



Optional Practical Training

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is work authorized by the United States of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for professional employment in the student's field of study that is not considered to be a part of the academic curriculum. OPT may be authorized at the following times: 1) during summer or other vacation periods; 2) after completion of all course requirements but before completion of thesis or equivalent; 3) while school is in session, not exceeding 20 hours per week; 4) after completion of the course of study. OPT can be authorize for a maximum aggregate period of 12 months per each educational level. Full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or any OPT done before a degree is completed will count against the 12 month total and reduce time available after the degree is awarded. Post-completion OPT will only be granted for full-time use and must be completed within 14 months of completion of study.

Eligibility: A student must have been in F-1 student status for at least one full academic year. Student may **not** work until OPT approval is obtained, the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is received and the start date on the EAD has been reached.

When to apply: Student may apply for post-completion OPT no sooner than 90 days **before** the completion date of the course of study but not earlier than the student's final semester. Three months before graduation is recommended.

Procedure for student:

1. Verify student's eligibility by doing a degree check with your advisor to verify your expected date of completion of studies. Assemble the following materials to send to the US Department of Homeland Security:
2. Complete Form G-1145 on staple on top of Form 1-765 and other documentation.
3. Complete Form I-765, marked with the appropriate code from the form's instructions [(c) (3) (B) for post completion] in Item 16.
4. Write a check or money order to the order of US Department of Homeland Security for \$380.00
5. Obtain two photos taken no earlier than 30 days before submission and following the specifications on the attached photo information sheet.
6. Photos may be taken at Walgreen's or Kinko's, for example, and vary in cost.
7. Lightly print your name and your I-94 admission number on the back of each photo. Place the photos in a small Ziploc[®]-style baggie when you send in your application.
8. Do NOT trim or staple through the photos.
9. Provide copies of student Form I-20 with DSO recommendation for OPT on page 3.
10. Provide copies of both sides of the I-94 card, the ID page in passport, visa page and any previously issued EAD card(s).
11. Make copies of all prior Forms I-20.

Procedure for DSO:

1. Verify student's eligibility with GPS report
2. Update student SEVIS record and reset completion date of I-20 to actual date of graduation.
3. Print and sign the new I-20 with recommendation. Return to student to include in OPT application. Assist student with complication of the document. Make one copy for the students file and copy for the students.

Student should mail application packet to:

For Delivery to a non-PO Box address:
(Via Fed-Ex, UPS, etc.)

For US Postal Service (USPS) deliveries:

USCIS
P.O. Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

USCIS
Attn: AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

NOTE: As always, it is recommended that you hold on to copies of all documents sent to and received from the USCIS.

More Details about Optional Practical Training

- **DURING OPT, you are required by federal regulations to report the following to the International Advisor at Butler County Community College who recommended your OPT:**

1. The date of work authorization issued by the USCIS with a copy of your EAD card,
2. Any change of name and/or address within 10 days of that change,
3. The name and address of your employer,
4. Any periods of time when you are unemployed.
5. You are allowed only 90 days of unemployment.
6. Date of OPT termination, if earlier than authorized completion date.

NOTE: While authorized for OPT, you are still monitored by Butler Community College concerning your F-1 visa status. All reports should be directed to the International Advisor who recommended your OPT.

- **TRAVEL WHILE ON OPT:**

1. Before receiving authorization: It is better not to travel during this time. If an emergency arises, contact your advisor.
2. OPT authorized during studies: Follow the same procedures as for regular F-1 travel authorization, i.e., I-20 signature for travel by your advisor.
3. Post-curricular OPT: Your I-20 must have a current signature for travel – no older than 6 months. You must have a current, valid EAD card. Your F-1 visa must be valid.