Optional Practical Training (OPT) Tutorial

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)
OPT Tutorial Instructions

• View each slide completely
• Note anything you don’t understand, so you can ask for clarification later
• It may be helpful to have the following documents handy to refer to:
   USCIS form I-765
   OISSS OPT Application Packet (here)
   Current I-20
Optional Practical Training-OPT

- Gives you the opportunity to add practical knowledge and training to the academic knowledge you have gained while studying.
- Gives you 12 months of employment authorization for each higher level of study you complete.
- Is a benefit of F-1 status (J-1 students are eligible for Academic Training, or AT, but not for OPT).
There are 2 kinds of OPT

1. Pre-completion OPT is rarely used by students.

2. Post-completion OPT is most commonly used by students.
Post-completion OPT

Is used after your degree requirements have been met.

- **Undergraduate** students are eligible when *all* degree requirements have been completed.

- **Graduate** students are eligible after finishing all degree requirements *or* after finishing all coursework, while working on a thesis or dissertation.
When to apply for OPT

You can apply up to **90 days before** you finish your degree requirements and up to **59 days after** completing your degree.

Applications must be received at the service center by the **60th** day of your grace period.

It is also important to consider processing time. . . .
Processing times

1 week processing in ISSS
1 week for mailing
3-5 months service center processing time
2 weeks to issue the EAD and to mail it

Plan on 4-6 months of processing time total
Timing your OPT application

It is ALWAYS best to apply as early as possible!!
Choosing an OPT start date

The start date your request for your OPT must be within your 60-day grace period

Remember, if you apply late, this could impact the length of time you may work
Applying for OPT

In order to apply for OPT, you will need to collect a variety of documents.

A checklist follows and can be accessed on our [website](#) as well (see page 2).
OPT document checklist

1. Form I-765 and accompanying fee
2. Form G-1145
3. Copies of the following documents:
   - The identity page of your valid passport
   - Your F-1 visa (it is ok if it has expired!)
   - Electronic I-94 record – www.cbp.gov/I94
   - All CPT and previous OPT I-20s
   - Front and back of any EADs (Employment Authorization Document) you may have received before
4. 2 recent passport-style photos
5. Academic adviser verification form (page 3)
The form I-765 has been updated.

Please read the new form instructions very carefully while filling out the form. Specific instructions begin on page 16.

Let us know if you have questions.
Completing the I-765

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1. Reason for applying</th>
<th>For the STEM extension, select 1.a. Initial permission to accept employment.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 2. Info About You:</td>
<td>1.a-1.c: List your full legal name as shown in your passport.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your full legal name</td>
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Part 2. Info About You:

Your U.S. mailing address

5.a.-5.f.: Enter the address to which you want your EAD (and Social Security card) sent. It should be where you plan to receive mail in 3-5 months.

7.a.-7.d.: Enter the address at which you currently reside (if it is different)

Other information

13.a.-17.b.: Follow the instructions for these lines carefully.
Info about your eligibility category

Item 27: fill in
  - (c)(3)(A) for pre-completion OPT
  - (c)(3)(B) for post-completion OPT

Part 3.

Item 7.a.: do NOT stamp or type your signature.
Part 6. Add’l information - it is only necessary to complete this section if you are applying for post-completion OPT.

List all previous SEVIS ID numbers, all periods of CPT and OPT and the academic levels for which they were authorized.
There are no instructions as to how to do this; we recommend the following:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>3.a</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
<th>3.b</th>
<th>Part Number</th>
<th>3.c</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
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3.d.
N001234567, OPT, 01/01/2017 - 12/31/2018, Bachelor

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4.d.
N001234567, CPT, 06/24/2016 - 09/29/2016, Bachelor
I-765 fees - USCIS filing fee

The federal government charges a fee for processing all applications.

The USCIS fee must be mailed with your OPT application.

- Pay by check, money order or credit card.

  Checks or money orders must be made payable to the “US Department of Homeland Security”

Check [here](#) for the current filing fee

Check [here](#) for how to pay by credit card
OISSS Extended Services Fee

OISSS charges an $80 Extended Services fee

- Although you will have graduated from PSU, we continue to provide services to you as long as you are on OPT

- Your student account will be charged the OISSS filing fee when your OPT application is complete and ready to mail out.
What is the Purpose of This Form?

Use this form to request an electronic notification (e-Notification) when U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services accepts your immigration application. This service is available for applications filed at a USCIS Lockbox facility.

General Information

Complete the information below and clip this form to the first page of your application package. You will receive one e-mail and/or text message for each form you are filing.

We will send the e-Notification within 24 hours after we accept your application. Domestic customers will receive an e-mail and/or text message; overseas customers will only receive an e-mail. Undeliverable e-Notifications cannot be resent.

The e-mail or text message will display your receipt number and tell you how to get updated case status information. It will not include any personal information. The e-Notification does not grant any type of status or benefit; rather, it is provided as a convenience to customers.

USCIS will also mail you a receipt notice (I-797C), which you will receive within 10 days after your application has been accepted; use this notice as proof of your pending application or petition.

USCIS Privacy Act Statement

AUTHORITIES: The information requested on this form is collected pursuant to section 103(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended INA section 101, et seq.

PURPOSE: The primary purpose for providing the information on this form is to request an electronic notification when USCIS accepts immigration form. The information you provide will be used to send you a text and/or email message.

DISCLOSURE: The information you provide is voluntary. However, failure to provide the requested information may prevent USCIS from providing you a text and/or email message regarding your immigration form.

ROUTINE USES: The information provided on this form will be used by and disclosed to DHS personnel and contractors in accordance with approved routine uses, as described in the associated published system of records notices [DHS/USCIS-007 - Benefits Information System and DHS/USCIS-011 - Alien File (A-File) and Central Index System (CIS)], which can be found at www.dhs.gov/privacy]. The information may also be made available, as appropriate, for law enforcement purposes or in the interest of national security.

Complete this form and clip it on top of the first page of your immigration form(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant/Petitioner Full Last Name</th>
<th>Applicant/Petitioner Full First Name</th>
<th>Applicant/Petitioner Full Middle Name</th>
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Email Address

Mobile Phone Number (Text Message)
3. Copied documents

Passport

F-1 visa

I-94
Additional documents

CPT I-20s (If any)

EAD card (If any)
4. Two recent photos passport style with Name and I-94 number in the back

![Diagram of photo dimensions]

- **First and Last name**
- **I-94# 000000000001**
5. Academic adviser verification form

To: Academic Advisors or Authorized Department Personnel

The international student named below is applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT is 12 months of employment authorization granted by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) which allows international students to gain practical work experience in their fields of study, usually upon completion of their degree programs. An international student advisor recommends this type of work authorization but USCIS actually authorizes it.

Before this authorization can be granted, the Office of International Student & Scholar Services must receive verification from you, the student’s academic advisor, of the date the student is EXPECTED to complete his or her degree requirements. The date of completion is not necessarily the end of the term or the graduation date but the date all the requirements for the degree are fulfilled. Undergraduate students must have a signature from their academic advisor (http://www.pdx.edu/advising/advising-locations) verifying that the student will meet all requirements for his or her degree (general education, major and degree) by the end of the quarter in which OPT is being recommended. Graduate students must obtain a signature from their academic advisor verifying that the student a) will meet all requirements for his or her degree (core and elective coursework and thesis/dissertation) by the end of the quarter in which OPT is being recommended or b) that the student has completed all coursework requirements (core and elective) and will complete the required thesis/dissertation within 14 months of the end of the quarter in which OPT is being recommended.

Please complete the form below and return it to us so that we may process this student's request. Should you have any questions, please contact our office at oiss@pdx.edu or by phone 503-725-4094.

To: International Student and Scholar Services (OISSS),

This is to certify that ___________________ (student's name) ___________________ (PSU ID number) is being recommended for Optional Practical Training based on the following information:

☐ S/he will complete all requirements for an undergraduate level degree in ___________________ by the end of term 20 ______.

☐ S/he will complete all requirements for a graduate level degree in ___________________ by the end of term 20 ______.

☐ S/he will complete all required coursework for a graduate level degree in ___________________ by the end of term 20 ______ but will continue working on her/his thesis or dissertation during post-completion OPT.*

________________________________________  ___________________________  _______________________
Academic Advisor's signature             Printed Name                          Date

Telephone number and/or email address

If student has coursework remaining in his/her final term of study, please tell us which classes must be completed. Please feel free share any information of which you think we should be aware.

*If the student is recommended for post-completion OPT while working on the thesis or dissertation, the paper MUST be completed by the end of the authorized OPT period or the student is considered to have violated her/his immigration status.

T 503-725-4094  www.pdx.edu/international-students/  oiss@pdx.edu
Revised: 27-Dec-17
After you submit your OPT application to OISSS

Your international student advisor will review the application and recommend OPT

A new I-20 will be issued

• You MUST sign that I-20 before the application can be mailed

If your application is not received by the processing center within 30 days of the date your advisor recommended OPT, it will be DENIED!
Tips for applying

• You can’t change your OPT dates after we mail the application, so choose them carefully.

• Remember that you CANNOT work until you have the card AND the start date has arrived.
  ☑ You cannot go in for training, and
  ☑ You cannot volunteer in your field of study before the EAD has arrived and the start date has passed
After your application is mailed

- Within about three weeks a receipt will be sent from the service center

- IMPORTANT: Check the order and spelling of your name on the receipt to be sure they are correct

- Please scan and email a copy of the Receipt Notice to OISSS (oia@pdx.edu) when you receive it

- If you do not receive a receipt Notice, or if you receive a Request for Information, contact OISSS immediately!
EAD Validity

- Your OPT period is generally 12 months
- Check the validity dates when you receive your EAD and if you have questions ask right away
- Please scan and email a copy of the EAD to OISSS (oia@pdx.edu) when you receive it
- Be advised – you may not begin working until you have received your EAD and the start date on it has arrived.
Maintaining status while on OPT

You are allowed to be unemployed for up to 90 days within the 12-month OPT period

• Working 20 or more hours per week (ideally for one employer) is considered being “employed”
• If you are working fewer than 20 hours per week, you are considered to be “unemployed”
When you find a job. . .
Let us know within 10 days of starting a new job!

Log in to WorldLink
  • select the F-1 Practical Training tab
  • select Report New OPT Employment e-form
    You will be asked to upload a pdf or .jpg formatted letter of offer
    You will be asked to verify your physical address as well
If your employer changes, use the Update OPT/STEM Employment Information e-form.
More information on reporting on OPT [here](#).
REMEMBER!

• You are **required** to report your employment information to us so that we can report it to the government

• If we are unable to report employment, the government will start counting days of UNemployment!
Volunteering while on OPT

If you can’t find a paid training placement, you may volunteer, BUT

- You must volunteer in your field of study
- You must volunteer at least 20 hours per week
- The volunteer activity *absolutely must* adhere to Department of Labor guidelines
- You may use the employment reporting E-Forms in WorldLink to report a volunteer experience, just like paid employment
Travel abroad while on OPT

You **must** have the following items to reenter the U.S. while on OPT:

- A valid EAD
- A valid travel signature on your I-20 (less than 6 months old)
- A valid passport
- A valid F-1 visa
- A job to return to or a letter of offer from a new employer
IS OPT a VISA?

• It is not. While on OPT, you are still in F-1 status
• Your international student advisor is still a resource, so call or email if you have questions!
Address updates

You MUST update your address within 10 calendar days any time you move – this is a requirement of your F-1 status. During your OPT, you must use the Update Contact Information E-Form in WorldLink.

If you move while your OPT application is pending and did not report a PO Box on your application, report your new address through Banweb, USCIS and US Postal Service.
What about Health Insurance?

You can keep your PSU health insurance if your employer does not provide insurance.

Email insurancehelp@pdx.edu for instructions as to how to purchase insurance.
Questions about OPT?

If you still have questions after reading through this tutorial, please make an appointment to see an international student advisor, or email oia@pdx.edu for more information!

We are available for quick questions
  Mon & Tues from 10-12
  Mon - Fri from 1-3pm
Thank you for your attention!

We hope that you enjoy your practical training experience!

Contact us if you have questions:

 oia@pdx.edu   503.725.4094