Optional Practical Training
Information and Application Online 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**: Schedule an appointment with an advisor with all your OPT documents and an OPT request I-20 will be issued to you. CIE 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

• **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.

All employment must be related to your major
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

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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Completion</th>
<th>Earliest Date to Apply</th>
<th>Earliest Requested Start Date</th>
<th>Latest Requested Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>Sept 16th, 2019</td>
<td>December 15th, 2019</td>
<td>February 13th, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2020</td>
<td>October 20th, 2019</td>
<td>Jan 18th, 2020</td>
<td>March 18th, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>February 17th, 2020</td>
<td>May 17th, 2020</td>
<td>July 16th, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2020</td>
<td>May 3rd, 2020</td>
<td>August 2nd, 2020</td>
<td>October 1st, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>September 14th, 2020</td>
<td>December 13th, 2020</td>
<td>February 11th, 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPT Application Checklist

You will need to prepare the following documents:

• OPT Request Form
• USCIS form I-765
• Passport
• New OPT I-20 & Previous 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 you submit the form to CIE.
  – 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
  – Due to many faculty being off campus during the online instruction period, we will accept emails in lieu of signatures on the form
• Read the “Applicant Requirements and Responsibilities” on the 2nd page of the OPT Request Form and sign the bottom.
• Select your I-20 collection option on page 2
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 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 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.

#2-4 Other Names Used
Enter your previous names, including nicknames you have used in official records or documentation.
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.**
PART 2, pg. 2, continued...

Other Information

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. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you? 
   • If yes, complete 13.b
   • If no, skip to 14

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 13.a., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 13.a., provide the information requested in Item Number 13.b.

#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.
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
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*)
FORM I-765

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 Blank
#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)).

(c) (3) (B)

28. (e)(3)(C) STEM OPT Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (e)(3)(C) in Item Number 27, provide the information requested in Item Numbers 28.a - 28.c.

28.a. Degree

28.b. Employer’s Name as Listed in E-Verify

28.c. Employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number

PART 2, pg. 3 continued...

#27 Eligibility Category

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

#28-31.b Other Eligibility Categories

These questions are NOT applicable to applying for your 12-month Post Completion OPT.

#28 is for STEM OPT applicants only.
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
PART 3, pg. 4 continued...

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

Important!

Your signature will be scanned and must fit within the box. It must NOT touch the box outline. If the signature is too big and crosses a line, your application could be delayed. Be conservative and use a signature smaller than normal. Please see the example.
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.
# Form I-765

## 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**
- Include copies of all previous CPT and OPT I-20s and EAD cards with your application.
Form I-765

IF YOU COMPLETED any part of PAGE 7, PART 6
You must add your signature and the date to Page 7.
Simply sign and date in the blank space at the bottom of page 7

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.
- Make a copy of your completed I-765 application to keep for your records, in case there is a problem with the application.
Form G-1145

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

- Optional
- Simple
- Recommended
- May get Receipt #
Payment- Option 1: Check

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Four Hundred and Ten and 0/100

SEVIS NUMBER: NOOOOOOOOO

Your Signature

Today's Date

*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.
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

www.cbp.gov/i94

Print out your most recent I-94

Copy the bio page, the visa page and the entry stamp for your application

If you changed your status and don’t have an F-1 visa, include your approval notice

Remember: your passport must be valid for at least 6 months into the future! Check your expiration date!
Submit the following to CIE

You can email the documents to cie@csueastbay.edu or drop them off at the front desk

- Completed OPT Request Form
- Completed I-765
  - CIE Advisors will review your I-765 for any corrections and inform you
- CIE advisors will issue your OPT request I-20
- You can pick up your I-20 from CIE or we can mail your I-20 to you
Prepare your OPT application

A detailed list of documents, the order and the mailing addresses is listed on the CIE OPT webpage

Be sure to include all required documents when mailing your application to USCIS

Your application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of your OPT I-20 issuance date (date is next to advisor’s signature on page 1 of I-20)
Application Sent! What now?

- USCIS will mail Form I-797C Notice of Action
  - Indicates your application is received, contains your receipt number
  - This does not allow you to work but does allow you to remain in the USA

- Your Receipt Number (usually starts with “YSC”) allows you to “Check your case status” at www.uscis.gov

- If you do not receive a receipt notice 6 weeks after your CIE appointment, request a receipt letter by USCIS online tools www.uscis.gov/tools
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.

• Please report any changes within 10 days of change.

• An email from SEVP (do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov) with instructions will be sent on or near your EAD start date.

• If your EAD start date has passed but you did not receive the email instruction, you should first check your spam or junk mail folder. If you still do not see it, contact CIE with your full name and SEVIS number to ask for a reset.

• Visit the SEVP Portal Help on Study in the States’ ([www.studyinthesates.dhs.gov](http://www.studyinthesates.dhs.gov)) website for help.

PORTAL LINK DOES EXPIRE- Please create login immediately upon receiving email!
I-20 with Employer Information

Once you update your employer information via the SEVP Portal, we recommend you request a new I-20 showing your employer details using the I-20 Request Form.

• CIE will not issue these automatically. It is your responsibility to update the SEVP Portal and submit the request.
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
- Fulfill Reporting Responsibilities: Report your address/phone/employer information via the SEVP Portal within 10 days of any change
  - An email will be sent to you by SEVP upon approval with login instructions
- 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.

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](http://www.csueastbay.edu/cie) for additional information