



Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Who can Apply?

A student may apply for Optional Practical Training if the following criteria are met:

- The student has been a full-time student for at least one academic year.
 - The student's proposed employment relates to the student's major area of study.
 - The student has not used all OPT available at the current level of study.
 - The student has not been authorized for 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT).
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What must the Applicant Do?

1. Student requests OPT: Email the DSO to indicate interest in applying for OPT.
 2. DSO recommends OPT:
 - DSO confirms eligibility, enters the request in SEVIS, and prints the new I-20.
 - The signed I-20 is sent to the student and the "Requested" status has begun.
 3. Student applies for OPT:
 - Student sends the following documents to USCIS:
 - o New I-20 with OPT request on page 2 (signed by DSO and student)
 - o Form I-765 (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>)
 - o Filing fee (\$470 online; \$520 paper)
 - o Copy of the Form I-94 (i94.cbp.dhs.gov/home)
 - o Copy of passport (visa and identification pages included)
 - o 2 passport photos (written in pencil on the back: name and SEVIS #)
 - o Copy of previous EADs or I-20s with CPT/OPT details
 - Note: Application submission must be done within 30 days of the DSO's recommendation in SEVIS.
 4. USCIS reviews request:
 - The OPT status will now be considered "Pending."
 - Additional "Requests for Evidence" may be issued by USCIS. Students must be alert to emails and respond by deadlines.
 5. If approved, student gets an EAD:
 - Student must wait until the OPT authorized start date to begin work.
 6. Student and DSO report employer information:
 - When the student is hired, the student reports employer information to the DSO to update in SEVIS.
 - Any changes to employment, address, or contact information must be reported to the DSO during the year of OPT.
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