

Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training

OPT WORKSHOPS: It is strongly recommended that you attend an [OPT Workshop](#) BEFORE filing your OPT application. The workshop focuses on Post Completion OPT so please inform CIE ahead of time if you are coming for Pre-Completion Advising during the Workshop.

Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training provides the possibility for you to work in the United States, while you still enrolled in classes to complete your degree program. F-1 students in a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree program are eligible to apply for OPT in the following situations:

1. 20 hours/week limit while school is in session and student still has coursework to complete
2. Full time employment can be requested during official schools breaks
3. Full time employment can be requested after completion of all course requirements for the degree except thesis, dissertation or equivalent.

Your application for Pre-Completion OPT must **first** be recommended by an advisor in CIE and then submitted to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for processing. You may submit your OPT application as early as **90 days prior to requested start date**.

ELIGIBILITY

You must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible to apply for Pre-Completion OPT:

- **Be in valid F-1 status**
- **Enrolled full-time.** Minimum 12 units for undergraduate or 8 units for graduate students. You are also eligible to apply for Pre-Completion OPT if you have approved Reduced Course Load (RCL).
- **Fulfilled one-year full-time requirement.** You must have been enrolled full-time for at least one full academic year prior to submitting an OPT application.
- **Be in good academic standing.** Defined as a minimum G.P.A. of 2.0 (Undergraduate students) or 3.0 (Graduate students).
- You will begin and end your OPT during your enrolled course of study
- You have not completed more than 364 days of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT).
- You have not already been approved for 12 months of Post-Completion OPT at the current degree level.

Job Offer

Job offer- a job offer is not required to apply but we recommend you have job offer to ensure that you are able to use the benefit. Authorized pre-completion OPT is deducted from 12 months of full time OPT available.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

In order to apply for Pre-Completion OPT; you will need to follow the procedures below:

1. Attend an OPT Workshop via Zoom or review the [OPT workshop online version](#). Inform the advisor presenting the workshop that you are there for Pre-Completion OPT information
2. Complete the Pre-Completion OPT I-20 Request Form. You should complete Student Information Section and have your academic advisor(s) complete the attached Academic Information Section
 - Graduate students: your academic advisor and your project/thesis advisor
 - Undergraduate students: (1) your major department advisor and (2) a General education advisor (Sam Tran in AACE. Please call email Sam.Tran@csueastbay.edu)
 - At this time, we will accept emails from your academic department in lieu of signatures on the form.
 - If you have an approved RCL form, you do not need advisor's signatures.
3. Email your completed Pre-Completion OPT I-20 Request Form (and any emails from your academic departments) to cie@csueastbay.edu for processing. CIE advisors will process your request and send your OPT Request I-20 via email.
4. Once you receive your Pre-Completion OPT Request I-20, you will need to print and **SIGN and Date** page 1. You are not permitted to use electronic signatures on your I-20.
5. Begin your application online with USCIS. Follow the instructions carefully. You will need to use eligibility code (c)(3)(A) on the I-765. Once you pay for your application, you are not eligible to edit or change any of the submitted answers.
 - a. You must attach your Pre-Completion OPT Request I-20 to your USCIS application before you pay!

THEN WHAT?

Receipt Notice:

Your Receipt Notice will be available immediately on your USCIS account under "My Documents".

Processing Time:

USCIS generally processes applications within 90 days but based on the time of year and how busy they are, the "standard" length of time required for processing is subject to change. Processing times can range from 2-4 months.

Approval Notice:

USCIS will mail your official Approval Notice to the address indicated on your I-765. This notice does not permit you to work but please keep it for your records.

EAD

Your EAD will be produced and mailed to you separately from the Approval Notice. You generally will receive the EAD about 2 weeks after the Approval Notice. Your EAD is required to be in your hands before you can start working.

- Please take a picture of your EAD and email it to CIE.

Pre-Completion OPT Information

- Pre-Completion OPT employment must be directly related to your major area of study
- Students authorized for part time Pre-Completion OPT must limit work hours to 20 or less hours per week.
- You may only work after the EAD is received and only within the dates specified on the EAD
- Pre-Completion OPT authorization for part time will be deducted from your Post Completion 12 month availability at a 50% rate.
 - For example- if you are approved for 2 months of part time pre-completion OPT, your Post Completion OPT would be deducted by 1 month.
- Pre-Completion OPT authorization for full time will be deducted from your Post Completion 12 month availability at 100% rate.
- You must continue to enroll full time during the Fall and/or Spring semester if you have been approved for part time Pre-Completion OPT.
- We strongly recommend you report your employment to CIE via email during your Pre-Completion OPT period so we can update your SEVIS record. We will need the following information
 - Name of Employer
 - Address of Employer
 - Start date of employment
 - How the employment is related to your field of study
 - End date of employment (if applicable)
- Any days of authorization you do not use, you will “lose”. These days will still be deducted from your post completion OPT period, however the unemployment will not affect your F-1 status.
- You must file a separate application for Post Completion OPT if you wish to work after graduation.

Pre-Completion OPT I-20 Request Form

| STUDENT INFORMATION (THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT) | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Last Name: | First Name: | |
| NETID: | Phone: | Personal Email: |
| Current Address: | | |
| When do you expect to complete all degree requirements? | Semester: | Year: |
| Student's Major: | Degree Level: | Bachelor's Master's Doctorate |
| Requested Pre-Completion OPT Period | | |
| Start Date: ___/___/___ | End date: ___/___/___ | End date cannot pass last day of your last semester |
| Hours Requested: | Part Time (20 hours or less per week) | Full Time (more than 20 hours per week) |
| Student Signature: | Date: | |
| | | |
| ACADEMIC INFORMATION (MUST BE COMPLETED BY YOUR FACULTY/ACADEMIC ADVISORS) | | |
| Undergraduate/Bachelor's Students Academic Verification | | |
| Section 1: To be completed by major advisor | | |
| When is student expected to complete all major coursework: | Semester: | Year: |
| Advisor's Name: | Advisor's Signature: | Date: |
| | | |
| Section 2: GE Verification- Please email this form to Sam Tran (sam.tran@csueastbay.edu). Sam will email us the confirmation. | | |
| | | |
| Graduate/Master's/Doctorate Student Academic Verification | | |
| Section 1: To be completed by graduate/department advisor | | |
| When is student expected to complete all major coursework: | Semester: | Year: |
| Advisor's Name: | Advisor's Signature: | Date: |
| | | |
| Section 2: To be completed by Project/Thesis/Capstone advisor | | |
| I verify that the student is currently making progress towards the completion of their project/thesis/capstone. | | |
| Student enrolled in project/thesis/capstone: | Semester: | Year: |
| Student is expected to complete project/thesis/capstone: | Semester: | Year: |
| Advisor's Name: | Advisor's Signature: | Date: |

APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please review the requirements and responsibilities below:

- I cannot start working until I receive the EAD and the start date indicated on my EAD has been met
- I am only allowed to work in my field of study only during the dates specified on the EAD
- I will ensure the information provided on my Pre-Completion OPT application is accurate
- I must report any changes to the following information within 10 days:
 - U.S. Address and phone number: Update your MyCSUEB account
 - Changes to your employment information and report loss of employment: Email CIE
- I will email CIE (cie@csueastbay.edu) a copy of my EAD upon receiving it
- I understand that Pre-Completion OPT authorization will be deducted from my Post Completion OPT application at the rate mentioned in this handout
- I understand that I am required to enroll as a full time student during Fall and/or Spring semester if approved for part time pre-completion OPT
- I understand that I must file a separate application to USCIS (with a new Post Completion OPT request I-20) in order to obtain Post Completion OPT
- I understand that I should inform CIE immediately upon receiving any notices from USCIS such as Rejection Notice, Request for Evidence (RFE), Notice of Intent to Deny, or Denial Notice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND SIGNATURE

I have read and now understand the above requirements. It is my responsibility to abide by the regulations governing Pre-Completion OPT and to maintain F-1 status. Failure to abide by the requirements is failure to maintain my F-1 status and my result in termination of my SEVIS record and thus my ability to work. In addition, failure to abide by the requirements may could potentially affect any future immigration benefit applications filed with USCIS such as Post Completion OPT, H-1B or Permanent Residency.

CIE is able to provide you with general guidance. However, any advice provided to you by our office, as well as the information in this packet, should not be construed as legal advice. Additionally, due to the fluid nature of governmental interpretation, the USCIS may change its interpretation of these immigration laws/regulations and eligibility requirements for benefits, at any time. We will do our best to provide you with the most current guidance. Each case is fact-specific and it is advised that you contact an experienced immigration attorney if you have questions regarding your situation.

Student Name: NETID:

Student Signature: DATE:

OPT REQUEST I-20

Your OPT I-20 will be electronically signed by our office and emailed to you. Electronic signatures on I-20's by DSO's are currently valid per [SEVP Guidance](#). You will be required to print your I-20, sign and date your I-20 with an ink pen and submit a copy of the signed I-20.