD start date** will be the requested date or the date of approval, whichever comes later
- If approved after the requested start date, the end date will be extended to reflect the 14-month limit

14 month limit = 60 day grace period + 12 months of OPT
Post-completion OPT Requested Dates

Apply up to 90-day before program end date

Program end date/ Commencement

Latest OPT start date

OPT end date

90 days

12 months

60 days

Request OPT start date to begin on any day within 60-day after your program end date
After Receiving OPT I-20 from ISS

1. **You can file with USCIS online**
   1-a. You can get an immediate application receipt notice
   1-b. Application fee can be paid by credit/debit card
   1-c. No delays by mailing issues

2. **You can file with USCIS by mail**
   2-a. Traditional method with hard copy documentation
   2-b. In case the internet fails!
   2-c. Payment by check, money order, cashier’s check, but no cash
Filing OPT Online

Who Can Submit Form I-765 Online?

Initial release of online I-765 is limited to students in these categories:

- (C)(3)(A) Pre-Completion OPT
- (C)(3)(B) Post-Completion OPT
- (C)(3)(C) STEM Extension

All other categories must submit a paper form I-765.
Filing OPT Online

To file Form I-765 online, eligible F-1 students must first visit my.uscis.gov to create a USCIS online account.

Quick Tips
- Online form is the same as paper version
- USCIS automatically save your answers so you can work at your own pace
- Draft forms are saved for 30 days from the last time you worked on your form
- Applicants must be in U.S. to apply online.
Filing OPT Online

Filling out the Form-Formats

- Photos: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- Documents: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF or TIFF
- Foreign language documents must have English translation
- Maximum size: 6 MB per file
- The only characters allowed in document file name are: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, parentheses
- Do NOT use special characters
Filing OPT Online

Filling out the Form – Applicant’s Declaration/Certification & Paying the fee

0 Sign digitally

0 Review your entire entries before you pay

0 After you agree to the applicant statement, you will be directed to pay.gov, a secure government portal

0 When you hit “Continue” to pay the fee, your form will be submitted

0 Once you submit payment, you CANNOT make corrections

0 Click on “Go to my cases” to see your case card and receipt notice.
OPT Filing Packet (By Mail)
– A list to apply for Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

- $410.00 Application fee. Check or Money order.
  * Please check on USCIS official website for the latest filing fee.
- Two passport style photos
- Completed and signed I-765 – Item #27 (C) (3) (B)
- Form G1145 - Electronic notification
- I-20 copy with OPT Notation
  * OPT application must be filed within 30 days of the date the DSO enters the recommendation for OPT in the SEVIS system.
- I-20 copies of all previous OPT and CPT I-20s
- Copy of previous EAD, if applicable
- I-94 copy
- Valid visa page (Colored copy of visa)

Filing location: USCIS changed the filing addresses for F-1 student I-765 filings without advance notice, although on the afternoon of Friday, January 8, 2021 USC IS finally posted the following update on the form I-765 launch page. Now instructs 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

Please note, the previously scheduled US government fee increase to $550 for any application postmarked on or after October 2, 2020 has been temporarily halted by a court order, so the fee remains at $410 until further notice.
Mark N/A on any text fields that don’t apply

Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):

I.a. $\checkmark$ Initial permission to accept employment.
I.b. $\square$ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.

NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to Replacement for Card Error in the What is the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.

I.c. $\square$ Renewal of my permission to accept employment. (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name (Last Name) Pete
1.b. Given Name (First Name) Pistol
1.c. Middle Name N/A

Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in Part 6.

Additional Information

2.a. Family Name (Last Name) N/A
2.b. Given Name (First Name) N/A
2.c. Middle Name N/A

3.a. Family Name (Last Name) N/A
3.b. Given Name (First Name) N/A
3.c. Middle Name N/A

4.a. Family Name (Last Name) N/A
4.b. Given Name (First Name) N/A
4.c. Middle Name N/A
Both for mail and online filers

Use ISS Address for Mailing Address

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**Part 2. Information About You (continued)**

**Your U.S. Mailing Address** *(USPS ZIP Code Lookup)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.a.</th>
<th>In Care Of Name (if any)</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.b.</th>
<th>Street Number and Name</th>
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<tr>
<th>5.d.</th>
<th>City or Town</th>
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<th>5.e.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>5.f.</th>
<th>ZIP Code</th>
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<tr>
<th>6.</th>
<th>Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?</th>
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</thead>
</table>

- □ Yes  □ No

**NOTE:** If you answered “No” to Item Number 6., provide your physical address below.
Both for mail and online filers

Previous OPT, CPT & SEVIS ID#

I-765 Form, Page 7, Part 6

<table>
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1.a. Family Name (Last Name)  Pete  
1.b. Given Name (First Name)  Pistol  
1.c. Middle Name  
2. A-Number (if any)  A-  
3.a. Page Number 3  
3.b. Part Number 2  
3.c. Item Number 26  
   Master's degree;  
   Previous CPT:  
   Full-time 05/20/2017 - 08/15/2017  
4.a. Page Number 3  
4.b. Part Number 2  
4.c. Item Number 26  
4.d. Previous SEVIS ID# N00222333555.  
   Bachelor of Science  
   Previous CPT:  
   Full-time 05/14/2015-08/15/2015  
   Previous OPT:  
   Post-Completion: 05/21/2016-08/20/2017
How to Track Your OPT Application

- Online tracking with OPT receipt number
  - USCIS.gov
  - USCIS Case Status Service Online
  - Check processing times – 90 days plus
  - 1-800-375-5283 National Customer Service Center
Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

- USCIS authorizes employment with the approval of the EAD (normally 90 to 120 days)
- I-765 receipt does **NOT** authorize employment
- The EAD card authorizes employment
- Official dates of employment are verified on the EAD
Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

What do you need to travel during OPT?
1) valid passport and F-1 visa, 2) recently endorsed I-20, 3) valid EAD card
4) job offer, 5) limit your time out of the U.S.

IS THIS YOUR PHOTO?

Do NOT start employment before the Start Date indicated on your EAD card.
Periods of Unemployment

The maximum period of unemployment is 90 days.

- The unemployment days are 90 consecutive days. It is important that you report in your SEVP portal any volunteering or employment within the 90 days.

- Students must work or volunteer in the current field of study at least 20 hours per week to be considered employed.
Periods of Unemployment

- Consequences of exceeding the period of unemployment
  - Your SEVIS record might be terminated by the system automatically.

- Keep records of employment / volunteering

- Prior to reaching the limit of authorized unemployment, prepare to:
  - Transfer,
  - change educational level,
  - complete change of status,
  - or depart the U.S.
Types of Employment

- Regular paid employment (multiple employers)
- Short-term multiple employers (gigs)
- Work for hire – 1099 employment (contractual relationship)
- Self-Employed – prove proper licenses
- Agency or consulting firm: must work at least 20 hours a week. Caution: employee and employer relationship.
- Volunteers or unpaid internships in your field of study (12-month OPT only—not available for OPT STEM)
Volunteering & Unpaid Internships

O Student may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern in your field of study, where this practice does not violate labor laws

O At least 20 hours per week

O Be able to provide evidence acquired from the employer to confirm 20 hours a week of employment

O ISS does not need verification of the volunteering.

O It is your responsibility to enter the volunteering information in SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program) portal.

O Dept of Labor (Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act)- must not violate any labor laws.
Employment Reporting Requirements

SEVP PORTAL—only students have access.

- SEVP will send the portal activation link to you a few days after your OPT start date (the actual date listed on the current EAD).

- Email will come from this SEVP email address: do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov

- Be sure ISS has your correct email address at the time of OPT application.

More information related to SEVP portal:
https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/assets/sevp_portal_student_user_guide.pdf
Employment Reporting Requirements

- SEVP Portal – allows F-1 students to report information directly to SEVP to fulfill legal reporting requirements.
- Report changes within 10 days
- SEVP Portal will allow you to:
  - View your post-completion OPT
  - Report changes – address, phone, & employer information
  - View and update your employers
  - All updates go directly to SEVP

Locked due to password difficulties – As of February 13 upgrade allows you to request a reset of the portal password
SEVP PORTAL - Add Employer

Employer Name: Required
Enter the legal name of the company that hired you.

Employer Address: Required
Address:
Enter the address where you work. Enter the street address in the top line. Use Address 2 line for the name of the building, if it is normally part of the address. See https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov for more details.

Address 2: Optional

City: State:

Zip Code:

Job Title:
Enter the title of your job for the company that hired you.

Full/Part-time: Required

Employment Start Date: Required
Enter the start date for your job with the company that hired you. This date cannot be before your OPT start date.

Employment End Date:
If your job offer has an end date, enter this date. Leave this field blank if you do not know when your job will end.

Relation to Field of Study: Required
Explain how this job relates to the degree that qualified you for this OPT

See example on next slide
Relation to Field of Study:
- Explain how the employment is related to student’s field of study

Example:
I studied Management Information Systems and now work for a Software company using data mining, analytics, big data skills, and programming languages (hadoop, R, SAS) which is knowledge gained during my MS/PHD study.

Watch out for character limits
In Case of Portal Failure, Report via ISS Webpage

ISS reporting link: https://lcl.okstate.edu/iss/forms.html

OPT/ STEM OPT

- Update your 12 month OPT Employment Information here
- OPT STEM Extension Employment

❖ You only need to use the ISS reporting link if you have a problem with the SEVP Portal.
❖ Keep all documentation of your OPT employment.
❖ In the future, you may be asked to provide proof that your employment is related to your field of study.
EAD Delivery Procedure

- ISS will notify you through your OSU email upon receipt of the EAD card

- You can either pick up your EAD (in person) in the ISS office or order eShip for your EAD delivery by express mail only (FedEx, UPS, DHL)

- E-Ship: [https://study.eshipglobal.com](https://study.eshipglobal.com).
  - Create an account, enter your name, CWID, & request packet from the ISS office as the sender
After OPT Completion

You have a **60-day grace period** following your OPT end date. You must do one of the following:

- Depart the U.S. by the end of the 60 days
- Change of educational level at OSU for a different degree
- Transfer out to another university and start your new program no later than 5 months from the date your OPT expires
- Or, complete **change of status**
FAQs

Q1. Do I need to provide a completed and signed form I-765 to ISS if I am applying online?
   A1. Yes. ISS needs the information to issue your OPT I-20.

Q2. Do I need to send my dependent(s) F-2 I-20(s) along with my OPT application to the USCIS?
   A2. No. Just F-1 OPT I-20 will be needed.

Q3. How do I prove that OSU is a SEVP certified institution?
   A3. Your I-20 page 1 indicates OSU’s certification and SEVIS school code.
FAQs

Q4. Do I need to have a SSN before applying for OPT?
A4: No. You may refer to Form I-765 official instructions, especially regarding Part 2 Items 13a-17b.

Q5: Can I travel internationally after applying for OPT?
A5: We do not recommend travelling internationally prior to receiving the EAD unless there is a compelling reason. Complete the ISS OPT Travel Form if you require a signature.
Questions!
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) OPT

- OPT STEM Extension
  - 24 months
  - USCIS Webpage for STEM-OPT
STEM OPT Eligibility

- Must be engaging in an unexpired post-completion OPT that was granted (successfully completed) a BS, MS, or PhD degree listed on the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List.

- Must have a current or previous degree in an eligible STEM major from a U.S. SEVP certified institution of higher education.

- Each degree has an assigned CIP code—check to see if your degree is noted as a STEM degree.

- Have a job offer for paid employment from an E-Verified employer who is willing and able to meet the STEM-OPT reporting requirements.

- STEM OPT is available for two per lifetime.
STEM OPT Filing Parameters

- Must file STEM OPT within 90-days of the current OPT expiration date but may **NOT** apply after the OPT expiration date.

- Student and employer must complete and sign the Form I-983 (Training Plan for STEM OPT Students) and submit it to the ISS website. The job offer must be a full-time and paying job. See the I-983 Form overview on Study in the States.gov

- USCIS must receive the application within **60 days** of the STEM OPT I-20 issuance.

- **A student who files the application timely may continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision is made, or for 180 days, whichever comes first.**
Previously Obtained STEM Degrees

0 On I-983, this is called ‘Prior degree’

0 F-1 student participating in 12-month OPT based on a Non-STEM degree can use prior STEM degree for STEM OPT

0 Employment must be related to the previous STEM degree

0 Degree must be received within 10 years

0 ISS (DSO) must verify the prior degree
STEM OPT

Employer-Employee Relationship

- Must have a *bona-fide* employer-employee experience
- *No* volunteer positions
- Start up businesses & self-employment do **not** qualify for the STEM OPT option.
STEM OPT Filing Packet (By Mail)

A list to apply for Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

- $410.00 Application fee. Check or Money order.
  * Please check on USCIS official website for the latest filing fee.
- Two passport style photos
- Completed I-765 – Item #27 (C) (3) (C)
- Form G-1145
- I-20 copy with STEM OPT Notation
  * OPT application must be filed to the USCIS Lockbox within 60 days of the date the DSO enters the recommendation for STEM OPT in the SEVIS system.
- I-20 copies of all previous OPT and CPT I-20s
- Copy of EADs
- I-94 copy
- Valid visa page (Colored copy of visa)
- Copy of official transcript or diploma showing the completion of your degree

Filing location: USCIS changed the filing addresses for F-1 student I-765 filings without advance notice, although on the afternoon of Friday, January 8, 2021, USCIS finally posted the following update on the Form I-765 launch page. 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

Please note, the previously scheduled US government fee increase to $550 for any application postmarked on or after October 2, 2020 has been temporarily halted by a court order, so the fee remains at $410 until further notice.
### Previous OPT, CPT & SEVIS ID#

**I-765 Form, Page 7, Part 6**

#### 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.

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2. A-Number (if any) ▶ A-

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<td>3.b. Part Number</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree;</td>
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</table>

Previous CPT:

- Full-time: 05/14/2015-08/15/2015

Previous OPT:

- Full-time: 05/20/2017 - 08/15/2017

Previous SEVIS ID# N00222333555.

Bachelor of Science

Post-Completion: 05/21/2016-08/20/2017
Unemployment is cumulative and counted in consecutive days (including weekends & holidays).

24-month STEM OPT are given an additional 60 days of unemployment after the 12-month initial OPT:

Total possible 150 days Unemployment days

= whatever remains of the 90 days from 12-month OPT

+60 days during the 24-month STEM OPT

Must report the termination of employment within 10 days of the event
STEM OPT Employment Reporting

- studyinthestates.gov: SEVP Portal Help
- In the Portal, STEM OPT students are unable to add a new employer or change the start date of their new employer due to the Form I-983 (Training plan)
- For **employment change** during STEM OPT, submit a Form I-983 to the ISS (DSO) **within 10 days** of the start date of the new STEM OPT employment. An updated I-20 will be issued. Please request eship for it.
- STEM OPT – When an employer end date changes you will receive an email reminder to complete an evaluation. Student and employer need to complete and sign on Final Evaluation on Student Progress on page 5 of I-983 form. Submit it to ISS (DSO) **within 10 days** of the job end date.
- Form I-983 will be uploaded in your SEVIS record by ISS
Material Changes with One Employer

- Changes in employment status
  - Termination
  - Resignation
  - Departure

- Material changes to Form I-983. Submit an updated I-983 to ISS (DSO) within **10 days** of any material changes below:
  - Change in employer’s EIN
  - Compensation and reduction of work hours
  - Significant decrease in hours per week
  - Changes in learning objectives or employer’s commitment
STEM OPT Reporting
SEVP PORTAL

- You must go through an ISS DSO to report employment with completed & signed Form I-983 and the ISS form “OPT STEM Extension Employment” (Option #1).

- You cannot edit employer information to work for another employer.
- You will not be able to change read-only portions
- SEVIS will push the updates into the SEVP portal (within a few days)
OPT STEM REPORTING REMINDER FROM SEVP PORTAL

As of February 13, 2019 SEVP Portal will provide you with reminders of when you are expected to report. See example
STEM OPT Reporting Requirements & Deadlines

6- and 18-month Participation Reporting

Student is responsible for reporting the following to the ISS website:

- **legal name**
- **current address**
- **name and address of current employer**
- **job title**
- **supervisor information**
- **and end date of employment**
STEM OPT Reporting Requirements & Deadlines

I-983 Form, Page 5

- 12-month STEM-OPT reporting from the STEM-OPT start date, student must complete the Evaluation on Student Progress on page 5 of the I-983 form.

- Final or 24-month STEM-OPT reporting from the STEM-OPT start date, student must complete the FINAL Evaluation on Student Progress on page 5 of the I-983 form.

- Collect the required signature from employer and upload the I-983 to the ISS website.

- ISS will upload the I-983 in your SEVIS record. It is suggested that you keep a copy for your records.
OPT STEM EAD Delivery Procedure

- If you *must* move, use ISS address on your Form I-765 and inform ISS.

- USCIS mailing is not forwarded to another address – EAD will be returned to USCIS.

- If you must change your address after filing, contact the National Customer Service number:
  1 (800) 375-5283

- There is a risk involved in changing your address
After Completion of STEM OPT

You have a **60-day grace period** following your STEM OPT end date. You must do one of the following:

- **Depart** the U.S. by the end of the 60 days
- **Change of educational level** at OSU for a different degree
- **Transfer out** to another university and start your new program **no later than 5 months** from the date your STEM OPT expires
- Or, complete **change of status**
Questions!