

F-1 International Students

Optional Practical Training Instructions

Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment authorization is a benefit of F-1 Student non-immigrant status that allows students to work off-campus in a job related to their major. Obtaining OPT is a two-step process which begins with a recommendation from the international student advisor and is completed with approval of the application by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and issuing of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

Eligibility

To be eligible for OPT you must be in valid F-1 Student status and have maintained F-1 status for at least one academic year immediately before applying. Your OPT application must be RECEIVED by USCIS within the specific timeframe described under When to Apply for OPT.

OPT Time Limits

OPT is limited to 12 months and students graduating with certain majors have an option to extend it for an additional 24 months. OPT may be used before completion of studies, after completion of studies, or a combination of both time periods. OPT may be full-time or part-time, but any OPT used before completion of studies is limited to part-time during the school year. Any periods of OPT, whether part-time or full-time, will be deducted from the total twelve-month period available.

- Part-time OPT is training that is 20 hours per week or less and is deducted at half of the full-time rate. (Two months of part-time OPT = one month of full-time OPT.)
- Full-time OPT is training that is more than 20 hours per week. Full-time OPT can only be granted during official WIT breaks or for employment after completion of degree requirements.

On your application you must indicate part-time or full-time employment and you must request EXACT DATES of your employment authorization, including a day, month, and year for both start and end dates. The latest possible start date for authorization after completion of studies is 60 days after the end of your final academic term.

When to Apply for OPT

Your post-completion OPT application must be received by USCIS **not more than 90 days before or 60 days after** your graduation date. Applicants for pre-completion OPT may not apply more than **90 days prior** to the requested authorization start date. All applications must be received by USCIS within 30 days of when your OPT I-20 is issued. It takes approximately one week for your OPT I-20 to be issued by International Student Services. **USCIS processing time varies significantly.**

Please be aware that it is a violation of F-1 status to begin working before authorization is granted, or before the start date on the Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

Maintaining Valid F-1 Student Status during Post-completion OPT

F-1 Student regulations require that to maintain valid status during post-completion OPT students must:

- Accept only employment that is directly related to their major
- Report the name and address of their OPT employer to International Student Services (ISS)
- Report any periods of unemployment to ISS
- Not be unemployed for more than an aggregate of 90 days during the 12 months
- Update ISS with any change of name, physical address, mailing address, foreign address or phone number within 10 days of the change

Travel

Before graduation - OPT does not affect travel to and from the U.S.

After graduation – Returning to the U.S. after graduation may be more risky than during your studies. Current government requirements are that you must have your EAD (OPT approval) and a job in addition to the usual travel documents to re-enter the U.S. after a trip abroad.

How to Apply:

STEP 1: COMPLETE AND SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS TO ISS SECURELY USING YOUR WENTWORTH ONEDRIVE ACCOUNT:

- OPT Application Form
- Copy of each previously issued I-20 form
- Copies of all previously issued EADs-front and back (if applicable)
- Copy of your F-1 visa (unless you are Canadian, or have had a change of status approval)
- Your electronic I-94 record (or small, white card stapled in your passport) showing your most recent entry to the U.S. Available at www.i94.cbp.dhs.gov
- Copy of your passport photo page showing passport expiration date
 - If it is determined that you are eligible for OPT, you will be issued a new I-20 form with a recommendation for OPT.
 - You will be notified through your WIT email account when your recommendation has been processed.

STEP 2: MAIL THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS TO USCIS:

******You should make a copy of your application for your records before you it send to USCIS.******

- Form I-765 (www.uscis.gov) Under part 2, section 21a, please write your Admission number as typed on Form I-94. Under part 2, section 26, please write your SEVIS ID # as stated on Form I-20. Under section 27 , if your employment will occur: 1) before you graduate, please write (c) (3) (A) OR 2) after you graduate, please write (c) (3) (B).
 - **Choose the address in #3 carefully because this is where your EAD will be mailed. It will not be forwarded to a new address so be sure the address will be valid for at least 4 months.**
- 1 copy of your new Wentworth I-20 recommending OPT
- 1 copy of each previously issued I-20 form
- Photocopies of all previously issued EADs-front and back (if applicable)
- 1 copy of your F-1 visa (unless you are Canadian, or have had a change of status approval)
- 1 copy of your electronic I-94 record (or small, white card stapled in your passport) showing your most recent entry into the U.S.
- 1 copy of your passport photo page showing passport expiration date
- 2 photos <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photo-composition-template.html> Write your full name and SEVIS ID# on the back.
- Personal check or money order made out to U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Check www.uscis.gov/forms/our-fees for the required amount. Write you SEVIS ID# on your check.
***Please be sure that the address listed on the check matches the address on Form I-765 because all correspondence (including the receipt and EAD card) will be mailed to that address. USCIS mail is not forwarded.**
- Form G-1145 (available at www.uscis.gov), if you would like to receive a text or e-mail notification that USCIS has received your application.

You are responsible for mailing your application materials to USCIS. It is **strongly suggested that you MAKE COPIES OF ALL YOUR DOCUMENTS before mailing them, and that you send your application by overnight mail so you get a return receipt. You should also keep a copy of these instructions for your reference.**

***Information changes from time to time. It is your responsibility to check that the address below is still current. You can find this information at the following link: www.uscis.gov. Click on Forms and then Form I-765 Instructions.**

For Express mail and courier service deliveries:

**USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517**

If you have any questions about the OPT application process, please contact International Student Services.

OPT STEM Extension

If you have any questions about the STEM extension or if you are interested in applying, please contact International Student Services.

Last updated: March 2021

OPT Application Form

Date: _____

I, _____, expect to complete my studies at Wentworth Institute of Technology on ____/____/____. I would like to request the following:

☐ **Pre-completion OPT** part-time (), full-time ()
from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____.

☐ **Post-completion OPT** full-time () No part-time OPT after studies
from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____.

I understand that **these dates cannot be changed** once the application has been submitted to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and that my application must be received by USCIS within 60 of my completion of studies date and within 30 days of the date my I-20 form recommending OPT is issued. I further understand that **post-completion OPT is an extension of F-1 Student status and that I am required to meet the following reporting requirements throughout OPT in order to maintain my status:** 1) Notify International Student Services in writing of any change in my address within 10 days of moving, 2) Notify International Student Services of the name and address of my employer or any periods of unemployment and update ISS in writing within 10 days when this information changes. **An aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during my post-completion OPT constitutes a violation of my F-1 Student status.**

I further understand that, whether my application is for pre-completion or post-completion OPT, it is a violation of F-1 status to report to my employer's place of business before authorization is granted, or before the start date on the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) or continue employment after the EAD has expired.

Listed below are all periods of my **previously** authorized Practical Training:

Curricular:

Optional:

Signature: _____

SEVIS ID#: _____
(found on the top of your I-20 form)

Complete Current Local Address:
(If on-campus, please give residence hall and room #)

Complete Physical Home Country Address: (no P.O. boxes)

Phone: _____

WIT Email: _____

Personal Email: _____