

## OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

F-1 students studying at the college level may qualify for practical training, which allows them to engage in *temporary* full-time or part-time employment to gain practical experience in their field of study.

### Three Types of OPT

1. Pre-completion OPT
  - a. Pre-completion OPT subtracts from post-completion OPT
2. Post-completion OPT
3. 24-month STEM extension of post-completion OPT

\*A total of 12 months of OPT is available per education level

\*All OPT (pre or post-completion) must be completed within *14 months* of program end date

### Eligibility Criteria

- Maintaining lawful F-1 visa status.
- Enrolled for at least one full academic year.
- Must be *directly related* to major.
- Offer of employment *not* required.
- Employment possible only after receiving EAD card.

### Application Timeline

- **Pre-completion OPT:** application may be filed up to 90 days before one-year requirement is reached. Application must be filed no sooner than 90 days before requested employment start date.
- **Post-completion OPT:** application may be filed up to 90 days before or 60 days after program end date.
- OPT application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of DSO recommending OPT in SEVIS.
  - Application is only official when USCIS has received application. A postmark date will not be considered proof of applying within application window.
  - Current processing time = approximately 90 days, apply as early as possible. Applying after graduation will almost certainly result in losing available OPT time.

### Application Process

- DSO will review the Form I-765 but you are fully and solely responsible for its correct preparation
  - NOTE: The completion and submission of the OPT application and applications for any other immigrant benefit is the responsibility of the *student*, and not the adviser.
  - Student is required to bring all required documentation to appointment to complete Form I-765.
- **After DSO has determined eligibility**, student and DSO determine requested OPT start and end dates. Start date cannot be more than 61 days after program end date.
- DSO requests OPT in SEVIS, prints new I-20 with OPT endorsement.
- Student files Form I-765 with required documentation and fee with USCIS within application deadlines.

### Post-Completion OPT Required Documents

Be sure to follow the instructions, page 20 defines what documents must be attached **and in what order**.

1. Completed Form I-765, marked with proper code at Item 27 – check with instructions!
2. Photocopy of current, properly signed Form I-20 with OPT endorsement
3. Photocopies of any previous EADs, if applicable
4. Check or money order for filing fee made to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” for \$410
5. 2 identical immigration/passport-style photos taken within 30 days of filing Form I-765
6. Photocopy of most recent Form I-94 (arrival record; obtained online if arrival by air, hard copy in passport if arrival by land or sea)
7. Photocopy of biographical page(s) in passport
8. Photocopy of F-1 visa in passport (and any prior F1 visas, if applicable)
9. Use Part 6. Additional Information to provide all previously used SEVIS numbers and evidence of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.
10. Optional – consider including form G-1145 to receive faster, electronic updates.