OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) FOR F-1 STUDENTS

General Overview
Optional Practical Training (OPT) allows students in F-1 status to gain practical experience and training in a field directly related to their major area of study. Students are allowed a maximum of 12 months OPT, which may be completed all at once, or at several different intervals (e.g., three months every summer). The initial 12 month OPT limit may be extended by 24 months, for a total of 36 months, for certain STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) degree holders if the employment meets all requirements (see the STEM request instructions and forms for details). Students are eligible to do one year of OPT for each higher level of study that they complete in the U.S.—one year for a bachelor’s degree, one year for a master’s degree, and one year for a doctoral degree. Students who are granted work authorization will be issued an “Employment Authorization Document,” or EAD card. This card will display your photo, signature, the type of employment authorization, and the specific dates that you are eligible for employment.

Eligibility Requirements
- To be eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT), you must have been enrolled as a full-time student at least for one academic year (2 semesters) and be in F-1 status and maintaining status at the time of application.
- All employment must be directly related to the major field of study for the program you are using to apply for the OPT authorization.

Types of OPT
Post-Completion OPT
This is the most common type of OPT. Students planning to use Optional Practical Training (OPT) after completion of program may apply to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) up to 90 days before completion of program but no later than 60 days after the program end date (the program end date may be different from the current I-20 end date). Due to new/updated USCIS policies, it is imperative that you take advantage of your full 90 days advance time period to submit an OPT application. Once OPT is recommended in SEVIS by an ISSS advisor the student must file a Form I-765 with USCIS. USCIS must receive the application within 30 days of when ISSS prints an I-20 recommending OTP. Post-completion OPT is always defined as full-time (20 or more hours per week) with the expectation that you will be engaged in full-time employment, or seeking full-time employment.
Special Note on Program End Dates: Please consult your academic advisor regarding the expected date of completion of coursework and program requirements. Your program end date is the date your academic program is considered completed for immigration purposes.

To determine the end date of your program (not necessarily the end date on your current I-20):

- For Master’s/Bachelor’s students: the program end date is the last day of final exams of the semester you are graduating. Ask ISSS for the exact date.
- For thesis/dissertation students: your program end date, upon consultation with your academic advisor and ISSS, could be: The date you defend successfully (as long as all other course work is completed); the date you submit your thesis or dissertation (as long as all other course work is completed); the last day of final exams of the semester you are graduating (you must be registered that semester to be eligible for this option).

After the program end date the student cannot work on or off campus (paid or unpaid) until he or she receives an EAD card and reaches the start date approved by USCIS. F-1 regulations do not allow students to postpone completion of program for any reason except unfinished academic requirements for the degree. If for unforeseen reasons you do not complete the program as expected and you have applied for OPT please consult an ISSS advisor immediately, as this can jeopardize your F-1 status and OPT eligibility.

Pre-Completion OPT

Pre-completion OPT is only recommended in very specific situations while a student is still enrolled in a degree program; in most cases, a different form of work authorization such as CPT is preferred. Students may only work up to 20 hours per week while school is in session if pre-completion OPT is authorized. There is no specified limit to the number of hours students may work during vacation periods. Part-time OPT is defined as 20 hours or less per week and counts ½ the time of full-time OPT (i.e., 4 months of part-time OPT = 2 months of full-time OPT). Full-time OPT is defined as more than 20 hours per week. Doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy may use full-time OPT during their dissertation research period while continuing full time registration. Students must confirm advancement to candidacy before applying for full time pre-completion OPT. Students who choose to break up their OPT into more than one period of pre-completion work authorization or to split their OPT period between pre- and post-completion OPT must file separate applications for each period of OPT.

24 Month STEM Extension

Students majoring in certain fields may be eligible to extend their OPT for an additional 24 months, for a grand total of 36 months. These fields are referred to as STEM (Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields. Students who choose to use the 24 month STEM extension will apply for the initial 12 months of OPT first, and then apply again for the STEM extension before that first 12 months is over (but no earlier than 90 days before the initial 12 month OPT period expires). Please contact ISSS for a full list of qualifying requirements for the STEM degree and employment. Students are required to submit proof of the STEM degree to USCIS upon application, including either a diploma and/or official transcript proving the degree earned.
Regulatory Information

Reporting Requirements while on OPT

While authorized for OPT you are still a F-1 student under the University at Albany’s sponsorship. **Make sure that MyUAlbany has the e-mail address you read regularly and that you respond to ISSS emails.** ISSS and DHS/SEVIS will contact you by email in the event of regulatory changes and/or if you have not updated your information with our office. While on OPT, you must:

1) Provide ISSS with a photocopy of your Employment Authorization Document, or EAD card (front and back).
   - You must receive authorization from USCIS and have an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) in your hands before you begin employment. The application process with USCIS takes on average 3 months, but may take longer.

2) Update your SEVIS USA address in MyUAlbany to your place of physical residence. Please also keep your email (including an alternate email) and phone number up to date.

3) Students on OPT are required to report any changes to personal/contact information (including but not limited to name changes, email, phone number, and address), employment information (including but not limited to new employment, employer changes, end of employment, employer name, address, supervisor contact information, position, and how the employment relates to the student’s program of study) and changes in status (including changes of status to H1B, permanent residency, departure from US, etc…).
   - Students are required to report any of the above changes to ISSS/DHS within 10 days.

4) Students must complete a Departure Form when you end OPT and plan to depart the United States. Please see the Departure Form on our website at [www.albany.edu/issss](http://www.albany.edu/issss) under “Forms”.

Students report by submitting an “OPT Data form,” available on ISSS’ website under the “Forms” page. Starting March 23, 2018, SEVP (the government agency which administers SEVIS) will be launching a portal for certain students to directly input changes in employment information. Students will be sent an email to enroll based on the email address in SEVIS, so your email must be up to date in MyUAlbany. As of March 2018, only OPT students will be able to use the portal to update employer information; students on STEM OPT must continue to report through ISSS using the OPT Data Form. **All students are still required to keep their demographic information, including SEVIS USA address, email, and phone number, up to date in MyUAlbany.**

For more information on the SEVIS portal, please go to the OPT/STEM section under the “Forms” page of the ISSS website.

Limited Periods of Unemployment to Maintain Status

During the 12 month post-completion OPT, maintaining F-1 status is dependent upon full-time, qualifying employment. “Volunteer work,” or unpaid activity, counts as employment under OPT as long as the employment meets all requirements, including that the student is working at least 20 hours per week in a position directly related to the student’s major. This “volunteering” should be reported to ISSS and stops the unemployment count.
Students may not accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment during the 12 months of optional practical training. This includes weekends. If you are at risk of exceeding 90 days unemployment please consult an ISSS advisor. Exceeding unemployment is considered a violation of F-1 status, meaning that a student’s F-1 status may be terminated by a DHS official at any time and/or future benefits may be denied to the student if those benefits depend upon maintaining F-1 status. Students at risk of exceeding unemployment days are advised by USCIS to either depart the U.S. before exceeding the unemployment limit or transfer/change level to begin a new full-time course of study before the unemployment limit is reached in order to avoid violating status.

**Travel While OPT is Pending**

Travel outside of the United States while an application is pending with USCIS is strongly discouraged. Once you have completed your studies, you need documentation showing continuing status in order to re-enter the U.S. For F-1 students on OPT, the proof that USCIS has granted you continuing status is the EAD card. Consult an ISSS advisor before making any international travel plans.

**Travel After OPT is Approved**

Students on an approved period of OPT with employment reported may travel. To re-enter, the student must have a valid I-20 signed within the past 6 months from the date of re-entry, valid passport, valid F-1 visa, valid EAD card, and proof of employment (such as a contract or offer letter). This current employment information must be reported to ISSS. If a student is not currently employed travel is strongly discouraged.

**Grace Period**

Once you have applied for OPT you are in a pending status, not a grace period, following graduation. Pending status refers to the time when your application is still pending with USCIS. You may remain in the United States while the OPT application is pending. If the application is denied, revoked, or withdrawn and you are more than 60 days past your program end date you must leave the United States immediately.

If your OPT is approved your 60 day grace period will take place at the end of your OPT period. This does not apply to students that have used all of their unemployment time or otherwise failed to maintain status/violated status; if a student has violated status no grace period is given.

**Health Insurance While on OPT**

If you are not working or work for an employer that does not offer health insurance, you may purchase insurance through ISSS at monthly intervals. If you are currently enrolled in the international student health insurance you must renew your policy with ISSS no more than 30 days after the completion of your program. If you are currently enrolled in NYSHIP insurance as a graduate/teaching/research assistant but want to switch to University insurance after the completion of your program, you must do so before the program completion date. If at any point on OPT you need insurance coverage contact ISSS to find out if you are eligible for insurance through the University. Health insurance through ISSS is only available to students in F-1 status; if you change status this can impact your coverage. Please plan accordingly and email IntInsurance@albany.edu for more information.
H-1B Cap-Gap Extension

If a student has a timely filed H-1B petition requesting an employment start date of October 1 of the following fiscal year, the student may be eligible for a “cap-gap extension” of the duration of F-1 status and/or work authorization. The extension of duration of status and work authorization will terminate upon the rejection, denial, or revocation of the H-1B petition filed on the student’s behalf. The only proof that students will receive of their cap-gap extension is a new I-20 from ISSS. If you believe you are eligible for a cap-gap extension, please contact ISSS to request a new I-20 and include any proof of filing and/or receipt notice(s) from USCIS. Please remember that ISSS cannot advise on H1b applications or a H1b status in any way.

OPT Denials

Based on updated USCIS guidance regarding unlawful presence and NTAs (“Notices to Appear”) OPT denials could have potentially serious consequences. If you receive a denial, RFE (request for evidence), or NTA please contact ISSS immediately so that you can be referred out to an immigration attorney as appropriate. Individual circumstances may determine how you should proceed. Generally, if your OPT is denied and you are past your 60 day grace period you should make plans to depart the United States immediately. Unlawful presence may begin accumulating. Unlawful presence can result in bars from entry to the U.S. Individuals who accrue more than 180 days but less than one year of unlawful presence and depart voluntarily may be barred for 3 years. Individuals who accumulate one year or more of unlawful presence may be barred for 10 years (whether they left voluntarily or were removed). USCIS has previously stated that they may issue NTAs for denied applications. An “NTA” is a notice to appear before an immigration judge for deportation proceedings. As of August 2018 that policy has been delayed. With these new/updated policies, it is imperative that you take advantage of your full 90 days advance time period to submit an OPT application.

Application Instructions for OPT

Please make 3 copies of your application: one for your records; one for ISSS; and one for USCIS.

Part 1 – Applying for a new I-20 from ISSS Recommending OPT (5-7 days processing time):

Submit the following documents to ISSS:

1. Completed “Optional Practical Training I-20 Request Form” (attached). This form should be filled out by you and your Academic Advisor
2. Completed I-765 form (you can also type the form using the online PDF)—all pages must be included, even if there is not substantial information on the page.
3. Completed form G-1145 E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
4. Photocopy of current Form I-94 Form (both sides of card version) or print-out of the electronic I-94 - [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/)
5. Photocopy of identity pages in passport, including expiration date
6. Photocopy of F-1 visa stamp, including most recent entrance stamp
7. Photocopies of all previous I-20s (including those from previous schools or programs)
8. Photocopy of previous EAD cards (if applicable)
9. Job offer (not required)
Part 2 – Applying for an EAD card by submitting application to USCIS (approximately 90+ days processing time):

You must mail the following documents to USCIS within 30 days of the issue date of the I-20 recommending you for OPT. Processing with USCIS takes approximately 90 days, and may take longer. You cannot begin working without the EAD card:

1. A money order, certified check or personal check made payable to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security.**
   - payable to the amount of $410.00
   - Effective March 2018 students may fill out a form to request a credit card payment. This form is called the G-1450. For more information, click here: [https://www.uscis.gov/forms/fingerprints/pay-credit-card](https://www.uscis.gov/forms/fingerprints/pay-credit-card)
2. Cover letter addressed to the Dallas Lockbox USCIS processing center (attached)
3. Original completed Form I-765 with your original signature in ink -- all 7 pages must be included, even if there is not substantial information on the page.
4. Form G-1145 E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
5. Photocopy of the new Form I-20 issued for OPT (do not send the original)
6. Photocopies of **all** previous I-20s (including those from previous schools or programs)
7. Photocopy of current I-94 Form (both sides of card version) or print-out of the electronic I-94 - [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/)
8. Photocopy of identity pages in passport, including expiration date
9. Photocopy of F-1 visa stamp, including most recent entrance stamp
10. Two identical passport photographs with your name and I-94 number written on the back – see next page and go to: [https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photos.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photos.html)
11. Photocopy of previous EAD cards (if applicable)
12. Job offer (not required)

**REMEMBER:** Optional Practical Training employment **must** be related directly to your major field of study and commensurate with your level of education. You may not begin employment until your physically receive the EAD card, in hand, from USCIS and reach the USCIS approved start date on the card. While engaged in OPT, students are under the University at Albany’s F-1 program. Change of local address, email and phone number must be reported to MyUAlbany within 10 days to update SEVIS. You must report any changes in your employment and/or status to ISSS within 10 days.

Send your completed application within 30 days of DSO signature using a method that shows Proof of Delivery to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For US Postal Service deliveries:</th>
<th>For Express mail and courier service deliveries (ex: FedEx, UPS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USCIS</td>
<td>USCIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 660867</td>
<td>Attn: AOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas, TX  75266</td>
<td>2501 S. State Hwy. 121, Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suite 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lewisville, TX  75067</td>
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</tbody>
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**MAKE COPIES OF EVERYTHING YOU SEND**

FEDERAL MAIL IS NOT FORWARDED. If the address given on Form I-765 is not valid your EAD will be sent back to immigration by the post office.
Passport Photograph Information

When obtaining pictures to send in to USCIS, please visit: https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photos.html for more information. The following information can be used to assist you.

Your passport photo must be:

- Printed on matte or glossy photo quality paper
- Size of photo
  - 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm) in size
  - Size of head must be between 1 -1 3/8 inches (25 - 35 mm) from the bottom of the chin to the top of the head.
  - View the Photo Composition Template for more size requirement details.
- Recent, taken in the last 6 months to reflect your current appearance
- Effective November 1, 2016: No glasses in your passport style photography
- Background must be plain white or off-white
- Head must be directly facing the camera with your full face in view
- Taken with a neutral facial expression or a natural smile, with both eyes open
- In color
- Taken in clothing that you normally wear on a daily basis
- No hats or head coverings, unless you wear it daily for religious purposes. Your full face must be visible and your head covering cannot cast shadows on your face.
- No headphones or wireless hands-free devices.

Photo Composition

- Make sure the photo presents the full head from the top of the hair to the bottom of the chin
- Center the head with the frame
- The person in the photo should have a neutral expression and be facing the camera

Paper Photo Head Size Template

Acceptable Photos (https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photo-examples.html):
**I-765 Instructions**

The instructions included here are an abridged version of the I-765 instructions provided by USCIS. Those full instructions are available here and students are strongly encouraged to review them: [https://www.uscis.gov/i-765](https://www.uscis.gov/i-765).

ISSS has included additional comments in blue. These instructions are provided in addition to the sample I-765, which you can also find in our OPT packet.

If you would like a visual sample of the I-765, these samples are available in the ISSS office.

**General Instructions:**

1.) This form must be typed or handwritten with black pen ink.
2.) Do not leave blanks. If there is no answer, write “N/A.”
3.) You must submit all pages to USCIS, even if there is nothing substantial on them.

**Part 1. Reason for Applying**

Select the appropriate reason

Item 1.a.: Initial permission to accept employment (most students applying should select this reason)

Item 1.b. Replacement of a lost, stolen, or damaged EAD, or correction of your EAD not due to USCIS error (see ISSS first)

Item 1.c. Renewal of your permission to accept employment (most commonly used by students who already have post-completion OPT and are applying for a STEM extension).

**Part 2: Information About You**

**Item Numbers 1.a.-1.c.: Your Full Legal Name:** Provide your full legal name as shown on your birth certificate or legal change of name document. This should be the same name as what is on your passport. If your name does not fit, you may handwrite it neatly. If it still doesn’t fit, use Part 6, Additional Information and ask an ISSS advisor for help.

**Item Numbers 2.a.-4.c. Other Names Used:** Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden names, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in Part 6. Additional Information. If you have no other names, write in “N/A” in each box.

**Item Numbers 5.a.-5.f.: Your U.S. Mailing Address:** You must provide a valid mailing address in the United States. You may list a valid U.S. residence, APO, or commercial address. You may also list a U.S. Post Office address (PO Box) if that is how you receive your mail. If your mail is sent to someone other than yourself, please include an “In Care Of Name” as part of your mailing address [...] We will send your EAD to this address. If you are using ISSS, see the sample I-765 for how to write ISSS’s address. ISSS will email you when mail is received on your behalf. It is your responsibility to arrange how you will get the mail received.

**Items Numbers 6-7.e. U.S. Physical Address:** Type or print your physical address in the spaces provided. This address must be where you physically reside, and must also be your current SEVIS USA address in MyUAlbany.

**Item Number 8, Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any):** Most students will not have this number. The most common way you will have an A-Number is if you have previously received an EAD card. The A-number is the USCIS number on the EAD card.

**Item Number 9, USCIS Online Account Number (if any):** Most students will not have this. You would only have this if you’ve previously filed an application or petition through USCIS ELIS, an online system.
**Item Number 10, Gender**: Select the box that indicates whether you are male or female.

**Item Number 11, Marital Status**: Select the box that describes the marital status you have on the date you filed the I-765.

**Item Number 12, Previous Application for Employment Authorization from USCIS**: If you have applied for employment authorization in the past, select “Yes” for Item Number 12. Provide copies of your previous EADs, if available. ISSS also recommends you include additional information on Part 6. Fill in Page Number 2, Part Number 2, Item Number 12, and indicate whether the I-765 was denied, withdrawn, or granted, and what benefit was received (example: “I have previously filed an I-765 which was granted. I was authorized for post-completion OPT based on my master’s program from 10/01/2017-10/01/2018. Please see the I-20s and EAD card included with this application as documentation of this authorization.”)

**Items Number 13.a-17.b, Questions regarding Social Security Numbers (SSN)**: 13.a. asks you if the SSA has ever officially issued you a Social Security card. If the SSA (Social Security Administration) ever issued a Social Security card to you in your name or a previously used name such as your maiden name, then you must enter the SSN from your card in Item Number 13.b.

If your request for employment authorization is approved, the SSA may assign you an SSN and issue you a Social Security card, or issue you a replacement card. If you want the SSA to assign you a Social Security number and issue you a Social Security card, or issue you a new or replacement card, then answer “Yes” to Items Number 14 and 15. You must also provide your father’s and mother’s family and given names at birth in Item Numbers 16.a-17.b.

You are not request to request an SSN using this application. Completing Item Numbers 14-17.b. is optional. However, you must have an SSN properly assigned in your name to work in the United States.

**Item Number 18.a-18.b, Country or Countries of Citizenship or Nationality**: Type or print the name of the country or countries where you are currently a citizen or national [...] if you are a citizen or national of more than one country, type or print the name of the foreign country that issued your last passport. If you are a citizen of only one country, write “N/A” in 18.b.

**Item Numbers 19.a-19.c., Place of Birth**: Enter the name of the city, town, or village; state or province; and country where you were born. Type or print the name of the country as it was named when you were born, even if the country’s name has changed or the country no longer exists.

**Item Number 20, Date of Birth**: Enter your date of birth in mm/dd/yyyy format in the space provided.

**Item Numbers 21.a.-21.e, Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record**: You can get this information from your most recent I-94 if you don’t already know it. 21.b., I-94 number, refers to the admission number on your I-94. Most students should write “N/A” in 21.c., because most students will not have a passport and not a travel document number.

**Item Number 22: Date of Your Last Arrival Into the United States, On or About**: Provide the date on which you last entered the United States in mm/dd/yyyy format.

**Item Number 23, Place of Your Last Arrival into the United States**: Provide the location where you last entered the United States.

**Item Number 24, Immigration Status at Your Last Arrival**: For most students the answer to 24 is F-1 student, unless you entered the U.S. in a different status and have changed status to F-1.

**Item Number 25, Your Current Immigration Status or Category**: For all students the answer to 25 should be “F-1 student”

**Item Number 26, SEVIS Number (if any)**: Enter your SEVIS number. If you have had any other previous SEVIS numbers you must use Part 6 to report these. Go to Part 6, type in Page 3, Part 2, Item Number 26, and write your previous SEVIS ID number(s).
Item Number 27, Eligibility Category: For pre-completion OPT, write (C) (3) (A). For post-completion OPT, write (C) (3) (B). For STEM OPT, write (C) (3) (C).

Item Numbers 28-28.c, STEM OPT Eligibility: If you are applying for STEM OPT, write your level and major in box 28.a. (example: Master’s in Computer Science); write your Employer’s Name exactly as it appears in e-Verify in box 28.b.; and write your employer’s e-Verify number in 28.c.. Please note the e-Verify is not the same as the EIN; it is usually a 5-7 digit number.

If you are not applying for STEM, write “N/A” in boxes 28.a.-28.c

Item Numbers 29-31.b.: You may leave these blank because you are not applying for these categories.

Part 3, Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification and Signature: Most students should choose option 1.a., because they should be preparing the application on your own. If you used an interpreter or preparer you must fill in the appropriate boxes.

Be sure to fill in your phone number(s) and email address. If you don’t have multiple numbers, write “N/A” in any box left blank.

You must sign in black pen ink. Do not type or use a digital signature. Be certain to date your signature.

If you did not use a preparer/interpreter/attorney, please fill in the boxes “N/A” for pages 4-6. You still must send these pages to USCIS.

Part 6, Additional Information: If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space provided in Part 6., Additional Information. [...]Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

You must turn this sheet in even if you don’t use it. Sign and date in the bottom right hand corner.

Students who have previously used OPT and/or CPT must include that information on this page. You may reference Page Number 3, Part Number 2, and Item Number 27 to list your CPT/OPT. Please state whether it was part-time or full-time, which degree level (bachelor’s, master’s, PhD), and the dates of authorization. You must also include copies of your I-20 showing your OPT and/or CPT.

Example: “I was previously authorized for part-time CPT for my master’s degree from 8/27/18-12/15/16. Please see the I-20s included with this application as documentation of this authorization.”
Cover Letter

USCIS Dallas Lockbox
ATTN: I-765

Dear Officer:

Enclosed please find the following items related to my request for Optional Practical Training:

1. Check or money order for $410.00, payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security;
2. Form G-1145 E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance;
3. Completed Original Form I-765;
4. Photocopy of Form I-20 issued for OPT;
5. Photocopies of all Forms I-20 ever issued to me;
6. Photocopy of current Form I-94 Form (both sides of card version) or electronic I-94;
7. Photocopy of identity page of passport;
8. Photocopy of most recent US visa stamp;
9. 2 passport photos, cut with white background with name and I-94 written on the back;
10. Form G-1145 E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance (optional)
11. Other evidence: ________________________________

Please feel free to contact me if further information is needed.

Sincerely,

___________________________________________  ____________________________
Signature                                             Date

___________________________________________  ____________________________
Name Printed                                         SEVIS ID Number
Optional Practical Training I-20 Request Form

Name: ___________________________________________ SUNY ID: __________________

Academic Major: ___________________________ Degree Level: (circle one) Bachelor’s, Master’s, PhD

I-20 End Date: ___________________________ (mm/dd/yy) SEVIS ID: ___________________________

Telephone Number: ___________________________ E-mail Address: ___________________________

I have attended a required OPT Workshop. [ ] Yes [ ] No  If yes, when __/___/____
Or I have watched the on-line OPT tutorial at www.albany.edu/isss. [ ] Yes [ ] No

Information Regarding OPT Start Date: Students may request an OPT start date within 60 days of the program end date. When selecting a start date, please keep in mind that:

- You cannot begin work until your OPT is officially approved by USCIS and you have received the EAD card in hand
- USCIS takes on average 90 days to process and approve an OPT application (from the date they receive your application)
- Your 12 months of employment AND 90 days of unemployment will start counting from the start date on the EAD.

USCIS officers adjudicating your case ultimately decide upon your start and end dates. If you choose a start date and USCIS is unable to process/approve the request by that date, you run the risk of losing employment time and possibly accumulating unemployment time, as USCIS may: Update your start date to the date approved, but not change the end date; or not update your start date (therefore you would have been accumulating unemployment). The very last end date an officer can assign regardless of when the OPT is approved is 14 months after your program end date.

Requested OPT Start Date: ___________________________

I have done OPT previously. [ ] Yes [ ] No  If yes, at what level of study? ________________________

I verify that my SEVIS USA Address, email and phone number in My UAlbany is correct:

[ ] Yes _____ (please initial)

I take full responsibility for reading/understanding the information presented in the OPT packet, the workshop and/or the online tutorial:

[ ] Yes _____ (please initial)

I take full responsibility for meeting all degree requirements

[ ] Yes _____ (please initial)

Student’s Signature _______________________________ Date __________________________

Please discuss your plans for post-completion OPT with your academic advisor and ask your academic advisor to complete the form on the reverse side of this page.
Academic Advisor Recommendation Form for Post-Completion OPT

Optional Practical Training, or OPT, is a form of work authorization for F-1 international students. A student engaged in Optional Practical Training is expected to engage in employment directly related to his or her field of study (i.e. major). The authorization is recommended by ISSS and granted by USCIS, a federal branch of the Department of Homeland Security.

ISSS requires verification from the academic advisor of the student’s level of study, field of study, and the expected program completion date and/or meeting of all degree requirements. Any academic advisor with questions about a student’s eligibility or how to complete the information below is encouraged to contact ISSS to discuss the student’s case (518-591-8172, ISSS@albany.edu).

Degree expected: [ ] Bachelor’s [ ] Master’s [ ] PhD [ ] Other ____________________________

Is the student in good academic standing, including have a GPA above 2.0 for undergraduate students and above 3.0 for graduate students? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Expected Completion Date (MM/DD/YY): ____________________________________________

This date was determined as follows (check one)
[ ] Anticipated Graduation (must be registered in that semester)
[ ] Dissertation Defense & Submission (for Doctoral students)
[ ] Other - please explain: ______________________________________________________

Do you expect the student to meet all degree requirements by the date above? [ ] Yes [ ] No
If no, please explain what degree requirements the student is missing. The student must consult ISSS before applying: __________________________________________________________________________

Do you recommend that Optional Practical Training be given to enhance the student’s understanding of his/her field of study? [ ] Yes [ ] No

I certify that the above information is correct and satisfies the information required by International Student and Scholar Services to recommend Optional Practical Training for this student.

Name and Title of Advisor: _______________________________________________________

Signature of Advisor: ___________________________ Date: _______________________

Phone Number: ___________________________ E-mail Address: ______________________