Optional Practical Training
Ph: 512-245-7966, Email: international@txstate.edu
www.international.txstate.edu

STOP: Before you apply for Optional Practical Training, you must read this form in its entirety and sign in the box at the bottom of OPT Statement of Responsibility and Legal Advice and ISSS Advising Statement of Understanding.

F-1 students may apply to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for authorization for 12 months of temporary employment for Optional Practical Training (OPT). The employment should be directly related to your major area of study. To be eligible for OPT, you must be in active F-1 status at the time of application and have completed one academic year as a full-time student (not necessarily in F-1 status). OPT can be authorized for the following:

- **Pre-Completion:** Before completion of studies in one of the following:
  1. Part-time (20 hours a week or less) during the fall/ spring semesters;
  2. Full/ part-time during summer vacation if currently enrolled and intend to register for the following semester.

- **Post-Completion:** After completion of studies

  **IMPORTANT!** If choosing this option, your OPT application must be received by USCIS **no later than** 60 days after your program completion date. However, it is **strongly** recommended to apply before you complete your studies. Also, your 12 months of OPT must be completed within 14 months of the date of completion of your studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preconditions</th>
<th>Student must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis at a DHS-approved school for one full academic year before being eligible for OPT. Students in English language training programs are not eligible for OPT.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Students may engage in OPT for any employer for the duration of OPT authorization, as long as the employment qualifies under OPT standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Standard OPT is available for a cumulative maximum of 12 months per educational level. A one-time extension of 24 months (for a total of 36 months) is available to certain STEM degree recipients who are employed by an employer registered with E-Verify.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours per week</td>
<td>20 hours/week limit for pre-completion OPT done while school is in session and student still has coursework to complete. Full-time employment can be requested for pre-completion OPT done during official school breaks, and for students who have completed all requirements for their degree except for thesis or dissertation. For post-completion OPT, according to SEVP guidance a student must be adequately employed to avoid limits on unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field of work</td>
<td>Must be directly related to the student's course of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer of employment</td>
<td>No offer of employment is required to apply for standard OPT, but the student is expected to work during the OPT EAD validity period. <strong>Students on post-completion OPT are limited to a maximum of 90 days of unemployment.</strong> To apply for a 24-month STEM extension, student must have an offer of employment from an employer registered with E-Verify.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect on other work</td>
<td>Prior use of full-time Curricular Practical Training for one year or more eliminates eligibility for OPT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval process</td>
<td>DSO recommends OPT in SEVIS. Student files I-765 application with required documents to USCIS for EAD. Work can begin only after receiving EAD issued by USCIS, and on or after the start date on the EAD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>If doing pre-completion OPT, must maintain a full course of study during the period of employment (unless done during school breaks). Degree candidates that have completed all coursework must continue to make normal progress towards completing the thesis or dissertation required for their degree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Application Procedure

How to Apply:
You apply for OPT to USCIS by first meeting with a Designated School Official (DSO) at International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). The DSO will make a new OPT requested I-20 which must be signed and dated by you. You may apply as early as 90 days before and no later than 60 days after the completion of your studies. Due to USCIS processing time, you should apply early.

Application Checklist:
☑ Signed Statement of Responsibility Form
☑ Signed Legal Advice and ISSS Advising Statement of Understanding
☑ Signed Completion of Degree Form
☑ Completed and Typed Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization [https://www.uscis.gov/i-765](https://www.uscis.gov/i-765)
  - Use the correct Form Edition. Refer to the USCIS website for latest form edition and effective dates of new forms.
  - Review the Form I-765 instructions page and ISSS template
  - Item #27 Use code: Pre-completion: (c)(3)(A); Post-completion: (c)(3)(B)
☑ Passport, valid for at least the next six months (color copy)
☑ Most recent I-94 and travel history
☑ Pay by credit card: [https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-fees/pay-with-a-credit-card](https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-fees/pay-with-a-credit-card)
  - Check the USCIS website for the most up to date filing fee: [https://www.uscis.gov/i-765](https://www.uscis.gov/i-765)
☑ Recent Passport photo – For photo requirements, see here: [https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/requirements/photos.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/requirements/photos.html)
☑ Any Form I-797A Notice of Action (if applicable)
☑ Any previously issued OPT EAD card and approval letter (if applicable)
☑ Copies of ALL I-20s including CPT or OPT authorization.

All required documents must be received by USCIS no later than 30 days after the DSO updates SEVIS with the OPT recommendation.

OPT Application Submission Instructions
Apply online:
  a. Create a USCIS Online Account: [https://myaccount.uscis.gov/](https://myaccount.uscis.gov/)
  b. Complete Form I-765 with digital signature, submit all supporting documents, and pay filing fee online.
  c. Update information, check case status, and correspond with USCIS online.
I have read the content of this handout and understand the regulations associated with OPT.

Name: ____________________________ Student ID#: ____________________________

Phone: ____________________________ Non-Texas State Email: ____________________________

Local Address: 

Street APT number # City State Zip

Student Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
Legal Advice and ISSS Advising
Statement of Understanding

Acknowledge the following statements by placing a mark (x) in the box provided.

I understand that:

☐ International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) offers best practices information on temporary employment authorization such as Optional Practical Training (OPT) as a courtesy to international students under a Texas State University issued Form I-20. Please note that all information provided is not considered legal advice.

☐ Applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) is my application and my responsibility. I may choose to compile and submit my application for temporary employment authorization on my own. If I choose to compile and submit my OPT application on my own, I will inform ISSS accordingly through email.

☐ I have reviewed the OPT website, OPT packet, Overview PowerPoint, and have gathered ALL required documents.

☐ I must receive my OPT I-20 and SEVIS recommendation from the DSO prior to submitting my OPT application to USCIS.

☐ I cannot begin employment before receiving EAD card from USCIS.

In signing this Statement of Understanding, I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand this document, and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers to my satisfaction. I shall not hold Texas State University liable for any loss or damage to my application for temporary employment authorization, including any costs involved, as a result of any information given to me.

_______________________________________________
Signature

_______________________________________________
Name (as per your passport)

_______________________________________________
Date (mm/dd/yy)
# OPT Completion of Degree Form

## To Be Completed by the Student

Please fill out this section and take this form to your department to complete the next section. This form must be signed by your academic or faculty advisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Student ID#:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family/Last</td>
<td>Given/First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Signature:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## To Be Completed by an Academic or Faculty Advisor (NOT a DSO at ISSS)

F-1 international students may qualify for Optional Practical Training (OPT), which is temporary work authorization for up to one year allowing the student to gain practical experience in their field of study. The above-mentioned student is applying for OPT. In order for ISSS to be able to recommend this student for this training, we need to know his/her expected date of completion. If you have any questions, please call 512-245-7966 and ask to speak with an international student advisor.

Please choose the category below that reflects this student’s situation regarding the completion of their degree requirements. Then please sign below and return the form to the student.

1. **Category 1**: This student is currently enrolled in classes and expected to complete all degree requirements in the following semester:
   - Spring
   - Summer
   - Fall
   - Year: ____

2. **Category 2**: A graduate student with only thesis / dissertation / comprehensive exams remaining may apply for OPT if the student has completed, or will complete, all other degree requirements excluding the thesis / dissertation / comprehensive exams. The student’s required coursework was completed, or will be completed, in the following semester:
   - Spring
   - Summer
   - Fall
   - Year: ____

3. **Category 3**: This student has graduated from Texas State University in the following semester:
   - Spring
   - Summer
   - Fall
   - Year: ____

4. **Special Situation**: If you have completed your thesis of dissertation but missed the initial deadline for submission of your thesis to Alkek Library and your graduation has been postponed to the following semester, you may still be able to begin your OPT prior to your graduation. To do so, you must obtain a “Letter of Completion” from the Graduate College to certify that all requirements for your degree have been completed. (E-mail gradcollege@txstate.edu).

**Comments**: __________________________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisor’s Signature:</th>
<th>Phone Number:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Printed Name:</th>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Email:</th>
</tr>
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</table>

This form must be completed in its entirety otherwise the OPT request will not be processed.