Optional Practical Training
Information and Application Workshop

Center for International Education
California State University, East Bay
Topics to be covered....

• What is OPT?
• Types of Employment
• Documents needed to prepare your OPT application
• Application Sent! What now?
• Maintaining F-1 Status While on OPT
• STEM
What is Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

OPT is temporary employment authorization for International Students in F-1 status. OPT provides an opportunity for students to apply the knowledge acquired from their academic program to a work experience directly related to their current major field of study.

- **Length**: 12 months at each higher education level. You may become eligible for another 12 months of OPT when you move to a higher education level in the US.
- **Jobs**: While on OPT, students job(s) must be directly related to their current major(s), not minor.
- **How to obtain OPT**: You will email your completed OPT Request Form to CIE advisor and we will email you your OPT Request I-20. You will then mail the application to USCIS.
- **Processing Time**: Mailing time: 2-5 days • Processing time for USCIS to approve your application and mail you the “Employment Authorization Document” up to 90 days or more
  - Currently taking between 3-4 months!
Types of Employment

All employment must be related to your major

• **Paid employment.** Students may work part time (at least 20 hours per week when on post-completion OPT) or full time in a job related to their field of study.

• **Multiple employers.** Students may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to the student’s degree program.

• **Short-term multiple employers (performing artists).** Students, such as musicians and other performing artists may work for multiple short term employers (gigs). The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration. If requested by USCIS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing a list of all gigs.

• **Work for hire.** This is also commonly referred to as 1099 employment where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than employment relationship. If requested by USCIS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods and the name and address of the contracting company.
Types of Employment

• **Self-employed business owner.** Students on OPT may start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, the student must work full-time. The student must be able to prove that he or she has the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to the student’s degree program.

• **Employment through an agency.** Students on Post-Completion OPT must be able to provide evidence showing they worked an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.

**Unpaid employment** Students may work as volunteers or unpaid interns, where this does not violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week for students on Post-completion OPT. These students must be able to provide evidence from the employer that the student worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment.

It is recommended that you maintain evidence for each job: the position held, duration of that position, the job title, contact information for the student’s supervisor or manager, and a description.
Employment Authorization Documentation (EAD)

- EAD will be mailed to you upon approval

- Dates indicate your eligible dates to work
  - You cannot begin working until the start date if you get the card before the start date

- Shows employers you are eligible to work in the USA

**Make sure you check spelling for any errors**
90-Day Unemployment Limit

• Your unemployment starts from the date on your EAD card, even if the date is in the past.
• You must work at least 20 hours per week in a qualifying position to be considered “Employed”.
• To avoid violating F-1 status, prior to reaching the 90-day unemployment limit, a student should take one of the following actions:
  – Apply to continue his or her education by a change of level or transferring to another SEVP-certified school
  – Depart the United States
  – Take action to otherwise maintain legal status
• As of SEPTEMBER 1st, 2020, your SEVIS record will be TERMINATED by SEVP for failing to report employment within 90 days

If one of those actions is not taken, a student who has exceeded the period of unemployment is considered violated his or her status. The student must depart the U.S. immediately as there is no additional grace period.
Eligibility to Apply

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 students 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. You have not already been approved for 12 months of OPT at the current degree level.
- Must be in good academic standing
- Job offer is not required.
Program Completion Date

The program completion date is NOT the same as your graduation date or the term you filed for graduation. Program Completion is when you complete all degree requirements.

CIE will change the program end date on your I-20 and print a new I-20 with OPT recommendation to you. You cannot work on-campus beyond your program end date on the I-20.
Determine your OPT start & end date

• Your *requested* start date must be within your 60 day grace period after the program completion date.

• OPT will end 12 months (365 days) from the start date, or within 14 months of the program completion date.

• Once USCIS receives your OPT application, it is very difficult to change the requested OPT start and end dates. This could also delay application.
When to Apply for Post Completion OPT

- Submit your application up to 90 days before your program completion date
  - You may also submit your application during the 60 day grace period after the program completion date.
  - You must be physically in the US while applying for OPT. If you leave the US during the grace period, you lose your opportunity to apply for OPT.
## OPT Request Dates

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Earliest Date to Apply for OPT Request I-20</th>
<th>Earliest Requested OPT Start Date</th>
<th>Latest Requested OPT Start Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Completion</strong></td>
<td>Course Completion</td>
<td>Earliest Date to Apply for OPT Request I-20</td>
<td>Earliest Requested OPT Start Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2021</td>
<td>February 13th, 2021</td>
<td>May 15th, 2021</td>
<td>July 13th, 2021</td>
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<td>Summer 2021</td>
<td>May 3rd, 2021</td>
<td>August 1st, 2021</td>
<td>September 30th, 2021</td>
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<td>Fall 2021</td>
<td>September 12th, 2021</td>
<td>December 12th, 2021</td>
<td>February 9th, 2022</td>
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It is your responsibility to confirm the grace period dates. The last day of finals is considered the semester end date and your 60 day grace period starts the following day.
OPT Application Checklist

Documents need to apply for OPT
• OPT Request Form
• USCIS form I-765
• Passport
• Most recent I-20 or CPT/OPT I-20’s
• I-94 Printout
• Passport Photos
• Payment (check or credit card)
• USCIS G-1145 (E-Notification)
• Previous EAD (if applicable)
OPT Request Form

- Complete the “Student Information” section and sign it.
- The “Academic Information” section must be completed and signed before your appointment.
  - Graduate students- needs to be signed by your academic advisor in major department and project advisor.
  - Undergraduate students- needs to be signed by your Academic Advisor in your Major Department and Sam Tran in AACE.
- Read the “Applicant Requirements and Responsibilities” on the 2nd page of the OPT Request Form and sign the bottom.
USCIS recently announced you can file your OPT application online!

Please review our USCIS I-765 Online Filing Process for instructions.

The rest of this presentation will focus on mailing the application but the same documents/process is required for both submission options (mailing or online filing)

We strongly recommend filing online if you are able to.
USCIS Form I-765

USCIS Form I-765 is the form used to obtain an EAD card. The form is Free to download
Form & Instructions-  [www.uscis.gov/i-765](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765)

You must download the latest version (edition) from the link above. If you send a previous edition, your application can be denied.

All information printed on your EAD card will come from the I-765 form.

Our suggestions for completing the form are on the next slides.

Note- we are not immigration attorneys. These are suggestions. You are welcome to complete as you see fit. You will be signing the form.
Form I-765

START HERE - Type or print in black ink.

Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):

1.a. □ Initial permission to accept employment.
1.b. □ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document due to USCIS error.

NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to Replacement for Card Error in the What is the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.

1.c. □ Renewal of my permission to accept employment. (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)

Top Portion: leave this entire section blank

Part 1: Reason for Applying
- Check the “1.a.” box for “Initial Permission to accept employment”.

Type Form and Print- type as much as possible, then complete any blanks and your signature in BLACK ink
Form I-765

PART 2. Information About You, pg. 1

#1 Name
Please write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20. This is how your name will appear on your EAD. Split long first names into first and middle.

#2-4 Other Names Used
Enter your previous names, including nicknames you have used in official records or documentation.
### Form I-765

**PART 2. Information About You, pg. 2**

**U.S. Mailing Address**

This is where you would like the Receipt Notice and the EAD card to be mailed. *This is very important!*

- **Should be valid for 3-5 months**
- **If you have plans to move during this time, use a reliable friend or family member’s address you have (indicate this in #5.a.)**

**#5.a.** If the mailing address belongs to someone other than yourself, put their full name (First Name Last Name) here.

**#5.b-5.e** Write a valid mailing address in the U.S.

**#6** If you listed a mailing address that is NOT your current physical living address, select “No” and complete **#7.a-7.d** with your current physical address.

- Physical address should reflect where you actually live.

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<th>5.a. In Care Of Name (if any)</th>
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<th>5.b. Street Number and Name</th>
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<th>5.d. City or Town</th>
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<tr>
<th>5.e. State</th>
<th>5.f. ZIP Code</th>
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<td>(USPS ZIP Code Lookup)</td>
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<th>6. Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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**NOTE:** If you answered “No” to Item Number 6., provide your physical address below.

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<th>7.d. State</th>
<th>7.e. ZIP Code</th>
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8. Most F-1 students do not have an A-Number, leave this blank.
   • If you have an previous EAD, use the USCIS # from the EAD

9. F-1 students do not have a USCIS Online Account Number, leave this blank.

10-11. The responses to these questions should be straightforward. Please complete them accurately.

12. Check “No” if you have never applied for an EAD.
   • Check “Yes” if you have previously applied for an EAD. You will need to provide copies of your previous EADs.

#13.a.-17.b. Social Security Number (SSN)

#13.a.
   • Check “Yes” if you have been issued an SSN and enter your SSN with one letter in each box in #13.b.
   • Check “No” if you do not yet have an SSN

Note on 12: This question does not apply to previous on-campus employment or CPT.
13.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known).

If yes, complete 15-17.b

14. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? (You must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15., Consent for Disclosure, to receive a card.)

If no, skip to 18

If yes, complete 15-17.b

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 14., skip to Part 2., Item Number 18.a. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 14., you must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15.

15. Consent for Disclosure: I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.

If yes, complete 15-17.b

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Numbers 14. - 15., provide the information requested in Item Numbers 16.a. - 17.b.

Father’s Name
Provide your father’s birth name.

16.a. Family Name (Last Name)
FAMILY NAME

16.b. Given Name (First Name)
First Name

Mother’s Name
Provide your mother’s birth name.

17.a. Family Name (Last Name)
FAMILY NAME

17.b. Given Name (First Name)
First Name

PART 2, pg. 2, continued…

#13.a.-17.b. Social Security Number (SSN)

#13.b.

• If you checked Yes, complete your SSN

#14.

• Check “Yes” if you want a new or replacement SSN card and complete #15-17.b

• Check “No” if you do not want a new or replacement SSN card
PART 2, pg. 2-3 continued…
The responses to these questions are straightforward. Please complete them accurately.

#18 Countries of Citizenship, pg2
- List all as applicable *(use Part 6 of the I-765 if needed)*

#19-20 Place of Birth, pg3
- List the name of the country as it was named when you were born, even if it’s name has changed
- Make sure your Date of Birth is in the correct format of MONTH -DAY -YEAR. *(01/31/1998 not 31/01/1998)*
PART 2, pg. 3 continued…

Information About Your Last Arrival

#21.a. I-94 Number
Use your current I-94 number. This is at the number found on the electronic I-94 record or on the top left corner of the paper Form I-94 card (see example)

#21.b-e. Passport Information
Enter the information directly from your passport; use the information of the passport you last used to enter the U.S. (this should match the country on your I-20)

#21.c. Travel Document
Leave it blank
Form I-765

#22 Date of Last Entry into the U.S.
Your most recent entry date can be found on your passport admission stamp, electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card.

#23 Place of Last Arrival into the U.S.
Name of the Port of Entry city from your most recent entry. This information can be found on your passport admission stamp, travel history section of your electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card (usually as a code, i.e. “SFR” for San Francisco).

#24 Immigration Status at Last Entry
Status in which you entered the U.S. If you entered with an I-20 as a student, write “F-1 Student.”

#25 Current Immigration Status
Current status should be “F-1 student.”

#26 SEVIS ID
Your SEVIS ID appears on the top left side of your I-20 and starts with N00…
Information About Your Eligibility Category

27. Eligibility Category. Refer to the Who May File Form I-765 section of the Form I-765 Instructions to determine the appropriate eligibility category for this application. Enter the appropriate letter and number for your eligibility category below (for example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii)).

Very Important

PART 2, pg. 3 continued…

#27 Eligibility Category

Use the code (c) (3) (B) for post-completion OPT. DO NOT USE a different code!
Form I-765

PART 3. Applicant’s Statement, pg.4

#1.a. Select 1.a. to indicate that you have read and understood the questions.

#2 Leave Blank

#3-6 Provide your information as requested
Applicant’s Declaration and Certification

• Read the entire declaration carefully.

Applicant’s Signature

#7.a.-7.b. Hand sign your name and provide the date of the signature

SIGNATURE MUST BE IN BLACK INK. NO ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES ACCEPTED

Be conservative and use a signature smaller than normal.

Your signature MUST be in BLACK ink. NO electronic signatures are accepted!
These sections are not applicable to you, since you’ve completed the form yourself. This section is for those who use an interpreter or other paid preparer to complete the form.
Page 7, Part 6 needs to be completed ONLY if:

• you have previously had other SEVIS IDs
• you have ever been authorized for CPT or OPT
• If neither of these apply to you, leave Part 6 blank

PART 6, Additional Information, pg. 7

#1.a.-1.c. Provide your name again as listed in Part 2, 1.a-1.c.

#2. Leave blank

#3.a-3.c. Reference Pg. 3, Part 2, Item 26 (CPT and Previous SEVIS) or Pg. 2, Part 2, Item 12 (OPT)

#3.d. List all previously used SEVIS numbers—including from all previous F-1 programs in the U.S including high school, short stays, community colleges, or previous I-20s at CSUEB

#3.d. If you have had previous CPT and/or OPT, write your SEVIS Number, CPT or OPT, Dates and Degree Level

• We recommend to include copies of all previous CPT and OPT I-20s and EAD cards with your application.
You are done with the I-765!

- Review all the information on the form for accuracy. You must submit **ALL 7 pages** of the I-765, even the blank pages.
- Make a copy of your completed I-765 application to keep for your records, in case there is a problem with the application.
- We recommend you email a completed copy to CIE for review.
  - Reminder, we will provide suggestions and check for completeness. We are not checking for accuracy, that is your responsibility.
- Check the edition (version) date on the form is current. The date is listed at the bottom left hand side of the page.
- Signature should be in black ink. No electronic signatures are permitted.
- Any questions you were not able to type the answer, write the answer using a black pen.
How to obtain OPT Request I-20

Email the following to your CIE advisor

• OPT Request Form (Required)
  – Form must be completed and signed by all required parties

• USCIS form I-765 (Optional but recommended)
  – We will review this form and suggestion corrections.
    • Reminder, we are not attorney’s, these are simply suggestions. We are not responsible for any missed “errors”

• CIE will email your OPT Request I-20. You will need to sign page 1 and following the mailing instructions

• IMPORTANT- USCIS will only accept an I-20 if it was signed within the last 30 days by CIE Advisor.
  – Do not delay mailing your application
Form G-1145

E-Notification of Application Acceptance from USCIS (Text message and Email)

• Optional
• Simple
• Recommended
• May get Receipt #
• Free
Application Fee

Currently application fee is $410.00

Please check the USCIS I-765 web site to verify the amount.

Recommended:
USCIS Fee calculator to be certain you are using the correct form edition and submitting the correct fee.

You are welcome to print and include the Fee Calculator page.

THERE ARE ONGOING LAWSUITS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY IMPACTING THE FEE & FORM.
Calculate your fees
www.uscis.gov/feecalculator
Payment - Option 1: Check

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Four Hundred and Ten and 0/100

SEVIS NUMBER: NOOOOOOOOO

Your Signature

*If you are using someone else's check, make sure they sign the check
*You can use a Money Order but it is harder to track
* "For" or "Notes" - for your personal note, we recommend you put your SEVIS number but it is not required.
Payment - Option 2: Credit Card

NOT RECOMMENDED

USCIS Form G-1450

*Make sure address on form matches credit card billing address
*Check information for accuracy
*Recommend you type and hand sign
Passport Style Photos

✔ Must meet specifications of US Passport Style Photos
✔ The photos must be taken within the past 30 days in the US. Do not take them at home!
✔ Background should be plain white or off-white
✔ Head should be centered within frame and photo should show full face
✔ Make sure you have a natural expression

Most places that take passport photos are already familiar with the specifications
I-94 & Passport Copies

**www.cbp.gov/i94**

Print out your most recent I-94 and include a copy with your application.

Send a copy of the following pages with your application:

- Bio Page
- Most recent F-1 visa
- Most recent entry stamp

Remember: your passport must be valid for at least 6 months into the future! Check your expiration date!
Previous I-20’s

• We recommend you include copies of any previous CPT and OPT I-20’s
• If you do not have any CPT or OPT I-20’s, we recommend you include a copy of your most recent I-20.

• No need to mail copies of ALL I-20’s
Prepare your application for USCIS

- Decide if you are going to mail it or submit it online.

  - **Mailing** - Follow the instructions in the OPT Handout and the supplementary handout emailed to you with your I-20.
    - The order of the application is very important
    - We recommend mailing via UPS/FEDEX for tracking purposes.

  - **Online submission** - review our [USCIS I-765 Online Filing Process](#)
    - Scan and simply name your supporting documents
Application Mailed! What now?

- May or may not receive text/email from G-1145
- USCIS will mail Form I-797C Notice of Action
  - Indicates your application is received, contains your receipt number, provides documentation for your legal stay
  - Your Receipt Number (usually starts with “YSC”) allows you to “Check your case status” at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
  - If you do not receive a receipt notice 6 weeks after you mail your application, request a receipt letter by USCIS online tools [www.uscis.gov/tools](http://www.uscis.gov/tools)
- USCIS will mail Approval Notice
  - This document does not allow you to work but please keep it for your records
- EAD card
Application Submitted Online!

What now?

- You will receive your receipt number immediately under “Documents” tab
  - Indicates your application is received, contains your receipt number, provides documentation for your legal stay
  - Your Receipt Number allows you to “Check your case status” at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
- You can sign up for Case Alerts to get notified immediately upon any action to your case
- Approval Notice will be posted online and will be mailed to you
  - This document does not allow you to work but please keep it for your records
- EAD card
Reporting Responsibilities

You are required to report any changes to your contact information or employment information within 10 days of the change. This includes but not limited to:

- Residential Address Change
- Phone or email change
- Employer Change
  - Beginning employment
  - Ending employment
  - Adding second employment

- Primary method to report all changes is the SEVP Portal
- Reporting Responsibilities listed on [CIE Website](CIE Website)
SEVP Portal

• The SEVP Portal [http://www.sevp.ice.gov/opt](http://www.sevp.ice.gov/opt) is a tool for you to report your employer information and contact information.
• You should also update your U.S. address and phone number on your MyCSUEB account.
• An email from SEVP (do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov) with instructions will be sent after approval.
  – Email generally arrives on EAD start date but can take up to 1 week after EAD start date
  – Check your spam/junk folders
  – If it has been more than a week since your EAD card start date, contact CIE to confirm email has been sent by SEVP and your email address in SEVIS is correct
• Visit the SEVP Portal Help on Study in the States’ ([www.studyinthestates.dhs.gov](http://www.studyinthestates.dhs.gov)) website for help

PORTAL LINK DOES EXPIRE- Please create login immediately upon receiving email!
Maintaining F-1 Status

To maintain F-1 status you must:

- Stay employed: work at least 20 hours a week in a job related to your major
- Do on pass 90 days of unemployment
- Fulfill Reporting Responsibilities: Report your address/phone/employer information via the SEVP Portal within 10 days of any change
- Send CIE a copy of your EAD card via email
- Obtain a travel endorsement at least 2 weeks before departure
SSN, Grace Period & Health Insurance

Social Security Number- If you elected to obtain SSN on your I-765, it should arrive within 2 weeks after receiving your EAD.

Grace Period- You will have 60 day grace period after the OPT end date.
   - You must leave the U.S. or transfer to another school to begin a new degree program to maintain your F-1 status
   - If you transfer before your OPT expires, your OPT authorization will terminate on your SEVIS release date

Health Insurance- It is very important to have Health Insurance during your OPT period
   - Can be employer provided or through CSUEB
Travel Outside the United States

Travel is only permitted after receiving EAD

Documents Needed to Reenter the USA

• A valid passport (6 months into the future)
• A valid F-1 visa
• I-20 with endorsement from CIE
  – Travel endorsement is valid for 6 months
    • Must submit request to CIE at least 2 weeks before departure
• EAD
• Job offer letter or job verification

Evidence of financial support for the OPT period is strongly recommended
Don’t Complete Degree Requirements

• If you have filed for OPT then find out you have not completed your program requirements you have 2 choices
  – Extend your I-20 and withdraw your OPT application.
    • You will not receive your money back, no guarantee the withdrawal will be processed before approval
  – Continue your OPT application
    • Complete the last requirements the next semester while working **PART TIME** (20 hours a week) on OPT
24 Month STEM Extension

Eligibility

☐ STEM CIP Codes Only
☐ Employed with E-Verify Employer
☐ Employer willing to complete and sign I-983 form
☐ Employment must be paid and at least 20 hours a week

Apply up to 90 days before current EAD expires.

Application must reach USCIS BEFORE current EAD expires

Review OPT STEM Handout available on www.csueastbay.edu/cie for additional information
REMINDERS

1. If mailing your application, all signatures need to be in black ink, no electronic signatures allowed.
2. You must sign your I-20 before submitting a copy as part of your application.
3. Application must be submitted within 30 days of CIE Advisor’s signature on page 1.
4. If mailing your application, you are responsible for checking I-765 Form Edition.
5. If mailing your application, you are responsible for checking application fee amount.
6. You must be INSIDE the USA to apply for OPT.
7. If your application gets rejected and returned to you, please let us know so we can issue you a new OPT request I-20.
Any questions?

Please ask, others may have the same question!