

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (Pre and Post Completion OPT)

OPT WORKSHOPS: It is strongly recommended that you attend an OPT Workshop BEFORE filing your OPT application. All OPT Advising will take place at OPT Workshops. Dates and times listed here: <http://www.csueastbay.edu/cie/f-1-students/employment/opt-workshops.html>

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) provides the possibility for you to work in the United States, for **12 months**, in your field of study (as indicated on your I-20). F-1 students in a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree program are eligible to apply for OPT in the following situations:

Pre Completion OPT:

1. part-time while school is in session (not to exceed 20 hours a week);
2. full-time during the annual vacation term if you intend to register for the next semester;

Post Completion OPT:

3. full-time after completion of all course requirements for the degree (excluding thesis or the equivalent);
4. full-time after completion of all degree requirements (including coursework and thesis or the equivalent)

A student is eligible for a maximum of 12 months full-time Post Completion OPT per degree level. A student who completes an approved period of OPT and then returns to school to complete a degree program at a higher level would be eligible for another period of OPT.

Your application for OPT must first be recommended by an advisor in the Center for International Education, and then mailed to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) with jurisdiction over your place of residence.

You may submit your OPT application as early as **90 days prior to your anticipated degree completion and up to 60 days after the program end-date**, provided that it is filed within 30 days of the date the DSO enters the OPT recommendation into SEVIS system.

ELIGIBILITY

You must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible to apply for 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 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 are physically maintaining F1 status and attending classes in the U.S.
- 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 is not required.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

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

1. Attend a OPT Workshop via Zoom or review the [OPT workshop online version](#).
2. Complete the OPT Request Form. (Pages 10 &11) You should complete Student Information Section and have your academic advisor(s) complete the attached Academic Information Section
 - Graduate students: visit an advisor in your academic department and your project/thesis advisor
 - Undergraduate students: two academic advisors complete this recommendation (1) your major department advisor and (2) a General education advisor (Sam Tran in AACE. Please call 510-885-3621 to schedule an appointment)
 - During the period of on “in person” classes and due to limited faculty availability, we will accept emails from your academic department in lieu of signatures on the form.
3. Complete Form I-765. **Guidelines are on pages 7-9. Note:** the US Postal Service does not forward mail from USCIS. We highly recommend you sign up for *Informed Delivery by USPS* (<https://informedelivery.usps.com/>) to track the delivery of your card.
4. Have two immigration photographs taken (see enclosed photograph specifications). Photos must be taken within the previous 30 days.
5. Email your completed OPT Request Form (and any emails from your major department) and your completed I-765 to cie@csueastbay.edu for review. CIE advisors will process your request and send you a scanned copy of your I-20.
6. Once you get the scanned copy, you will need to print and **SIGN and Date** page 1. You only need to send a copy of the OPT request I-20.
7. Prepare your application to mail to USCIS:
Once you have received your OPT request I-20 from CIE, you will need to prepare and submit the following list of items to USCIS:
 - **Notification**- [G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance](#). This should be first page
 - **Payment**- [Fee for I-765](#), payable to US Department of Homeland Security. Personal check, cashier’s check or money order is acceptable. We recommend you use www.uscis.gov/feecalculator
 - Please note you do not have to pay the biometric services fee
 - **Photos**- Two full-face passport style photos. They must be taken in the USA and within the past 30 days. Put the photos in an envelope with your payment (check) and attach with a paperclip on top of the entire application. Do not staple the fee and the photos.
 - **I-765**- Original [USCIS Form I-765](#). Make sure it is signed in wet ink, no electronic signatures are accepted. Include all pages (7), even if they are blank. You must use the current edition of the I-765.
 - **OPT I-20**- photocopy of your new OPT Request I-20 from CIE
 - **Previous I-20(s)**- photocopies of your previous I-20’s at this degree level
 - **I-94**- Photocopy of paper or printout of electronic [Form I-94](#)
 - **EAD**- Photocopy of any previous EAD cards (if applicable)
 - **Passport**- photocopy of Bio Page, most recent entry stamp, and photocopy of F-1 visa page.
 - If you changed your status in the USA and do not have an F-1 visa, please include a copy of your I-797 approval notice

8. Mail your application to USCIS:

- We recommend you mail your application using a trackable method and keep a record of your application’s delivery
- Make sure your application is received by USCIS less than 30 days after your OPT I-20’s issuance date.
 - If you delay your mailing and it is received after 30 days, USCIS will most likely deny your OPT application.
 - If you are close to the 30 days, please request a new I-20 from CIE
- The address to which your EAD card will be sent determines where the application should be mailed. Your EAD card will be sent to the address you listed as mailing address on the I-765
- Make a copy of your complete application before mailing
- Do not use any staples in the application

Direct Filing Addresses are listed on the [USCIS I-765 Lockbox](#) website

If you live in	Mail your application to:
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 Northern Mariana Islands	<p>USCIS Phoenix Lockbox We recommend</p> <p>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS): For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:</p> <p>USCIS USCIS P.O. Box 21281 Attn: NFB AOS Phoenix, AZ 85036 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034</p>
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, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, West Virginia	<p>USCIS Dallas Lockbox We recommend</p> <p>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS): For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:</p> <p>USCIS USCIS P.O. Box 660867 Attn: NFB AOS Dallas, TX 75266 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</p>

THEN WHAT?

Once USCIS receives the application, a receipt will be processed and sent to the address on the I-765 (this normally takes 3-5 weeks). 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 3-5 months. If you have not received your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) a full 90 days after the Notice Date on your receipt from USCIS, and your requested OPT start date has passed, you can contact USCIS for further information on your application.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

- **How do I choose my post-completion OPT dates?**

The start date of your OPT period can be any date in the 60 day period following your completion of studies date. The latest OPT end date can be 12 months after the requested start date.

- **How can I check the status of my pending application?**

Visit the following USCIS website: <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>

- **I did an Internship last term and was authorized for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for 5 months. Does this mean that I only have 8 months of OPT available to me?**

No. Curricular Practical Training is a separate category of employment authorization, and does not count towards your 12 months of OPT. HOWEVER, if you do 12 months of Full-time CPT, you lose your eligibility for Optional Practical Training. Anything less than 12 months full-time CPT will NOT deduct from your OPT.

- **If I apply for OPT early (during the 90 days before completing my program), does that mean I will be able to start working before I complete my degree program?**

The authorized dates of employment will be listed on your Employment Authorization Document (EAD). You cannot start working before the start date on your EAD. The start date is either the start date you requested or the date USCIS approves your application, whichever is LATER.

- **I applied for OPT, but it hasn't been approved yet. I've finished all my degree requirements- can I start working? Can I do an Internship?**

No. Once you have completed your degree requirements, you are no longer eligible for ANY type of employment authorization, except for optional practical training. Therefore, you are not eligible for curricular practical training or on-campus employment, and your company cannot legally have you begin employment until the start date on your Employment Authorization Document.

- **I am finishing my courses this semester, but didn't apply for graduation on time. Does this mean I should apply for OPT during the NEXT semester?**

No. USCIS is not concerned about the date that your degree is officially posted (i.e. the semester that you file for graduation). Your status as an F-1 student is based on the date that you actually complete the requirements for your degree. This date is your "completion of studies date." Therefore, if you are completing your courses and all other degree requirements this semester, your application for OPT must be received no later than **60 days after the end of this semester**.

- **I'd like to take a trip home before beginning my OPT, is that possible?**

If you leave the U.S. after you complete your program and you have not applied for Optional Practical Training, you are no longer entitled to OPT. If you have completed your degree program, and would like to travel and re-enter the U.S., please contact an international

student advisor to discuss your plans. CIE recommends that you do not travel and re-enter the US unless you have both OPT approval and an offer of employment. Once you have received your EAD, you will need the following documents to return to the U.S.:

- Valid passport
- Valid F-1 visa stamp
- Original I-20 with travel endorsement not older than one month.
- Employment authorization document (EAD or OPT card)
- Verification of employment (job offer letter) *Please note: the F-1 regulations allow for re-entry during OPT in order 'to resume employment', so you should be prepared to document your employment, or at least your efforts to gain employment.*

Note: *If you are absent from the U.S. for 5 consecutive months or longer, your current immigration status is considered 'abandoned'. In other words, you may not be allowed re-entry to the U.S., even if you present a valid OPT authorization, visa, and I-20.*

- **If I complete another degree program after OPT, do I get another 12 months of OPT?**
Yes, you may be authorized 12 months of optional practical training, and become eligible for another 12 months of optional practical training when you change to a higher educational level. (i.e. completing a master's degree after a bachelor's)
- **Once I receive my EAD card, do I have to start working right away?**
No, however, you cannot be unemployed for more than 90 days during the approved 12 month OPT period.
- **I received my EAD and the card mentions that it is "not valid for re-entry to the U.S." What does this mean?**
It means that you are not able to re-enter the U.S. JUST by showing the EAD. You also need to show an endorsed I-20 with OPT approval, a valid passport, and a valid F-1 visa stamp.
- **Can I change jobs during OPT?**
Yes. Provided you report any change of name and address of employer or interruption of such employment to your SEVP Portal within 10 days of the change.
- **Can I begin a new program of studies and use my OPT at the same time?**
No, F-1 regulations state that "authorization to engage in practical training employment is automatically terminated when the student transfer to another school or begins study at another educational level."

Passport Photo Requirements

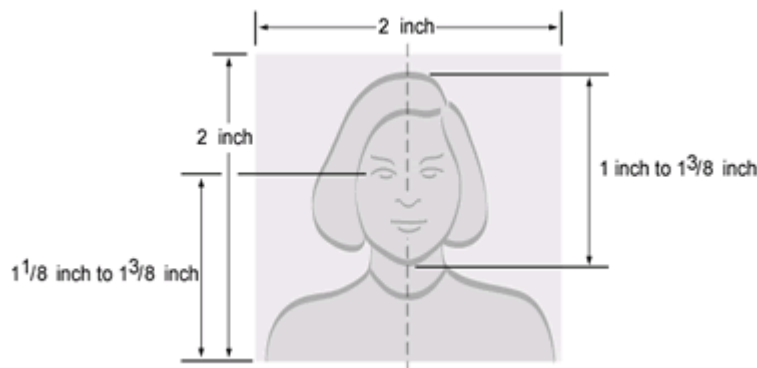
Your photo is a vital part of your application. To learn more, review the information below on how to provide a suitable photo. We recommend you use a professional passport photo service to ensure your photo meets all the requirements.

***DO NOT TAKE THESE PHOTOS AT HOME.**

***PHOTOS MUST BE TAKEN IN THE USA within the past 30 days.**

All photos must be no more than 30 days old when an application is filed and must meet the specifications for full frontal/passport photos as stated on the US Department of State website:

- In color
- Printed on matte or glossy photo quality paper
- 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm) in size
- Sized such that the head is between 1 inch and 1 3/8 inches (between 25 and 35 mm) from the bottom of the chin to the top of the head.
- Taken in front of a plain white or off-white background
- Taken in full-face view directly facing the camera
- With a neutral facial expression and both eyes open
- Taken in clothing that you normally wear on a daily basis:
 - Uniforms, clothing that looks like a uniform, and camouflage attire should not be worn in photos except in the case of religious attire that is worn daily.
 - You may only wear a hat or head covering if you wear it daily for religious purposes. Your full face must be visible and your head covering cannot obscure your hairline or cast shadows on your face.
 - Headphones, wireless hands-free devices or similar items are not acceptable in your photo.
 - If you normally wear prescription glasses, a hearing device or similar articles, they may be worn for your photo. Glare on glasses is not acceptable in your photo.
 - Dark glasses or non-prescription glasses with tinted lenses are not acceptable unless you need them for medical reasons (a medical certificate may be required).



For more information on photo standards visit the Department for State website at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/photos.html>

I-765 Guidelines for OPT Applications

These directions are meant to help you with best practices in completing the Form I-765 for Post Completion OPT. **Please note, this is not legal advice!! You will be signing the form so please answer what you think is best.**

General Guidelines

You can find the Form I-765 and official instructions to complete the form here: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>. You are responsible for making sure you have the current version of the form as listed on the USCIS website.

We STRONGLY recommend you type as much as possible (besides your signature) as the data entry for this form is done via machine reading. Your signature and any answers you were not able to type, should be completed in BLACK INK. **NO ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES ARE ALLOWED!!**

If you need more space for a response, use Part 6 Additional Information.

Guidance here is only given for those items that can be somewhat confusing in nature. Please fill all required fields.

Do not complete the top part of Page 1, that is for USCIS

Part 1

Item 1. Select 1.a.- Initial permission to accept employment

Part 2

- **Item 2:** Share any other way your name is given on your legal documents. This includes “FNU,” multiple last names you may sometimes use, or previous names you used if you changed your name for any reasons, such as marriage.
- **Item 5:** This is the address where USCIS will mail your documents related to this application only. If using anyone else’s address, BE SURE to put their name in the “In Care Of Name” field, to ensure delivery. Do not use a CSUEB address
- **Item 6:** Check YES if you currently in the same address you just gave as the place to send your documents, in item 5. If you check yes, you do NOT have to complete Item 7. If you check NO, please complete item 7.
- **Item 7:** Please give the address where you currently live. USCIS will NOT mail documents here, and it’s okay if this will change over the course of your application processing. Just use the address where you live today.
- **Item 8:** You will only have an A-Number if you have ever had an EAD card before and it will be listed on your EAD card (called a “USCIS number”). Those who have never had an EAD card or an application with USCIS before can leave this field blank.
- **Item 9:** Leave Blank
- **Items 13 – 17:**
 - If you have an SSN, please give it in Item 13b. You can then check NO for Item 14, and skip down to item 18.
 - If you do NOT have an SSN, you can apply for it through this application, and your SSN will be issued to you when your OPT application is approved. You would answer NO to item 13.a., YES to Item 14, and give the required information in items 15-17

- **Item 21a:** Your I-94 number is found on your most recent I-94 entry record. You can access your most recent I-94 by using this link and going to “Get Most Recent I-94” <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/i-94> Please be sure that you use the I-94 from your most recent entry to the US!
- **Item 24:** “F-1 student” unless you changed your status from within the US, and have not left the US since then.
- **Item 25:** “F-1 student.”
- **Item 26:** You can find your SEVIS ID number at the top left of your I-20. It starts with N00.
- **Item 27:** This item is asking you to give the regulatory citation of the kind of work permission you are applying for.
 - OPT: (c)(3)(B)
- **Item 28:** Applicants for Post Completion OPT can leave this blank.
- **Item 28.c:** Leave Blank
- **Items 29 – 31:** Skip these, as they are for other immigration categories only.

Part 3

- **Item 1a.-** Be sure to check this box
- **Items 3-5-** Complete your contact information
- **Item 7a-** Make sure you sign in **BLACK** ink. This should be an original signature. No electronic signatures accepted

Parts 4-5

Please leave these pages blank as you should be completing the forms yourself

Part 6

Complete this section only if:

- You have been approved for **CPT** in the past
- You have been approved for **OPT** in the past
- You have used a **different SEVIS ID** in F-1 status in the US (for example, you attended school for a while, left the US to take a break from school, and returned with a new I-20, you would have a SEVIS ID from your first period of attendance that is different than your current SEVIS ID). Your SEVIS ID is on the top right corner of your I-20, and starts with N00..

Item 1. If you need to complete this section because one or more of the above statements apply to you, please complete Part 6, Item 1.

Item 2. You will need to complete Part 6, Item 2 (A-Number), if you are applying for STEM OPT; your “A-Number” will be on your EAD card (called a “USCIS number”). Those applying for OPT can leave Part 6, Item 2 blank.

Items 3-7. For each of the items listed above (i.e. CPT, OPT, different SEVIS ID numbers), complete one box in Part 6, starting with 3.a. We suggest using the following to complete the Page number, Part Number, and Item number, as this information is required specific to Category (c)(3)(B) (per the [I-765 instructions](#), page 4):

For 3a-c, 4a-c, and/or 5a-c, etc., list the following:

For previous OPT applications

Page 2, Part 2, Item 12

- **OPT:** Please list your past OPT approvals. We suggest this format:

OPT Authorizations. SEVIS #, OPT, Start date – End date; Degree level (Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD), whether full time or part time

For example: N0000000000, OPT, 09/08/17-10/07/18, Bachelor's, Full Time

For previous CPT and SEVIS Numbers

Page 3, Part 2, Item 26

- **CPT:** Please list your CPT approvals. We suggest this format:

CPT Authorizations. SEVIS #, , CPT, Start date – End date; Degree level (Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD); Part-time or Full-time. You can find your CPT details on the I-20 that was approved for each period of CPT.

For example: N0000000000, CPT, 07/07/17-09/07/17, Bachelor's, Part Time (or Full Time)

- **Previous SEVIS ID's:** Please list your other SEVIS ID's you have used in the past. We suggest this format:

Previous SEVIS ID's SEVIS ID: N00.....; program start date – program end date; Degree level (Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD).

For example: Previous SEVIS ID N0000000000, 09/08/13-05/20/16, Bachelor's

Optional Practical Training (OPT) 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 OPT Period **Start date must be within 60 days after course completion date		
Start Date: ___/___/_____	End date: ___/___/_____	*1 day less a year after start date (365 days)
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: To be completed by Sam Tran (AACE)		
When is student expected to complete all GE requirements:	Semester:	Year:
UWSR (WST) requirement met:	Semester:	Year:
Signature:	Date:	
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:
UWSR (WST) requirement met:	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 work on campus beyond my program completion date, usually the last day of finals of your final term
• 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 ensure the information provided on my OPT application is accurate
• My passport must remain valid during my OPT period
• I must maintain health insurance coverage for myself and dependent(s) during my OPT
• My OPT will be automatically terminated if I transfer to another school or start a new degree program
• I cannot be unemployed for more than a total of 90 days during my entire 12 month OPT period, including periods between jobs.
• It is my responsibility to report my employment via the SEVP Portal (www.sevp.ice.gov/opt)
• I must report any changes to the following information within 10 days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ U.S. Address and phone number: Update your SEVP Portal Account and your MyCSUEB account ○ Changes to your employment information and report loss of employment: Update your SEVP Portal
• I will email CIE (cie@csueastbay.edu) a copy of my EAD upon receiving it
• It is my responsibility to obtain a travel signature from CIE if I am going to travel outside the US while I am on OPT. A travel endorsement is only valid for 6 months. I must have a valid F-1 visa, valid passport, EAD card and a job offer in order to re-enter the US
• I understand that I am eligible to apply for OPT STEM, my application must be received by USCIS <u>BEFORE</u> my Post Completion OPT EAD expires
• 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	
<p>I have read and now understand the above requirements. It is my responsibility to abide by the regulations governing 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 H-1B or Permanent Residency.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Student Name:	NETID:
Student Signature:	DATE:

Delivery Method

- In Person Pickup at CIE or the person named here has permission to pick up: _____
** ID will be required at pickup**
- Standard Mail (USPS)- mailed to the address provided on page 1