

F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

OPT

INFORMATION & INSTRUCTIONS

OPT

Definition

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an opportunity for F-1 international students to participate in professional, temporary employment that is directly related to their major area of study, but not a part of the academic curriculum.

Eligibility

F-1 students are eligible for Optional Practical Training after they have completed two, full-time semesters (fall and spring). Time spent on an approved full-time study abroad program may be counted toward the two-semester requirement as long as the student has completed one semester in the U.S. before studying abroad.

Students are **not** eligible for OPT if they:

- are in violation of their F-1 status.
- will not have completed two full-time semesters of study by the requested employment start date.
- were previously authorized for 12 months of full time Curricular Practical Training at the same degree level.
- were previously authorized for 12 months of Optional Practical Training at the same degree level.

Maximum Time Allowed

A **maximum period of twelve months (full-time) per degree level** can be granted. Students are eligible for an additional twelve months with each higher degree level. **Part-time OPT** is deducted from the total amount of available full-time OPT at one-half the full-time rate. (e.g. four months part-time = two months full time)

When Eligible to Work Part Time or Full Time

Optional Practical Training may be granted at four stages in a student's academic career. Timing dictates if it can be part time or full time. Full time means more than 20 hours of work per week and part time equals 20 hours or less per week. OPT may be used incrementally within or among all four potential periods of authorization, but a separate application must be submitted for each different period requested.

- 1) During summer or other vacation periods when school is not in session – may be either full time or part time.
- 2) During the fall and spring semesters* – may only be part time, except as noted in #3 below.
- 3) After the completion of all course requirements for the degree, but before completion of the thesis, dissertation or equivalent* – may be either full time or part time.
- 4) After completion of the degree – may only be full time.

*Note: Students in situation 2 or 3 **must continue to enroll in a full course of study** while on OPT.

When To Apply

The DSO recommendation must be made in SEVIS, and the I-765 and OPT I-20 must be received by USCIS, no sooner than 90 days before the program end date, and no later than 60 days after the program end date. [8 C.F.R. § [214.2\(f\)\(11\)\(i\)\(B\)\(2\)](#)]

How To Apply:

- 1) Complete Section A of the “Academic Advisor Recommendation Form”.
- 2) Have your **academic advisor complete Section B** of the “Academic Advisor Recommendation Form.” Note: All fields are required. If any item is left blank, Office of Global Education (OGE) staff cannot provide a recommendation.

IMPORTANT! The program completion date will be adjusted in SEVIS to reflect the anticipated completion date indicated by the advisor on the recommendation form. The OPT I-20 will show this adjusted completion date. **If you do not complete your degree by this time you must apply for a program extension prior to the expiration of your new OPT I-20.** Failure to do this will result in a status violation that will also invalidate your OPT authorization.

- 3) Download and complete USCIS [Form I-765](#). After you complete the fillable pdf, print it out and sign the form. The ISSS advisor does not endorse the I-765, but can review it for completeness. ISSS can provide a blank I-765 if you have trouble downloading the form. **The category code for line #27 on the I-765 is “(c) (3) (B)”**

NOTE REGARDING ADDRESS: The primary reason for failing to receive an OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is due to problems with the address used on the I-765.

- Use an address where you can receive mail for the next four months: a receipt is usually sent within 2-4 weeks and the EAD can take up to four months.
- When using someone else’s address-
 - make sure your name is on his/her mailbox OR
 - include the other person’s name in the address (item #5.a) using “c/o” (in care of)
 - “c/o” is not valid with PO Boxes
 - “c/o” proper format: c/o Friend’s Name, Friend’s Address
- The post office is not supposed to forward EADs through a mail-forwarding request.
- If your address changes while your application is pending (has not been decided by USCIS):
 - Change your address **online** with USCIS

- 4) **Make an appointment at ISSS** to meet with an international student advisor.

CHECKLIST FOR APPOINTMENT:

- Academic Recommendation Form
- I-765
- Current and all previously issued I-20's
- Visa used for your most recent entry
- Passport
- I-94
- Previously issued EADs (if any)

If you wish, you may bring the following items so that your application packet can be fully reviewed and assembled:

- \$410 payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- 2 passport style photographs in a 'Ziploc' bag

- 5) The **OGE advisor will verify your F-1 status** during your appointment. *Recommendations for students to engage in OPT cannot be made for those who are out of status.*

If everything is okay, the advisor will electronically request a new I-20 with his/her recommendation for OPT. Also, if applicable, the advisor will shorten your program end date in SEVIS. When the new I-20 is ready, you will receive an e-mail (usually within 2-3 business days) to come pick it up.

- 6) **Pick up your new I-20** with an OPT recommendation from OGE. Sign the I-20 in Section #11.

- 7) **Submit the OPT application** to the appropriate regional USCIS service center within 30 days of the OGE advisor's recommendation and prior to the completion date of your program. Assemble and fasten the application materials together in the order listed below. OGE recommends mailing the application in a traceable manner (such as certified with proof of delivery receipt). Students using a **Pennsylvania** address should send their application to:

For US Postal Service

USCIS Chicago Lockbox

Attn: I-765 C03
P.O. Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680-5374

For non-US Postal Service (such as FedEx, UPS, etc):

USCIS

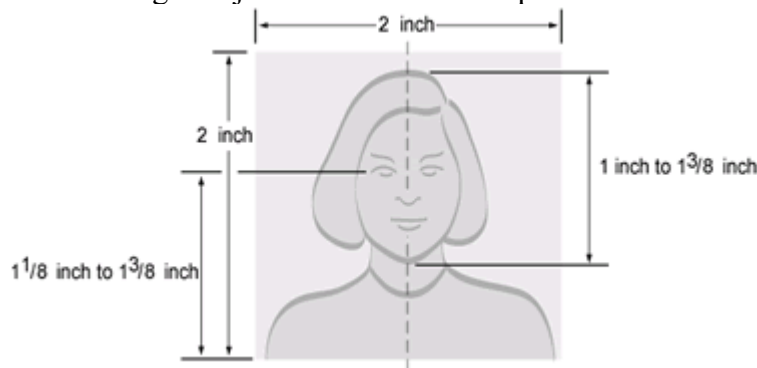
Attn: I-765 C03 (Box 805373)
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

You should keep copies of all documents sent to and received from USCIS.

Photo Guidelines

Seven Steps to Successful Photos

1. Frame subject with full face, front view, eyes open
2. Make sure photo presents full head from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1 3/8 inch (25 mm to 35mm)
3. Center head within frame (see Figure below)
4. Make sure eye level is between 1 1/8 inch to 1 3/8 inch (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
5. Photograph subject against a plain white or off-white background
6. Position subject and lighting so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
7. Encourage subject to have natural expression



Online Status Check

Online Status Check: <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>. Enter Receipt Number (LINxx-xx-xxxxx) without hyphens to check on the status of your application.

Authorization

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) has the final authority to grant Optional Practical Training. Authorization is issued in the form of a card referred to as an EAD (Employment authorization Document). Employment may not begin until the student receives a valid EAD.

During OPT

While on OPT, any change in name, change in address, or early termination of OPT must be reported to OGE. Transferring to another school or beginning study at another educational level automatically terminates OPT. During your appointment, the OGE advisor will give you a handout entitled "F-1 OPT Post-Recommendation Guideline" with specific details on issues of concern while you have an application pending and while you are participating in OPT. Be sure to read and comply with this. If you don't receive this handout, please inform OGE.

Thank you for choosing The University of Scranton and we wish you the best with practical training endeavors!

Reference: 8 CFR 214.2 (f) (10) (ii) – (13)

F-1 PRE-COMPLETION

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

ACADEMIC RECOMMENDATION FORM

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) is a type of temporary employment authorization available to international students in F-1 status. OPT provides an opportunity to gain practical experience in the student's field of study. **This form must be completed** by the student, with the appropriate signatures before The Office of Global Education can process the recommendation. Please read the separate OPT instructions handout for specific eligibility details and application procedures.

SECTION A: To be completed by Student

Name Exactly as in Passport: _____
(Surname/Family name) (Given name) (Middle or other name, if applicable)

Royal ID Non Scranton E-mail Address Phone # and Type Alternate Phone # and Type

Dependents: (Spouse and/or minor children who are currently in the U.S. as your F-2 dependents)
Surname/Family name, Given name Surname/Family name, Given name
 1. _____ 2. _____

CPT OPT Full Time Part Time Dates Authorized _____ to _____
 CPT OPT Full Time Part Time Dates Authorized _____ to _____

Requested Period of OPT: Beginning (mm/dd/yy) ___/___/___ Ending (mm/dd/yy) ___/___/___

SECTION B: Recommendation to be completed by Academic Advisor

IMPORTANT!!! ACADEMIC ADVISOR MUST COMPLETE ALL FIVE (#1-5) ITEMS BELOW:

#1 Educational Level: [] Bachelor [] Master [] Doctorate **#2 Major:** _____

#3 Term in which ALL degree requirements are anticipated to be completed:
 [] Fall 20____ [] Intercession____ [] Spring 20____ [] Summer 20____

#4 Mark the one statement that will be applicable during the "Requested Period of OPT" indicated above:
 _____ All **DEGREE** requirements have been/will be completed BEFORE the start of OPT.
 _____ All **COURSE** requirements have been/will be completed **EXCEPT FOR THESIS, DISSERTATION OR EQUIVALENT**. The student will continue to pursue a full course of study during the training period.
 _____ The training will occur only during a summer vacation or other period when school is officially not in session and the student will resume a full course of study following the period of training.
 _____ The training will occur during a regular fall or spring term and will not exceed 20 hours per week. The student will continue to pursue a full course of study during the training period.

#5 I have reviewed the student's academic record and verify the above to be true and correct. I recommend the student be permitted to engage in Optional Practical Training for the requested period of training as described above.

Academic Advisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (typed or printed): _____ Phone: _____

Program Director/Chair's signature: _____

Dean's signature: _____

F-1 POST COMPLETION

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

ACADEMIC RECOMMENDATION FORM

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING is a type of temporary employment authorization available to international students in F-1 status that provides them an opportunity to gain practical experience in their field of study. **This form must be entirely completed** by the student and the academic advisor before The Office of Global Education can process the recommendation. Please read the separate OPT Instructions handout for specific eligibility details and application procedures.

SECTION A: To be completed by Student

Name **Exactly** as in Passport: _____
(Surname/Family name) (Given name) (Middle or other name if applicable)

Royal ID Non Scranton E-mail Address Phone # and Type Alternate Phone # and Type

Dependents: (Spouse and/or minor children who are currently in the U.S. as your F-2 dependents):
Surname/Family name, Given name Surname/Family name, Given name
 1. _____ 2. _____

Previously authorized periods of practical training:
 CPT OPT Full Time Part Time Dates Authorized _____ to _____
 CPT OPT Full Time Part Time Dates Authorized _____ to _____

Requested Period of OPT: Beginning (mm/dd/yy) ___/___/___ Ending (mm/dd/yy) ___/___/___

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#5 I have reviewed the student’s academic record and verify the above to be true and correct. I recommend the student be permitted to engage in Optional Practical Training for the requested period of training as described above.

Academic Advisor’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (typed or printed): _____ Phone: _____

Dean’s signature: _____ Date: _____

Revised: 5/5/2022