

F-1 Student Checklist for OPT Applications		
Follow the guidelines below to obtain Optional Practical Training (OPT). Please remember this is just checklist that serves as a guide. Official instructions should be followed as stated on the I-765 from.		
Step	Action	Completed
1	Schedule an appointment with the International Studies Advisor to learn if you are eligible for OPT.	
2	Complete Form I-765: Application for Employment Authorization. The Form I-765 and instructions are available on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website (www.uscis.gov) under Immigration Forms. Fill out the form by typing using a PDF program. Bring in a flash drive with your saved I-765 saved on it. Complete Form G-1145.	
3	Form I-94: Google "How to find your I-94 number"	
4	Valid Passport: photocopy of photo pages, renewal page if original has expired, and pages showing amendments such as name changes, corrections, etc.	
5	VISA: photocopy of visa page	
6	ALL Forms I-20: photocopies of all Forms I-20 issued to you.	
7	EAD: photocopies of any previous employment authorization documents. ~Ignore if you never had an EAD card previously issued. ~	
8	Two identical photographs: two recent 2 in x 2 in full frontal color passport photos with your name and I-94 card number written in pencil on the back. (See the U.S Department of Homeland Security specifications at www.travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotos/index.html)	
9	\$410 Check/Money Order/Bank Check: \$410, payable to <u>U.S. Department of Homeland Security</u> indicating I-94 number on check for identification reasons. Please note that USCIS fees are subject to change. To verify, please visit www.uscis.gov .	
10	Schedule an appointment with the International Office to receive an updated Form I-20 with OPT recommendation. Make an appointment 3 months in advance of when you will need your OPT I-20.	
11	File Form I-765 and supporting documents listed above with the appropriate USCIS Service Center depending on where you live.	
Mail the items above to: (always check the USCIS website for updated mailing address)		
Address for United States Postal Service (USPS – Post Office) Certified mail/Return Receipt: USCIS PO Box 805373 Chicago, IL 60680		Address for private courier (non USPS) deliveries: USCIS Attn: I-765 C03 131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Resources:

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Important Reminders:

- *Apply early! USCIS allows you to apply up to 90 days prior to your graduation date and up to 60 days after your graduation date, provided that it is received within 30 days of your immigration advisor issuing a new I-20 recommending OPT. Your application will not be considered by USCIS if received after 60 days from your*

graduation date. Only apply for OPT if you have filed your grad check, met all the graduation requirements listed on your grad check, and know you will pass all your classes.

- For pre-completion OPT, you can file the Form I-765 up to 90 days before being enrolled for a full academic year, as long as the OPT will not begin until after you have completed a full academic year. If you have been enrolled for a full academic year, you can file the Form I-765 up to 120 days prior to the requested OPT start date.
- For post-completion OPT, you can file the Form I-765 up to 90 days before your program end date and no later than 60 days after your program end date.
- The Form I-765 must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date your advisor made the OPT recommendation in SEVIS (see page 1 of the printed Form I-20 for the date).
- If you move and do not provide USCIS with your new address, your EAD will be returned to USCIS. To change your address, submit an online Form AR-11 to USCIS, and ask your DSO to update SEVIS.
- Your OPT employment must be directly related to your field of study and cannot begin until you have the EAD card in hand (and the start date has arrived).
- F-1 status is dependent upon full-time employment or volunteer service while on post-completion OPT.
- You cannot accrue more than 90 days of unemployment while on post-completion OPT. If you are close to 90 days, consult with your DSO.
- You will need to continue to update your DSO with address changes and changes in employment while on post-completion OPT.
- When you receive your EAD card, email the International Office a copy of it.
- Enter your job information in your SEVIS portal, you will be emailed those directions from USCIS. You only have 90 days of unemployment (see your EAD card for the start date of your 90 days of unemployment, weekends and holidays count towards your unemployment days). If you don't enter your job details in your SEVIS portal within 90 days, your OPT i20 will be cancelled. It is your responsibility to enter your job details.