

F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) APPLICATION PACKET

This OPT application packet includes:

- OPT Student Request and Academic Adviser Verification Instructions including Eligibility Requirements, When to Apply, How to Request the OPT I-20 from ISSS, Materials required to send to USCIS, Where to Mail the Completed Application, Information about the EAD card, and Requirements while on OPT.
- The OPT Request Form to be completed by the student, signed by the Academic Adviser, and submitted to ISSS.
- Instructions for completing USCIS Form I-765

Related USCIS Forms:

- USCIS Form I-765: <http://z.umn.edu/i765>
- USCIS Form G-1145: <http://z.umn.edu/g1145>

Form I-765 Instructions for F-1 Optional Practical Training

0. I am applying for: Put and “X” in the box next to “Permission to accept employment.”

1. Full Name: Print family, first, and middle names. Write “family name” or “last name” with all capital letters. If you do not have a middle name, write “(none)”

2. Other names used: If you have not used other names, write “(N/A)”

3. U.S. Mailing Address: Use a residential address that will be valid for 3 months after submission of application. USCIS mail cannot be forwarded to a new address by the postal service. If correspondence will be “in care of” a friend or family member in the U.S., write the person’s name in block 2 (i.e., C/O John Doe) and the person’s address in item 3.

4. Country of Citizenship or Nationality: Block 1 of I-20

5. Place of Birth: See passport

6. Date of Birth: See passport

7. Gender: Check one

8. Marital Status: Check one

9. Social Security Number: If you do not have a social security number, write “(none)”

10. Alien Registration Number or Form I-94 Number: Use the 11-digit number on most recent I- 94

11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS? F-1 curricular practical training (CPT) authorized by ISSS **is not** employment authorization from USCIS. If you have previously submitted an employment authorization application to USCIS for approval, check “yes” and provide additional information requested in item 11

12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S.: See most recent stamp in passport or I-94

13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S.: U.S. city applicant went through U.S. port of entry

14. Status of Last Entry: See most recent stamp in passport or I-94

15. Current Immigration Status: If you changed your visa status since you last entered the U.S., refer to your I-797 form. Otherwise, see most recent stamp in passport or I-94

16. Eligibility Category: The eligibility category for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training is: (c) (3) (B)

17. Write "N/A" in each of the 3 blocks

18. Write "N/A"

19 a. Write "N/A"

Signature, Date of Signature, and Telephone Number: Sign, date, and write your phone number

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) FOR STUDENTS ON F-1 VISAS

SUMMARY

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is temporary employment directly related to a student's major field of study, and is generally used before or after completion of an academic program. OPT enables students to gain work experience in their field of study. 12 months of OPT is available per degree level for students of any major as long as the subsequent degree is at a higher educational level. Students on post-completion OPT are limited to a maximum of 90 days of unemployment. Students with certain majors in science, technology, engineering or math may be eligible for a 24-month extension of post-completion OPT. International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) must recommend OPT for a student. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) then provides final approval and issues an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Individuals must have an EAD before they can begin OPT employment. OPT authorization granted by USCIS cannot be changed or voided after EAD card is issued.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Students must complete the online OPT workshop at z.umn.edu/opt prior to submitting the application.
- Completed one full academic year of full-time study
- Maintained Valid F-1 status
- Employment must be in the student's major field of study
- Have not been authorized full-time CPT (Curricular Practical Training) for 12 months or more at the level for which the student will apply for OPT

NOTE: Students lose their OPT eligibility if they depart the U.S. during their grace period and USCIS has not received their OPT application prior to their departure.

OPT CATEGORIES

1. Pre-completion (rarely used)
 - a. Academic Year

During fall and/or spring semesters and student has not completed required coursework. On- and off- campus work combined may not exceed a total of 20 hours per week.
 - b. Vacation Period

Authorization may be part-time or full-time.
2. Post-completion
 - After completion of the degree program

WHEN TO APPLY

- **Pre-completion Application Submission Dates:**
Can be submitted to ISSS 100 days before your requested employment starting date.
- **Post-completion Application Submission Dates:**
Can be submitted to ISSS *no more* than 100 days before your expected date of completion. OPT applications must be received by USCIS *no earlier* than 90 days before and *no later* than 60 days after the student's date of degree completion. *Applications received outside this window will be denied.*

Step 1: Request an OPT recommendation from ISSS

Submit these items to ISSS during walk-in hours or a scheduled appointment. ISSS will prepare a new I-20 in 7 business days. ISSS cannot accept your application for processing unless these items are completed:

- Student Request/Academic Adviser Verification Form
- Form I-765* (Use most recent version from ISSS website.)
- Certificate of completion of the OPT Online Workshop (paper or pdf)

* Instructions for completing Form I-765 can be downloaded from uscis.gov (go to "FORMS").

Step 2: Assemble the OPT application materials

Staple the application materials together in the following order:

1. Check or money order, payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for the OPT application fee. For current fee information, go to uscis.gov, click on "FORMS" and scroll down to I-765.
2. Two identical passport-style color photos taken within 30 days of filing your application. Do not use a photo previously used for a passport or visa. The instructions with Form I-765 provide detailed photo requirements. Print full name and most recent I-94 number in pencil on the back of each photo. Place the photos in a clear plastic bag or an envelope and staple it to the application. Do not put staple holes in the photos. Learning Abroad Center (230 Heller Hall, 612-626-9000) offers photo services.
3. Original Form I-765 (Keep a copy for your records).
4. Photocopy of I-20 page 1 with your signature and page 2 with OPT recommendation.
5. Print of the most recent electronic I-94 at cbp.gov/i94. If you have a paper Form I-94, photocopy of both sides of Form I-94 (copy the back side even if it is blank). Do not mail the original paper Form I-94.

6. Photocopy of biographical page of passport.
7. Photocopies of as many as possible of the following that contain your name and photo: entry visa stamp with a photo, driver's license or state ID, student ID, and any previously issued EAD.
8. Photocopies of pages 1 and 3 of all previous I-20s issued before June 2015 and page 1 and 2 of I-20s issued after June 2015. Do not mail original I-20s.

We also recommend you submit a G-1145 E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance form. This form should be **paperclipped on top** of stapled application materials, and it can be downloaded uscis.gov (go to "FORMS").

Keep a copy of all of these documents for your records.

Step 3: Mail the OPT application to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox

OPT application must be received by USCIS no later than 30 days after the "date issued" on student's OPT I-20. Applications received after this date will be denied. It is the student's responsibility to mail the OPT application to USCIS. Mail the application materials from Step 2 by certified or express mail to obtain a signed receipt. Keep the receipt for your records.

Use the Phoenix Lockbox address if the address you indicated on FORM I-765 is in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, **Minnesota**, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.

For U.S. Postal Service:	For Express mail:
USCIS	USCIS, Attn: AOS
PO Box 21281	1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S
Phoenix, AZ 85036	Suite 100
	Phoenix, AZ 85034

Use the Dallas Lockbox address if the address you indicated on FORM I-765 is in Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Vermont, Virginia, or West Virginia.

For U.S. Postal Service:	For Express mail:
USCIS	USCIS, Attn: AOS
PO Box 660867	2501 S. State Hwy. 121,
Dallas, TX 75266	Business
	Suite 400
	Lewisville, TX 75067

You are responsible for mailing your OPT application to USCIS.

NOTE: Based on information provided by USCIS, we strongly advise you not use the electronic e-file application available on their website. While it appears that it could help speed the application process, due to a number of factors, it is likely to delay the processing of your application by several days or weeks.

Step 4: Wait for EAD to be mailed from USCIS

- It takes approximately 2 to 4 months for USCIS to process your request and mail your EAD to the address on Form I-765. To find current processing times for I-765 (OPT) applications go to <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/processTimesDisplayInit.do>
- Several weeks after you apply, you should receive a receipt notice (Form I-797) in the mail from USCIS. Go to <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do> check your application status or contact the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.
- If there is a problem with the OPT application, USCIS will mail a Request for Evidence to the applicant. If this occurs, bring the Request for Evidence and the copy of the OPT application materials to ISSS for assistance.
- You may not begin employment until you have received your EAD and the start date is current, even if your requested start date has passed.
- You may not continue any on-campus employment after the completion date in block 3 of your OPT I-20, even if you have not yet completed your degree. Any on or off-campus employment after this completion date must be with OPT authorization.
- The EAD will reflect the dates of your employment authorization.

REQUIREMENTS WHILE ON OPT

Go to issu.umn.edu/fstudent/opt-requirements.html for requirements while you are on OPT (including travel information).

OPT STUDENT REQUEST & ACADEMIC ADVISER VERIFICATION

STUDENT REQUEST

Student should complete the section below.

1. Student's Name
Family name First name Middle

2. U of M ID#

3. SEVIS ID #

4. Email

5. Phone

6. Academic Major on I-20 Degree Level on I-20 (e.g., BA, BS, MA, MS, PhD)

7. Students completing a master's program, check one: Plan A Plan B Plan C or coursework only

8. I-20 expiration date
Month Day Year

Passport expiration date
Month Day Year

Visa expiration date
Month Day Year

9. Type of optional practical training:

Pre-completion. part-time / full-time
circle one

Post-completion. All coursework finished by completion date.

Post-completion. All program requirements will be completed.

10. Date of degree completion
Month Day Year

A. For undergraduate students, the date of completion is the last day of the semester/term for which the student is registered and has filed an Undergraduate Degree Application.

B. For graduate students in Plan C or coursework only programs, the date of completion is either (a) the last day of the semester/term for which the student has registered for the final course(s) remaining on the student's Graduate Degree Plan; or (b) the final day of the student's assistantship. If a student has registered for the final course(s) remaining on the student's Graduate Degree Plan for A Term, the date of completion is the last day of A Term.

C. For graduate students required to complete a master's degree plan A, plan B or doctoral thesis, the date of completion is the student's choice of either (a) completion of all required classroom credits (including thesis credits); (b) the day the student has completed all requirements for the degree, including submission of the final paper or thesis; or (c) the last day of the month that the student submits the final paper or thesis. Students may not postpone the completion date by "holding" a completed thesis. Once defense and thesis revisions are completed, the thesis must be submitted within a reasonable time after defense.

- The date of degree completion written above will be the new end date indicated in Item 5 on your OPT I-20. Any work, on or off campus, after this end date will require OPT authorization. Previously authorized CPT will be expired.
- Once you have applied for post-completion OPT, you are no longer eligible for a program extension.

Note: Employment (including assistantships) is not possible after the date of degree completion written above, (even if you have not completed your degree) until the start date on your EAD. You may not delay completion of your degree to pursue on or off campus employment.

11. I want my OPT to begin on
Month Day Year and end on
Month Day Year

12. Describe your proposed employment

STATEMENT: I have read the information on the attached pages regarding OPT and understand the implications of the authorization during and after my program of study. The information I have provided is accurate.

Month Day Year

Ready by:

ACADEMIC ADVISER VERIFICATION

Academic adviser should complete the section below.

To the Academic Adviser:

- **Do not sign this form if the "Student Request" section has not been completed.**
- Optional practical training (OPT) is work authorization that allows F-1 students to gain practical work experience in their field of study.
- Students most often use OPT to work for one year after completion of their degree, known as "post-completion OPT."
- Students are not required to have an employment offer to apply.
- If you have questions, call an ISSS adviser at 612-626-7100.

By signing this form I am verifying the following degree completion date:
(If you have questions, refer to the definition provided under #10).

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Month	Day	Year					

Academic Adviser Signature

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Month	Day	Year					

Name (print)

Phone

Department or College

Comments:

ISSS will complete this section:

Type of OPT:

- Pre-completion
- Post-completion. All coursework finished by completion date.
- Post-completion. All program requirements will be completed.

Completion date: # of Months:

Month Day Year

OPT dates: to

Month Day Year Month Day Year

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the OPT application process with student | <input type="checkbox"/> Previous OPT at this degree level? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 12 months full-time CPT? | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Plan/Holds/Registration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Info | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel discussed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check Assistantship end date, if any | <input type="checkbox"/> Send no earlier than 90 days prior to program completion date |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check CPT end date | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed OPT online workshop |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Give I-20 due date slip to student |

Date submitted to ISSS

Month Day Year

International student adviser initials

Adviser Comments