

## **Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

### **What is Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)?**

Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training is for students who have not yet met the requirements to complete their degree, but would like authorization to work in their field of study.

### **Who is eligible for Pre-Completion OPT?**

Students maintaining F-1 status who have completed two semesters of full-time study by the requested employment start date are eligible to apply for Pre-Completion OPT.

### **When should I apply?**

You can apply for Pre-Completion OPT up to 90 days prior to the requested start date. If they receive the application packet more than 90 days before the requested start date, it will be denied and the application fee will not be refunded.

You must file your application to USCIS no more than 30 days past the date of issuance on your I-20. If it is past the 30 days, it will be denied.

### **How do I choose my OPT dates?**

With processing times of about up to 90 days, you want to allow time for the OPT card to arrive. You cannot begin working until both the card arrives and are within the authorized dates of employment listed on the card. We recommend you choose your dates accordingly.

You must also choose an end date for your OPT. The date cannot go past the end date of your program. If you are applying for full-time pre-completion OPT, this can only be authorized during official college breaks. The start date must be after the semester ends and the end date must be before the next semester begins.

### **How many hours can I work on Pre-Completion OPT?**

You are authorized to work part-time (up to 20 hours) per week while classes are in session and are allowed to work full time (over 20 hours) during official college breaks (summer and winter)

## **How does Pre-Completion OPT affect my Post-Completion OPT?**

Pre-completion OPT time **does** take away from the 12 month authorized Post-Completion OPT time. Part-time pre-completion OPT deducts from your post-completion OPT at ½ the rate (i.e. 2 months pre-completion = 1 month post-completion.) Full-time will deduct at 100% of the rate (i.e. 1 month pre-completion = 1 month post-completion.)

## **Do I need a job before I apply?**

No, a job is not needed. However, it is highly suggested that you have a job as this time will deduct from the time you receive on your post-completion OPT.

## **What work can I do?**

You can work at any job that is related to your field of study. It can be paid or unpaid. Job title does not matter, but the nature of the work does matter as it should be related to your field of study.

## **How long does it take USCIS to approve my application?**

Processing times take on average 3 months.

## **When can I apply for a Social Security Number?**

If you do not have a Social Security Number already, the I-765 Form allows you to apply for a SSN while filing for OPT (see section 10 on I765 form.)

## **What are the steps to apply for Pre-Completion OPT?**

### **1. Apply for the Pre-completion OPT I-20 from ISS:**

- a. Submit a Pre-Completion OPT Request Form, signed by both yourself and your academic advisor
- b. Pick up your I-20, check it over, and mail it with the rest of the required items no more than 30 days after the issuance date on the I-20.

*(cont.)*

**2. Send your application and all required documents to USCIS:**

- a. G-1145 Form. This will provide with E-notification that your file was received. (Free and optional)
- b. A check or money order for \$410.00 made out to the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**. (DO NOT WRITE ON THE BACK OF THE CHECK!) Your name and address must be on the check. Write your I-94 # on the bottom left hand of the check (in the “memo” or “for” section.)
  - i. For money orders, use the following address for the receiver:

PO Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

- c. Two passport style photographs taken within the last 6 months. Each photo must be cut to 2 inches by 2 inches with your name and I-94 # printed lightly on the back in pencil. Photos must have been taken within the past 6 months. Place the photos and check/money order in an envelope. Write your name and I-94 # on the outside of the envelope as well.
- d. Complete form I-765 **online** using the PDF version located at the following website <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf> you will need Acrobat Reader to open the file.
  - i. **Be sure to enter (c) (3) (A) in step # 20. Print completed form I-765 and sign in BLUE INK.**
  - ii. Double-check your address. Will you be there in 3 months? If unsure, you can use ISS’s address.
- e. All I-20s, Visa, Passport, I-94 card/electronic print out. If you wish to receive an E-notification that your application was received by USCIS you can print and complete form G-1145 and include it with this packet. <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf>

**3. Make a copy of your completed I-20 application for your records.**

**4. Make an appointment with ISS to bring in your application to be reviewed by an advisor.**

**5. Mail your entire packet by certified return receipt mail (allows you to track the package.)** If you are staying with the New York/New Jersey area, all packets mailed by USPS should be sent to:

USCIS  
PO Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

**Once I receive my EAD card, what should I do?**

- Make sure to check the dates are correct on the card.
- Make a copy of the card and bring or email it to ISS for our records.
- You must inform ISS of any employment you receive and if you change your address.
- You cannot start working until you receive your EAD card and the start date on the card has arrived.

## Pre-Completion OPT Request Form

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT:**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

RCC ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City/State) (Zip Code)

Check here if you have a secondary MAJOR

OPT Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ OPT End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full- Time or Part- Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Passport Expiration: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you applied for OPT before (Circle one): NO YES

If YES, please indicate for which education level: Associates Bachelors Masters

I understand that all periods of Pre-Completion OPT will be deducted from the available period of post-completion OPT.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY AN ACADEMIC ADVISOR ONLY:**

The above-named student is applying for permission to engage in employment for OPT as provided in the immigration regulations for F-1 students. OPT is employment in a job related to the student’s field of study and is intended to enhance and supplement the formal, classroom education. US Immigration and Citizenship Services (USCIS) will authorize OPT.

- International Student Services (ISS) must have a statement from the student’s academic advisor indicating the date the student is expected to complete all degree requirements or the expected date of completion. The date of completion is not necessarily the end of the term or the graduation date, but the date all requirements for the degree are fulfilled.
- This date must accurately reflect the actual completion date of his/her program. Students may not continue working on campus after the end date that you confirm below until they have OPT from USCIS.

Please complete the information below and return it to the student so we may process the student’s request. Should you have any questions, call ISS at ext. 4193.

I certify that the above student will complete All the requirements for their degree on: \_\_\_\_\_  
(mm/dd/yyyy) please be accurate)

Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Degree to be received: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre-Completion OPT USCIS Application Checklist

**You must submit all the following items to USCIS. Please put the packet together in the following order.**

- ❑ Fee of \$410. Make check payable to the “US Department of Homeland Security.” You may send a money order or personal check drawn on a US bank, NO CASH. Your name and address must be on the check. Write your I-94 # on the bottom left hand of the check (in the “memo” or “for” section.)
- ❑ G-1145. Use this form if you wish to receive email or text confirmation (within 1 week) of your receipt number from the Lockbox facility. Clip the form to the front of the OPT application. Find the form at: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).
- ❑ Two “passport” photos. Print your name and write your admission number (I-94#) on the back of each photo. Use powder to prevent glaring and be sure there are no shadows in your photos! You may put the photos and check in an envelope and attach carefully to the front of the I-765 (do not staple photos!).
- ❑ Original I-765 form (follow instructions on how to complete form on page 2).
- ❑ A copy (NOT original) of page 1 and 2 of the new pre-completion I-20 from ISS with the recommendation for OPT on page 2. Sign the new I-20 in blue ink. This I-20 cannot be more than 30 days old when it arrives at USCIS or OPT will be denied!
- ❑ A copy of ALL previously issued I-20 documents dating back to beginning of F-1 status (signed in item #11).
- ❑ A copy of your I-94 record.
  - Both sides of your I-94 card (front and back - even if the back is blank) OR
  - Printout of the electronic I-94 record from [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94)
- ❑ A copy of the photo page (identification page) and expiration date page of your passport.
- ❑ A copy of the most recent F-1 visa page in your passport (even if expired).
- ❑ A copy of any previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) OPT card, if you have had one.

## Form I-765 Tips for Pre-Completion OPT

To best aid you in completing the Form I-765 for Employment Authorization we have suggested tips below.

You will need your I-20's, Passport, Visa and I-94 to complete the form.

All dates on the form are written 2-digit month, 2-digit day and 4-digit year (MM/DD/YYYY).

*This document is for guidance ONLY. It is your responsibility to understand the complete instructions and where to file your I-765: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>. International Student Services is not responsible for any missing or incomplete information.*

Part 1	
1a.	Check if first time applying for <b>Post Completion OPT</b>
1c.	Check if applying <b>STEM OPT</b>
Part 2	
Enter name, mailing, physical addresses, immigration information	
5a through 5e	This is the address where USCIS will send your OPT Receipt, Approval and OPT card to be delivered.
6	Answer Yes or No
7a through 7d	Enter the address where you are physically residing at the time of filing if <b>DIFFERENT than MAILING ADDRESS</b> entered in number 5.
8	Enter the A-number if any. This number is typically issued to individuals who have applied for or been granted certain immigration benefits. If you have previously been issued an EAD the number can be found on the front of the card. For additional information please refer to the above link for I-765 instructions <b>Page 16, Item Number 8.</b>
9 through 12	Mark the appropriate boxes
13a through 15	Enter the appropriate boxes regarding issuance of a Social Security Number (SSN)
16a through 17b	<b>If you are Requesting a Social Security Number (SSN)</b> complete the required fields
18 through 25	Enter information from your Passport and I-94, Travel History
26	Enter your SEVIS ID number from the top Left-hand side of the I-20
27	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre Completion OPT Enter: (c)(3)(a)
28a through 28c	<b>STEM OPT ONLY: SKIP</b>
Part 3	
1a	Read the statement and select this box if you understand the terms.
1b or 2	Read the statement and complete the boxes if <b>SOMEONE OTHER THAN YOU</b> completed this form <b>FOR YOU</b> or you required a <b>Language Interpreter's assistance.</b>
3 through 6	Enter your Contact Information
7a through b	Sign in Blue Ink and Date the page
Part 4	
ENTER if SOMEONE OTHER THAN YOU Completed this form FOR YOU or you required a Language Interpreter's assistance.	

Part 5	ENTER if SOMEONE OTHER THAN YOU Completed this form FOR YOU or you required a Language Interpreter's assistance.
Part 6	
3d	<p><b>Post Completion OPT Applicants ONLY:</b></p> <p>The I-765 Instructions dictate that you must enter and provide evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All SEVIS ID numbers used in the U.S.</b></li> <li>• <b>All Previous</b> Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorizations</li> <li>• <b>All Previous</b> Optional Practical Training (OPT) authorizations</li> </ul> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include copies all previous I-20 and previously issued EAD's</li> </ul> <p>Example SEVIS Number: (SEVIS ID: N0000000000)  Example CPT: (CPT 08/01/2018 to 12/19/2018 – Master's)  Example OPT (OPT 05/18/2017 to 08/25/2017) – Bachelor's)</p>