

APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR F-1
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING UPON COMPLETION OF A DEGREE

Definition and Eligibility

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an employment benefit authorized by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for students in the F-1 visa category. Students who have maintained their F-1 status will have an opportunity to obtain work experience **in their field of study** to enhance their educational experience in the United States.

Upon completion of a degree program, a student is eligible for 12 months of full-time OPT. To be eligible for OPT, a student must have maintained their F-1 status. Students can apply for OPT 90 days before the completion of their program to within the 60-day grace period upon completion of their program.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

STEP 1 – Submit the following documents to the Global Engagement Office (GEO) through the [GlobalJays Portal](#) for review or schedule an appointment with the International Student and Scholar Services (ISS) office in GEO to review your documents.

To obtain Optional Practical Training (OPT), students must submit the following documents for processing. **Please refer to this checklist before sending your application to the USCIS.**

How To Apply

1. Go to <http://globaljays.creighton.edu/> login with Blue credentials, click “ISSS Forms”
 - Click on “Employment Authorization” at the bottom
 - Click on “Optional Practical Training” (OPT)

Complete all of the sections:

- a. “Instruction” tab – only submit an “OPT Employment Update” if you already have an employment offer letter. If not, wait until you receive USCIS approval.
- b. “Attached Documents”—Upload the following forms from the checklist below:

_____ A completed USCIS Form I-765 - <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

*Note: Item #20 should be marked as “(C) (3) (B).” This is for post-completion OPT. See below***

- _____ Academic Advisor Electronic Recommendation (to be submitted via GlobalJays Portal)
- _____ Copy of electronic I-94 record - <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home> from most recent entry into U.S.
- _____ Photocopy of passport biographical page
- _____ Photocopy of U.S. F1 visa stamp pages
- _____ Copies of all I-20s, including copies of all previous I-20’s from all schools attended
- _____ Personal check or money order made payable to the “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” (Do not send cash). [Click here](#) to view the most current filing fee. **No need to upload online
- _____ E-notification of application (Form G-1145) (optional)
- _____ 2 passport-style photos (2 X 2 inches). Photos can be taken at most CVS or Walgreens stores. Write full name and I-94 number, in pencil, on back of photos.
- _____ Once everything above is submitted, your DSO will need to issue 1 updated original I-20 with OPT recommendation (keep the second updated original I-20 for your records)

- c. Read through the “Learning Content” for “OPT Guidelines and Application Procedures” – Click “Read”
- d. In “Assessments” take the OPT Quiz
- e. Click into the Questionnaire Form and enter the information that you and advisor are requesting (ie: start and end date, etc.)
- f. Sign the Signature Documents “CPT Statement of Understanding” (if under 19, have parent/guardian sign). Click print, then sign, scan to your e-mail, and finally forward it to lucyhancock@creighton.edu, as a prompt for her to review your completed OPT application. Please wait 2-3 business days for follow up.

****Eligibility codes for I-765**

(c)(3)(A) for pre-completion OPT, (c)(3)(B) for post-completion OPT, and (c)(3)(C) for a 24-month extension for an F-1 student who has received a degree in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM), that appears on the STEM designated Degree Program List published on the SEVP website.

STEP 2

Upon receipt and review of the above documents, the ISSS office will issue a new SEVIS I-20 recommending OPT. You will receive two original copies with the OPT recommendation on the second page. Send one original copy to the USCIS and keep one original copy for your records.

STEP 3

You will mail the I-20 packet which includes the items above and the new I-20, **within 30 days**, to the address below:

USCIS Phoenix Lockbox

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries:

USCIS
PO Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

For Express mail and courier deliveries: (Recommended as fastest service)

USCIS
Attn: AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

We recommend that you send the application by certified or registered mail.

Address on I-765 Application to receive your EAD card

The address you enter on the application is the address where USCIS will mail the OPT/EAD card to you. This address should be valid for at least 3-4 months. If you are planning on moving, you may enter the GEO office address. Once we receive the card we will mail the card to you. The format for the GEO Office address is: c/o GEO, 2500 California Plz, Omaha, NE 68178

You may also change your address with USCIS by going to www.uscis.gov/addresschange or by contacting the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 after you have received a Notice of Receipt from the USCIS for your OPT application.

STEP 4

You will receive an e-notification (if submitted Form G-1145) with case number and will also receive an official Receipt Notice from the USCIS in the mail. Please check for spelling mistakes or any other mistakes.

Once you have received a receipt/case number, you can check the status of your application on the USCIS website at: <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus>

STEP 5- Once you receive your OPT (EAD) card, send a copy to the Global Engagement Office at GEOstudents@creighton.edu. At this time, please also submit your employment information on the OPT Data Form to the same email address.

STEP 6 - Under the new regulations, students on OPT must remain in contact with the Global Engagement Office at Creighton University and report any changes in address, biographical information, and/or employment within 10 days of the change. The school is then responsible to update your SEVIS record. Students are also required to provide any updated employer details, (name and/or location of employer).

General Requirements

F-1 students on OPT are eligible to work anywhere in the U.S. in a position that is directly related to major field of study. Students can begin employment only **after** they have received their EAD cards and the dates on the card have been reached. Students on OPT may change jobs or work for more than one employer.

Traveling and OPT

Students are not advised to travel out of the U.S. while the OPT application is pending. After approval of OPT, students may travel out of the U.S. with the following:

- (1) A valid travel signature on their I-20 by the DSO in the ISS office at Creighton
- (2) A valid F-1 visa to re-enter
- (3) OPT/Employment Authorization Card (EAD)
- (4) A letter of employment from their employer

Unemployment Time

Under new federal regulations, students on post completion OPT are allowed to be unemployed for more than 90 days during their authorized OPT period. Work may be full-time, part-time, or a volunteer position, as long as the work is in the student's field of study.

What is Considered Employment?

- All OPT employment is required to be related to the student's degree program (major) and at their educational level.
- A student must work at least 20 hours a week in a qualifying position to be considered employed. If it is a position with a variable schedule, within a month, it should average out to at least 20 hours a week.

Types of employment allowed:

- Paid Employment- at least 20 hours a week or full time.
- Multiple Employers
- Short-term employers
- Work for hire
- Self-employed business owner
- Employment through an agency or consulting firm
- Unpaid employment- can work as volunteers or unpaid interns, as long as it doesn't violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours a week.

Grace Period

Students are given a 60-day grace period after their OPT ends. During this time, they may prepare to depart the U.S., change their visa status, or be admitted to another program to continue their education either at another school or at the same school.

STEM OPT Extension

Students who are majoring in one of the STEM fields are eligible to apply for an extension of their OPT for an additional 24-month period. You must submit a copy of your degree reflecting the conferred degree as well as your major field of study. In addition, the employer with whom you are seeking the 24-month OPT extension **must be** registered in E-Verify. Accordingly, you must list the employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in Item #21 of the Form I-765

Cap-Gap Extension and Cap-Gap OPT

Students whose OPT and grace period expires before their H-1 B OPT start date has begun are automatically given extension by the USCIS of their post completion OPT

