Optional Practical Training (OPT) – Post-Completion

Optional Practical Training (OPT) provides an F-1 visa holder with an opportunity to gain 12 months of employment experience in his/her major area of study (with an option for a 24-month extension for STEM majors). The 12 months can be used all at once or in increments before graduation, using Pre-Completion OPT. If you have used any Pre-Completion OPT time, you will have that amount of time less after graduation on Post-Completion OPT. Example: 3 months of Pre-Completion OPT = 9 months of Post-Completion OPT.

Employment while on OPT must be related to your major field of study. A job offer is not required to apply for OPT, but you must obtain authorization by USCIS prior to beginning employment. OPT is granted for specific dates and cannot be adjusted after it is approved. Once the application is submitted, please allow 90 days for processing.

There are three types of OPT: pre-completion, post-completion, and STEM Extension. The information found below is for Post-Completion OPT only.

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**Post-completion OPT** is used after the F-1 visa holder has completed his/her program of study, however it is recommended that you apply 90 days before the program end date on your I-20 form. You may apply for Post-completion OPT up until 60 days after the program end date listed on your I-20, though this is not recommended.

To apply for Post-completion OPT: submit the Verification of Graduation request form to the Registrar’s Office, then prepare all of the documents as outlined in this packet. Once ISSS receives the Verification of Graduation letter from the Registrar, ISSS will reach out to you for an appointment to complete the OPT application process.

The government takes at least three months to process OPT applications, which is why it is important to **plan ahead!**
Post-Completion OPT Application Process

Submit Graduation Verification Letter request form to the Registrar’s Office (form in this packet)

Once the Verification of Graduation letter is received from the Office of the Registrar, ISSS will contact you to schedule a meeting to complete the OPT application.

Documentation needed for Post-Completion OPT application:

- Copies of the ID page in your Passport and F-1 visa
- The I-94 document, which can be retrieved from: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home
- A completed Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
  - Found on: https://www.uscis.gov/i-765
  - Type responses into form, print, and sign. Do not print double sided. Do not staple.
  - See I-765 Completion Guide in this packet for instructions
- **$410.00 application fee**
  - By personal check or money order
    - Payable to: US Department of Homeland Security
    - In memo line write SEVIS ID #
  - Or by credit card
- Two passport-sized photos (2 inches by 2 inches) taken in the past 6 months, not used before
  - Write SEVIS # lightly on the back.
  - Photos can be taken at a CVS, Walmart, Costco, etc.
- Copies of front and back of previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card(s), if previously issued
- Copy of OPT-endorsed I-20 Form (you will get this at the meeting with ISSS)
- **When would you like your OPT to begin?** Pick a start date within the 60 days after the completion date on your I-20 form. See OPT Timeline in this packet.

After OPT is filed:

You should receive three documents from the government:
1. Receipt notice (normally within 2-3 weeks)
2. Approval notice
3. EAD Card (normally within 1-2 weeks of receiving the approval notice; scan front and back of the card to ISSS for your immigration file)

➤ If you receive an R.F.E. (Request for Evidence), contact ISSS immediately.

Employment Rules

- You **MAY NOT** work before you receive the EAD card or before the start date on the EAD card.
  - You should receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) within 3-4 months from the date on the receipt notice. If it is not received in this time, contact ISSS.
- Employment must be **directly related** to your major field of study.
You may not be unemployed for more than 90 days in total while on OPT.
Volunteering/working an unpaid internship for at least 20 hours per week in your major field of study may be considered employment.

Reporting Requirements

While on OPT, you will continue in F-1 visa status under the sponsorship of James Madison University, and as such, you must maintain your visa status:

- Report employer name and address, part-time (less than 20 hours per week) or full-time employment (20-40 hours per week), and start date to ISSS immediately upon accepting employment.
  - Provide ISSS with a statement about how the employment is related to your major.
- Inform ISSS of a change in employment immediately and report all criteria listed above, including end date of previous employment.
- Inform ISSS of a change of name or address within 10 days.
- Keep all immigration documents safe and valid.

Travel

Before departing the U.S., it is strongly recommended that you contact an ISSS advisor about your particular travel situation, as every situation is unique. Below are general reentry guidelines to consider before departing the U.S. while on OPT.

Items needed for reentry to the U.S. while on OPT:
- A valid passport; valid at least 6 months into the future
- A valid F-1 visa to reenter the U.S.
- Your most recent Form I-20 with travel signature from an ISSS staff member
- Your valid EAD (Employment Authorization Document)
- Letter of employment

- It is strongly suggested that you do NOT travel outside of the U.S. while your OPT application is pending and before you secure employment.

If you intend to leave the U.S. permanently, inform ISSS of your departure date.

The following two questions are of particular interest while traveling on OPT. The answers are from the ICE website on Travel. Again, consult the ISSS staff before traveling.

1. Can I reenter if my request for Post-Completion OPT is pending?
   Yes, but traveling during this time should be undertaken with caution. USCIS may send you a request for evidence while you are away, however, so you would want to make sure you have provided a correct U.S. address both to your DSO and on the application and would be able to send in requested documents. Also, if USCIS approves your OPT application, you will be expected to have your EAD in hand to re-enter the United States. Like a request for further information, USCIS can only send the EAD to your U.S. address.

2. Can I reenter if I left while on Post-Completion OPT?
   If USCIS has approved your OPT you will be expected to have your EAD in hand to re-enter the United States, in addition to your Form I-20, valid passport and visa, and a letter of employment... If you exceed the limits on unemployment while outside the United States, you will not be eligible to re-enter the United States in F-1 status.
Pick an OPT start date within the 60 days after graduation.

Cannot begin work until:
- you receive the EAD card and
- until the start date listed on your EAD card

Cannot accrue more than 90 days of unemployment. Report employer name, address, and start date to ISSS.

Report any change of address or employment to ISSS.

If eligible, apply for STEM Extension before expiration of EAD card.

You can submit your application as early as 90 days before graduation.

Allow for at least 90 days for government processing.

You may apply up to 60 days after graduation.

Use grace period to prepare to leave the U.S., transfer to a new school, or change to another immigration status.

If you are staying in the U.S. for the grace period, you cannot re-enter the U.S. after leaving.
Graduation Verification Letter Request

Full Name: ____________________________________________________________________________________

first                                 middle                                 last                                 (maiden)

Indicate the information to be verified in the letter (enrollment status, degree, class rank, etc.):
__________________________________________________________________

CGE-ISSS graduation requirement verification

Please provide the following:

Student ID #: ______________________

Date of Birth: ______________________

Phone #: ______________________

Email: ______________________

Number of copies: 1

Graduation date: ______________________

Signature: ______________________

Date: ______________________

*JMU can only verify enrollment for current and past semesters; future enrollment cannot be verified.*
I-765 Completion Guide for Post-Completion OPT

Complete online at https://www.uscis.gov/i-765. Type into the fields when possible.

Complete with your information

If you have ever had another legal name, list it in the next section. If not, go to the next page.

Complete online at https://www.uscis.gov/i-765. Type into the fields when possible.

Complete with your information

If you have ever had another legal name, list it in the next section. If not, go to the next page.
### Part 2. Information About You (continued)

#### Your U.S. Mailing Address

5.a. In Care Of Name (if any)  
5.b. Street Number and Name  
5.d. City or Town  
5.e. State □ ZIP Code  

6. Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address? □ Yes □ No  

**NOTE:** If you answered “No” to Item Number 6, provide your physical address below.

#### U.S. Physical Address

7.a. Street Number and Name  
7.c. City or Town  
7.d. State □ ZIP Code  

#### Other Information

8. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any)  
9. USCIS Online Account Number (if any)  

10. Gender  
     □ Male □ Female  

11. Marital Status  
     □ Single □ Married □ Divorced □ Widowed  

12. Have you previously filed Form I-765? □ Yes □ No  

13.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you? □ Yes □ No  

**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.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known).  

14. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?  
   (You must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15, Consent for Disclosure, to receive a card.) □ Yes □ No  

**NOTE:** If you answered “No” to Item Number 14, skip to Part 2, Item Number 18.a. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 14., you must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15.

15. Consent for Disclosure: I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card. □ Yes □ No  

**NOTE:** If you answered “Yes” to Item Numbers 14 - 15., provide the information requested in Item Numbers 16.a. - 17.b.

#### Father’s Name  
Complete with your father’s information  

Provide your father’s birth name.  

16.a. Family Name (Last Name)  
16.b. Given Name (First Name)  

#### Mother’s Name  
Complete with your mother’s information  

Provide your mother’s birth name.  

17.a. Family Name (Last Name)  
17.b. Given Name (First Name)  

#### Your Country or Countries of Citizenship or Nationality

List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national. If you need extra space to complete this item, use the space provided in Part 6. Additional Information.

18.a. Country  

18.b. Country  

**Complete 18.b. only if you have a second country of citizenship.**
Get your I-94: [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/)

Check your I-94!

Complete online at [https://www.uscis.gov/i-765](https://www.uscis.gov/i-765). Type into the fields when possible.

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### Part 2. Information About You (continued)

#### Place of Birth

List the city/town/village, state/province, and country where you were born.

19.a. City/Town/Village of Birth

19.b. State/Province of Birth

19.c. Country of Birth

20. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

#### Information About Your Last Arrival in the United States

21.a. Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)

21.b. Passport Number of Your Most Recently Issued Passport

21.c. Travel Document Number (if any)

21.d. Country That Issued Your Passport or Travel Document

21.e. Expiration Date for Passport or Travel Document (mm/dd/yyyy)

22. Date of Your Last Arrival Into the United States, On or About (mm/dd/yyyy)

23. Place of Your Last Arrival Into the United States

24. Immigration Status at Your Last Arrival (for example, B-2 visitor, F-1 student, or no status)

#### F-1 Student

25. Your Current Immigration Status or Category (for example, B-2 visitor, F-1 student, parolee, deferred action, or no status or category)

#### F-1 Student

26. Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)

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### 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)).

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

29. (c)(26) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(26) in Item Number 27, provide the receipt number of your H-1B spouse’s most recent Form I-797 Notice for Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker.

30. (c)(8) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(8) in Item Number 27, have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime?

Yes ☐ No ☐

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 30, refer to Special Filing Instructions for Those With Pending Asylum Applications (c)(8) in the Required Documentation section of the Form I-765 Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.

31.a. (c)(35) and (c)(36) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) in Item Number 27, please provide the receipt number of your Form I-797 Notice for Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(36) in Item Number 27, please provide the receipt number of your spouse’s or parent’s Form I-797 Notice for Form I-140.

31.b. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) or (c)(36) in Item Number 27, have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime?

Yes ☐ No ☐

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 31.b, refer to Employment-Based Nonimmigrant Categories, Items 8. - 9., in the Who May File Form I-765 section of the Form I-765 Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.
I-765 Completion Guide for Post-Completion OPT

Complete online at https://www.uscis.gov/i-765. Type into the fields when possible.

Part 3. Applicant's Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature

NOTE: Read the Penalties section of the Form I-765 Instructions before completing this section. You must file Form I-765 while in the United States.

Applicant's Statement

NOTE: Select the box for either Item Number 1.a. or 1.b. If applicable, select the box for Item Number 2.

1.a. ☒ I can read and understand English, and I have read and understand every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question.

1.b. □ The interpreter named in Part 4. read to me every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question in [ ] , a language in which I am fluent, and I understood everything.

2. □ At my request, the preparer named in Part 5, [ ] prepared this application for me based only upon information I provided or authorized.

Applicant's Contact Information

3. Applicant's Daytime Telephone Number

4. Applicant's Mobile Telephone Number (if any)

5. Applicant's Email Address (if any)

6. □ Select this box if you are a Salvadoran or Guatemalan national eligible for benefits under the ABC settlement agreement.

Applicant's Declaration and Certification

Copies of any documents I have submitted are exact photocopies of unaltered, original documents, and I understand that USCIS may require that I submit original documents to USCIS at a later date. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information from any and all of my records that USCIS may need to determine my eligibility for the immigration benefit that I seek.

I furthermore authorize release of information contained in this application, in supporting documents, and in my USCIS records, to other entities and persons where necessary for the administration and enforcement of U.S. immigration law.

I understand that USCIS may require me to appear for an appointment to take my biometrics (fingerprints, photograph, and/or signature) and, at that time, if I am required to provide biometrics, I will be required to sign an oath reaffirming that:

1) I reviewed and understood all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application; and

2) All of this information was complete, true, and correct at the time of filing.

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that all of the information in my application and any document submitted with it were provided or authorized by me, that I reviewed and understand all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application and that all of this information is complete, true, and correct.

Applicant's Signature

7.a. Applicant's Signature

⇒ Sign your name here

7.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

NOTE TO ALL APPLICANTS: If you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents listed in the instructions, USCIS may deny your application.

Part 4. Interpreter's Contact Information, Certification, and Signature

Provide the following information about the interpreter.

Interpreter's Full Name

1.a. Interpreter's Family Name (Last Name)

1.b. Interpreter's Given Name (First Name)

2. Interpreter's Business or Organization Name (if any)
Part 6. Additional Information

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. 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.

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)
1.b. Given Name (First Name)
1.c. Middle Name
2. A-Number (if any) ▶ A-

3.a. Page Number 3.b. Part Number 3.c. Item Number
3.d. List dates of CPT used, if applicable.

For example:
Part-time CPT from 01/25/2015 to 05/15/2015
Full-time CPT from 08/10/2016 to 12/14/2016

4.a. Page Number 4.b. Part Number 4.c. Item Number
4.d. List any previous SEVIS ID numbers you have had.