Optional Practical Training (OPT) – Pre-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 shorter increments during the school year (part-time), summer vacations (part-time or full-time), or after graduation (Post-Completion OPT). Any time you use for Pre-Completion OPT, you will have that amount of time less after graduation for Post-Completion OPT. (Example: 3 months of Pre-Completion OPT = 9 months for 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 below relates to Pre-Completion OPT only.

Pre-completion OPT is used during the F-1 visa holder’s program of study (before the program end date on the I-20 form), and is either part-time (during the semester) or full or part-time during annual vacations (e.g. summer break).

To apply for Pre-completion OPT: prepare all the documents as outlined in the OPT packet, then schedule a meeting with one of the ISSS advisors.

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

Email isss@jmu.edu to schedule a meeting to complete the application process.

Documentation needed for Pre-Completion OPT application:

Submit the following items:

- Copies of all SEVIS I-20s
- Copies of the ID page in your Passport, plus visa and entry stamp
- 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 and print
  - See I-765 Completion Guide in this packet for instructions
- $410.00 application fee
  - By personal check or money order
    i. Payable to: US Department of Homeland Security
    ii. In memo line write SEVIS ID #
  - Or by credit card
    i. Complete Form G-1450:
- Two passport-sized photos (2 inches by 2 inches) taken within the past 6 months
  - Write SEVIS # lightly on the back.
  - Photos can be taken at a pharmacy, such as CVS, or Walmart.
- Copies of front and back of previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card(s), if issued
- When would you like your OPT to begin? You will need to pick a start date.

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 and Reporting Requirements

- 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.
- Inform ISSS of a change of name or address within 10 days.
Pre-Completion OPT Timeline

Can submit application

EAD start

EAD end

Apply for OPT

90 days

OPT Employment

You can submit your application as early as 90 days before you want it to begin.

Allow for at least 90 days for government processing before employment start date.

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

Stop working by end date on EAD card

Continue in F-1 status (e.g. full-time enrollment, graduation, grace period)

Report employment information to ISSS.
I-765 Completion Guide for Pre-Completion OPT

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

START HERE - Type or print in black ink.

Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):
1.a. ☐ Initial permission to accept employment.
1.b. ☐ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.
NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to Replacement for Card Error in the What is the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.
1.c. ☐ Renewal of my permission to accept employment. (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)
1.b. Given Name (First Name)
1.c. Middle Name

Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in Part 6.

Additional Information

2.a. Family Name (Last Name)
2.b. Given Name (First Name)
2.c. Middle Name

3.a. Family Name (Last Name)
3.b. Given Name (First Name)
3.c. Middle Name

4.a. Family Name (Last Name)
4.b. Given Name (First Name)
4.c. Middle Name

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I-765 Completion Guide for Pre-Completion OPT

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

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 □ 5.f. 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 □ 7.e. 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

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.
I-765 Completion Guide for Pre-Completion OPT

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

### 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)

### 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 Item 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 Pre-Completion OPT

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

**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

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.

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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)

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Leave pages 5-7 of I-765 blank.