



Center for Global Engagement

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

If you would like to get work experience in your major field of study this summer or after you complete your studies, you should apply for Optional Practical Training employment authorization from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) *early!* YOU DO NOT HAVE TO HAVE A JOB OFFER TO APPLY FOR OPT!

PRE-COMPLETION OPT

During the semester (up to 20 hours a week).

During annual vacation periods (summer and winter break).

After completion of all course requirements for the degree while working on the thesis or dissertation(full time only).

POST-COMPLETION OPT

For after completion of study (full time only).

If you have travel plans after school ends, your OPT must be authorized by USCIS BEFORE you leave the country. We are unable to endorse your Form I-20 for reentry until your EAD card is issued. You will need your EAD Card, endorsed I-20 and a letter from an employer to return to the U.S. Do not leave the United States until you have secured employment.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is off-campus employment authorization that lets F-1 students get work experience in their major field of study. The amount of work you are permitted is a maximum of 12 months of full-time employment for each higher educational level you pursue in the U.S. You can use it during or after your studies. You can work for any employer, anywhere in the country.

Think of it as an OPT bank account! In that account are 12 months of full-time optional practical training for your current program of study. Let's say you'd like to work fulltime for three months after your sophomore (second) year in your bachelor's degree. That's a three-month withdrawal of full-time employment, leaving you 9 months left to spend during your bachelor's degree. During your junior year, you decide to work part-time (less than 20 hours a week) for two semesters or nine months. Since part-time

employment counts at half the full-time rate, you've made a withdrawal of four and a half months of full-time employment. This leaves you with four and a half months of full-time employment still in your account to use after you graduate.

If you decide to spend all of your OPT after you complete your degree, you must request all of it at once, that is the full year. You cannot use it in pieces.

If you decide to go on for your Master's degree after completing your OPT for your Bachelor's, your bank account will be full again with another 12 months available to you!

HOW CAN IT BE USED?

Summer vacation – either part-time or full-time employment
During the school year-Only part time employment is allowed
After completing all requirements for the course of study – full-time employment only.

HOW CAN YOU QUALIFY FOR IT?

You are currently in valid F-1 status.
You have been a full time student for at least one full academic year (2 semesters).
You **cannot** already have used 12 months of full-time Curricular Practical Training.

HOW DO YOU APPLY?

Download the application on-line from the CGE website.
After assembling all the necessary documentation, please contact the CGE at 716-829-8119/8114 or at petryshl@dyc.edu/soaresa@dyc.edu to schedule an appointment.
After your application has been reviewed by the CGE a new form I-20 will be issued with the OPT recommendation.
You will mail the application certified mail return receipt requested.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

It will take about two to three months for your EAD (Employment Authorization Document) to be returned to us from USCIS. It could take less or more depending on their workload.

It's important to take USCIS processing time into consideration when planning the date you want to start working! **You cannot begin to work until you have your EAD Card!!**

How can you extend your OPT?

You can extend before- completion of studies by filing another application. You may not

continue to work until it has been authorized by USCIS.

After-completion OPT **cannot** be extended. You must apply for the full amount of time remaining in your 12-month bank account. You will, however, be entitled to another 12-month period of OPT if you go on to a higher level of study.

For those students who qualify for the 17 month STEM extension please download the STEM OPT forms from the CGE website.

Study and after-completion OPT

Immigration regulations state that, “Authorization to engage in optional practical training employment is automatically terminated when the student transfers to another school or begins study at another educational level.” Therefore, you should not continue your U.S. studies until after your OPT has ended.

Do not start working until USCIS authorizes your employment and you have your EAD card!

APPLICATION FOR F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

1. COMPLETE THE ATTACHED APPLICATION FORMS:

OPT Request Form:

Item #1: Personal and Program Information. Please note that we recommend that you apply for OPT 90 days prior to your program completion to allow time for USCIS to process your application.

NOTE: The latest date you can apply for OPT is 60 days after your course of study completion date.

Note: Your application must be received by USCIS Service Center within 30 days of the issuance of your I-20 with the OPT recommendation.

Item #2: Indicate what type of OPT you are applying for and the dates you want to work. Tell us how much of your 12-month OPT benefit you have already used for this program, if any.

Item #3: Describe how your proposed employment for practical training is directly related to your major and appropriate for your level of education. Take time to do this carefully. Do not say that you are seeking an entry-level job in your major.

Form I-765: Application for employment authorization (will fill out at your scheduled appointment in DAC Suite 219).

Complete items 1-23:

Item #3: Address. We have entered the address of our office, so that we may track the processing of your application.

Item #14 – A-Number or I-94 Number: Put your I-94 number unless CIS has previously assigned you an alien registration number.

Item #15 – If you have ever applied for hardship or optional practical training employment before, answer yes, where and when you applied, whether it was granted or denied and attach a photocopy of any EAD card issued for it.

Item #20 – Before Completion of Studies (c) (3) (A)
After Completion of Studies (c) (3) (B)
Stem OPT (c) (3) (C)

Your certification – Sign, put your telephone number and the date.

2. ATTACH THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS TO YOUR APPLICATION:

Two identical natural color passport size photographs of yourself, taken within 30 days. Print in pencil your I-94# on the back.

Forms I-20. Photocopies of all previous Forms I-20 issued by us and other schools you have attended.

Photocopy of any previous EAD Card(s).

Photocopy of Form I-94 (both sides).

Photocopies of your passport identification pages, and visa.

OPT recommendation form filled out by your Academic Advisor.

\$410 US Fee in the form of a check or money order. Make it payable to the Department of Homeland Security. If you are using a personal check, it must have your name and address on it (and it must be drawn from a US institution).

Please make a photocopy of your entire application for your records.

Please make an appointment with the CGE after assembling all application materials.

INFORMATION ABOUT APPLICATION PROCESSING

1) If we determine that you qualify for Optional Practical Training Employment authorization, we will issue you a new Form I-20 with our recommendation on it.

2) After you have signed your new I-20, you will send your application to USCIS, certified mail, return receipt requested.

**For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries:
USCIS
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266**

or

**For Express mail and courier deliveries:
USCIS
Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067**

3) USCIS will communicate with our office about your application. If they request additional information, we will contact you. If your application is approved the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) will be sent here and we will contact you to come in and pick it up.

4) You cannot begin working until you have received your EAD Card.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

ABOUT YOUR F-1 RESPONSIBILITIES WHILE YOU ARE ON AFTER-COMPLETION OF STUDIES OPT

While you engage in this important employment opportunity, The Department of Homeland Security has important rules with which you must comply:

- 1.** Work only within the dates that you have been authorized on your card.
- 2.** Do NOT begin a new program of study. *If you do, your OPT is automatically canceled.*
- 3.** Report any change of address or name to the Center for Global Engagement within 10 days of making the change.
- 4.** Obtain a travel endorsement from the CGE should you need to travel outside the U.S. Should you need to renew your F-1 student visa, consult with us first!
- 5.** Only accept employment in your field of study.
- 6.** You must begin work within 90 days of the start date on your EAD card.
- 7.** You must report your employer's name and address within 10 days of employment to the CGE using the OPT Reporting Form and any changes in employer after the initial employment using the same form.
- 8.** You must report any periods of unemployment to the CGE. An F-1 student can not accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment while on OPT.

***Note: BEGINNING IN Spring 2016 SEVIS will have the capability to automatically terminate students who accrue 90 consecutive days of unemployment and manually terminate students who have an aggregate of 90 days of unemployment during the OPT period.**

Our very best wishes to you as you begin this exciting new chapter in your U.S. education!

**OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING
REQUEST FORM**

1. PERSONAL AND PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Name: _____ Date: _____
Local address: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____
SEVIS ID # _____
Degree Program _____ Major: _____

Expected Date of Completion of Studies: _____

2. WHAT KIND OF OPT ARE YOU APPLYING FOR?

Before Completion of Studies:

Full-time. *Only available during vacation periods or if you have completed all of your coursework except for comprehensives, thesis, or dissertation.*

STARTING ON _____ **AND ENDING** _____.

Part-time. (Less than 20 hours a week)

Starting on _____ **and ending** _____.

After Completion of Studies:

Starting _____ *Your start date could be as early as the expected date of completion of studies you put above, or any other date within the 60-day period following it.*

Ending _____ You must apply for all of the 12-month benefit you have remaining for this program of study.

How much of your 12-month OPT benefit for this program have you used, if any?

3. DESCRIBE YOUR PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT AND EXPLAIN HOW IT RELATES TO YOUR MAJOR. Do not say that you are "seeking an entry level position that is appropriate for your skills and experience!"-

