



12-Month Post-Completion Optional Practical Training Information Packet and Application Process Overview

Definition of Optional Practical Training (OPT): An F-1 student may apply to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) division of the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for authorization for temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study. The student may not begin OPT until the date indicated on his or her employment authorization document. [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(A)]

STEP #1: Attend an OPT Information Session offered by the International Center (IC).

STEP #2: Meet with your Academic Advisor to discuss and confirm your program completion date and to have him/her complete the Academic Advisor Memo in support of your application for OPT.

STEP #3: Submit the following OPT application materials to the International Center:

- Completed OPT Request Form
- Completed and signed Academic Advisor Memo
- Copies of pages 1 and 3 of all previous Form I-20s (including those from any other schools you have attended in the US)

STEP #4: The IC will prepare a new Form I-20 with a special annotation on page 3 recommending OPT. When the new form is ready to pick up, the IC will email you.

STEP #5: Pick up the new Form I-20 from the IC.

STEP #6: Prepare the application materials. **You MUST mail the complete application to USCIS within 30 days of the date on the new Form I-20 with the OPT recommendation on page 3.** Application materials for USCIS must include:

- **Original**, completed, and signed Form I-765 available at <http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf>
 - In Item #3, be sure to use a valid address where you will be able to receive mail in the months after you submit your application. Mail sent from USCIS cannot be forwarded, so if you use an invalid address, you will not receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD). To change the address while the application is pending to <https://egov.uscis.gov/crisgwii/go?action=coa>.
 - Use (C)(3)(B) in Item #16 on the form
 - Place "N/A" in the blanks for Item #17 on the form
 - Don't forget to sign and date the form!
- **Original** completed Form G-1145 available at <http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf> (optional, but recommended)
 - By completing this form you will receive an electronic notification (via email and/or text message) when USCIS accepts your application.
- Copies of pages 1 and 3 of all previous Form I-20s (including those from any other schools you have attended in the US)
- Copy of pages 1 and 3 of newest Form I-20 with the OPT recommendation of page 3.
 - You keep the original. Only send a copy to USCIS.

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- Copy of the biographical/identification page of your passport.
- Copy of the F-1 visa stamp page from your passport (if applicable).
- Copy of the front and back of your Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record or a copy of your electronic I-94 Admission Number (<http://cbp.gov/i94>).
- Two passport-style photographs taken within the last 30 days.
 - Lightly print your full name and I-94 Number on the back of each photo in pencil.
 - The photos should be placed in an envelope or plastic bag and paper clipped or stapled to the application so they are not lost.
 - USCIS specifications for these photos can be found here: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/photos/photos.html>
- Check or money order in the amount of **\$380** made payable to the **US Department of Homeland Security**.
- Submit all application materials to USCIS using an express mail courier like UPS, FedEx, or DHL so that the materials will arrive in a timely manner and can be tracked at every step along the way. Sending via regular mail is strongly discouraged.
 - If the address included in Item #3 on the Form I-765 is located in Vermont, send the petition to the address below. If the address is outside of Vermont, contact the IC to find out where to send your petition.

US Citizenship & Immigration Services
Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067

NOTE: If you would like for someone in the IC to review your final application materials before sending to USCIS, please schedule an appointment.

STEP #7: Receive an official Receipt Notice from USCIS within 2-3 weeks.

STEP #8: Receive the Employment Authorization Card (EAD) within 2-3 months and begin working only after the start date printed on the EAD.

Eligibility Requirements and Things to Think About

Eligibility requirements	Practical Training may be authorized to an F-1 student who has been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year.
Location	Student may work anywhere in the USA for the duration of OPT.
Duration & hours per week	Cumulative maximum of 12 months per educational level. Student may work 40 hours per week. Certain STEM students may apply at a later date to work up to an additional 17 months.
Field/level of work	Position must be in student's major field of study.
Offer of Employment	No offer of employment is required, but a student is expected to work or be actively seeking employment after the OPT EAD (Employment Authorization Document) is issued. However, unemployment after the EAD start date is restricted.
Effect on other work	A student who completed 12 months or more of full-time CPT is not eligible for OPT.

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Deadlines for Submitting OPT Application to USCIS	The student must properly file his or her OPT application to USCIS up to 90 days prior to his or her program end date and no later than 60 days after his or her program end date.
Start date of the EAD	The effective start date of the EAD will be either the date employment is scheduled to begin (as listed on page 3 of the I-20), <u>or</u> the date the EAD is issued, whichever occurs later .
Approval process	Student must apply for and receive an EAD from USCIS with assistance of the IC before work begins.

Reporting Employment/Volunteer Activities to the IC While on OPT

For students on 12-Month OPT, F-1 status is now dependent upon employment. **Students cannot be unemployed for more than an aggregate of 90 days while on OPT in order to maintain F-1 status.**

Students must report their employment status to the IC via email at international@norwich.edu, using the subject line: "OPT Employment/Employer Information."

Situation	Information
Employed by one employer	Provide the employer's name and address
Multiple employers	List all employer's names and addresses, indicate which employer is the primary employer
Self-employed	Indicate "self-employed" and give the business address (which can be the same as the personal address)
Not currently employed	Indicate "none" for the employer
Volunteering in field of study	Provide volunteer position title, name of organization and address
Students with performing arts degrees who have multiple short-term gigs	Indicate "self-employed performing arts student." Provide list of gigs on a regular basis or if working for an agency, list the agency as "employer" and provide address.

Final Considerations

- You are still considered in F-1 status during the period of OPT employment.
- You cannot work on-campus after the new end date of the Form I-20.
- You must update the IC regarding any changes of mailing address or name changes.
- You must update the IC regarding any changes in employment/employer.
- You must request a travel signature on your Form I-20 from the IC before leaving the US.
- You have a 60-day grace period upon completion of OPT.
 - If you use the 90 day of unemployment, there is no grace period.
- You may be able to extend the EAD card for an additional 17 months of OPT if you meet the extension eligibility requirements and apply in a timely fashion. Contact the IC for details.
- You will no longer be authorized to engage in OPT employment if/when you transfer to another school or begin study at another educational level.

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12-Month Post-Completion Optional Practical Training REQUEST FORM

Definition of Optional Practical Training (OPT): An F-1 student may apply to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) division of the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for authorization for temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study. The student may not begin OPT until the date indicated on his or her employment authorization document. [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(A)]

SECTION I: Personal Information

Student ID #: _____

Full Name: _____

Current Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

SECTION II: Academic Information

Academic Level: Bachelor's Master's

Degree Program/Major: _____

College/School: _____

SECTION II: OPT Request Information

When do you want your OPT to begin?

Requested OPT Start Date: _____

Requested OPT End Date: _____

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MEMORANDUM FROM ACADEMIC ADVISOR
for 12-Month Post-Completion Optional Practical Training

TO: International Center

FROM: _____
(Advisor's Name)

(College/School/Department Name)

RE: Optional Practical Training (OPT) for _____
(Student's Name)

DATE: _____

I hereby certify that the above named student:

is currently enrolled in a full course of study toward the completion of a _____ (*level of study*) degree in _____ (*field of study*) at Norwich University, and the expected date of completion of this degree is _____ (*the last day of the final semester of study*).

OR

was enrolled in a full course of study toward the completion of a _____ (*level of study*) degree in _____ (*field of study*) at Norwich University, and the date of completion of this degree was _____ (*the last day of the final semester of study*).

ADVISOR'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

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