F-1 Post-Completion Optional Practical Training

International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)

Agenda

What is OPT?  OPT Application Process  Traveling Abroad on OPT

Unemployment  Reporting Requirement on OPT  Tips and Reminders
What is OPT?

- Work in your field of study
- Benefit of F-1 Status
- Not a new visa
- In form of Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- Authorization from the USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services)
What constitutes “work”?

At least 20 hours/week in your field of study

What are some examples of OPT?

- Paid
- Multiple employers (short and long-term)
- Self-Employed Business Owner (full-time)
- Unpaid (volunteer/internship)
- Work for hire (1099 Employment)
- Agency Employment (at least 20hrs/week)
How long can I be on OPT?

12 months max / degree level

How do I qualify for OPT?

In lawful status

2 semesters
Do I need a Job Offer to Apply?

No Job Offer Required to Apply!

When can I apply for OPT?

[Diagram showing dates for applying OPT]
Earliest Date I Can Apply

Sept 25th, 2015

• Do not email ISSO your OPT application before this date!

ISSO Preferred Deadline

Nov 13th, 2015

• USCIS must receive your application no later than 60 days after the completion of your program.

• The earlier you apply, the fewer potential complications.

• You cannot apply after the completion date if you leave the U.S.
Before You Apply: Plan Early

ISSO: 10 business days
USCIS: 2-3 Months

OPT Application Process
**OPT Application Process**

1. **Step 1:** Submit OPT application
2. **Step 2:** Receive I-20 with OPT Recommendation
3. **Step 3:** Mail to USCIS

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**Step 1:** Submit Application to ISSO
Item A: Complete OPT Recommendation Request Form

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Item A: Complete OPT Recommendation Request Form

(Page 1)

You must specify your request from the options below:

- ✔ Full-time
- [ ] Part-time
- [ ] Full-time OPT - 20 hrs/wk
- [ ] Full-time OPT - 20 hrs/wk
  a) During the summer, or (b) during the academic year.
  b) During vacation period.
- [ ] Post-completion OPT (full-time only)
  You also must submit a complete OPT Academic Adviser Form on p. 2.

2) If you have not been issued an EAD for OPT before, please provide the following information: start and end dates on the card:

Student's Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Office Use: Columbia University Academic Adviser, Department Chair, or Program Coordinator

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Item A: Complete OPT Recommendation Request Form
(Page 2)

Columbia University
In the City of New York
International Students and Scholar Office

For Post-Completion and ABD Students

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Form for
Academic Adviser, Department Chair, or Program Coordinator

This form must be completed in its entirety for the ISSO to accept the student’s OPT application. Item 1 must be completed for all applicants. Box 2 or 3 should be checked when applicable to the student’s situation.

The student listed below is requesting the ISSO recommendation for employment authorization in his/her field of study. In order to issue a recommendation, we are required to obtain the following information. Please complete and sign below. If further information is advisable or necessary, describe in an accompanying letter.

This is to confirm that:

Student Name: ________________________________

1. is expected to complete requirements for the following degree: ______ bachelors ______ masters ______ doctoral ______ certificate

by 12/23/2015 (DATE: mm/dd/yyyy)

Note: For terms other than spring, this is not the degree conferral date, but the end of the term in which degree requirements are met.

For PhD students: projected defense date ________________________________

Please check any box that is applicable to student.

☐ has completed all coursework, is at the “all but thesis / all but dissertation” (ABD) stage and has received MPhil (if applicable).

☐ has received a grade for any course-related Curricular Practical Training previously authorized (if applicable).

Faculty/Adviser Name (please print) ________________________________

Title and Department: ________________________________

Email: ________________________________ Phone ext.: ________________________________

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ________________________________
Item B: Complete I-765 Application
**Item B: Complete I-765 Application**

1. Full Name
   - (Family Name) (First Name) (Middle Name)

2. Other Names Used (include Maiden Name)

3. U.S. Mailing Address
   - Street Number and Name (State) (ZIP Code)
   - Address must be valid for 4 months into the future

4. Country of Citizenship or Nationality

5. Place of Birth
   - (Town or City) (State/Province) (Country)

6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

7. Gender
   - Male
   - Female

8. Marital Status
   - Married
   - Single
   - Divorced
   - Widowed

15. Current Immigration Status
   - (Visitor, Student, etc.)

16. Eligibility Category
   - Go to the “Who May File Form I-765?” section of the instructions. In the space below, please note the letter and number of the eligibility category that’s selected from the instructions. For example, (C)(3)(B). (C)(3)(B)

17. (C)(3) Eligibility Category
   - If you entered the eligibility category (C)(3) in Question 16 above, the year, degree, your employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in the space below.
   - Degree
   - Employer’s Name as Listed in E-Verify
   - Employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number

18. (C)(20) Eligibility Category
   - If you entered the eligibility category (C)(20) in Question 16 above, please provide the last 4 digits of your social security number.

**Certification**

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the “Who May File Form I-765?” section of the instructions and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in Question 16.

Applicant's Signature...

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

Printed Name

Address

Leave this area blank

Sign here in blue ink
Mailing Address (Valid for 3-4 months from mail date)

Using an address that is not your own:

\[
\text{c/o John Smith, 405 W. 119th St. Apt. 2P, New York, NY 10027}
\]

If name is too long, first initial with last name is fine:

\[
\text{c/o J. Smith, 405 W. 119th St. Apt. 2P, New York, NY 10027}
\]

- Do not forward mail (government mail not forwarded)
- Do not use a P.O. Box

Item C: Copy I-94 Arrival Record

or

https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov
Trainee Fee: Pay $120 Trainee Administrative Fee

https://lexington.columbia.edu/isso/trainee

Send One PDF

A. Completed OPT Request Form (2 pages)
B. Completed I-765
C. Copy of electronic I-94 or white I-94 card
D. Previous EAD cards (if any)

isse-opt@columbia.edu
Step 2: Receive new I-20 with OPT Recommendation

Pick Up Tips

- Ready within 10 business days
- Check Columbia email
- Read ALL mailing instructions
Review OPT Recommendation

Step 3: Mail Application to USCIS
When must USCIS receive my application?

Within 30 days of OPT recommendation date on I-20

USCIS Mailing Tips

Use Courier Service  Sign and Date  Contact Us if Not Using NY/NJ Address
USCIS Application Checklist

- I-765 form
- Fee $380
- Copies of all pages of all previously issued 1-20s
- Copy of your passport ID page
- Copy of F-1 entry visa
- Print out of I-94 information OR copy of both sides of I-94 card
- Copy of both sides of any previously issued EAD cards
- Two U.S. passport style photos [www.tinyurl.com/sampleOPTphoto]

Writing a Check

Student Name
U.S. Address

Department of Homeland Security

Three Hundred and Eighty

$380.00

USCIS I-765

Signature

MM/DD/YEAR
After Approval: Receive and Review EAD Card

You Will Receive 3 Pieces of Mail

1. Receipt Notice
2. Approval Notice
3. EAD
Track Your Case Status

http://www.uscis.gov/

Review EAD Card

- Contact the ISSO if there is an error on your receipt notice or EAD or if you receive a Request for Further Evidence (RFE) for your application.

- You MUST have the EAD in hand before beginning any employment.

OPT Approval Dates Means not valid for re-entry on its own
60-Day Grace Period after End Date on EAD

- No Work
- No International Travel

Travel Abroad on OPT
OPT Travel Documents

1. Unexpired Passport, valid 6 months into the future (some countries are exempt from the 6-month rule).
2. Unexpired F-1 entry visa, valid for further entries (except Canadians).
3. An I-20 with a valid travel signature in the last 6 months.
4 A. Receipt notice (pending OPT application, before EAD is issued)
4 B. EAD and a letter from an employer (once OPT approved, after EAD is issued)

www.ice.gov/sevis/travel

Entry Visa Reminder

Eligibility to enter the U.S. as an F-1 student
Does NOT determine how long you may remain in the U.S.
NOT guaranteed an entry visa (from a U.S. Consulate) simply because you have been granted OPT (by the USCIS).
You always need to establish non-immigrant intent to qualify for an F-1 visa.
We recommend to have EAD card and proof of employment before applying.

Canadian citizens exempt from requirement.
Unemployment

- Allowed to accrue maximum of 90 days unemployment throughout year

- 20 hours / week = employment
### Travel Abroad While Not Working

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel abroad while unemployed:</th>
<th>Travel abroad while employed during a period of authorized leave or as part of employment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counted toward 90 day limit.</td>
<td>Not included in the 90 day limit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reporting Requirements on OPT

- Date: 53

- Date: 54
Report any change within 10 Days

Name or address

Name and address of any (new) employer

Period(s) of unemployment

Decision not to use OPT and depart the U.S. to return home or to another country

Change to another nonimmigrant status in the U.S

www.tinyurl.com/iskoOPTreporting

Tips and Reminders
Keep Employment Record

- On letterhead
- Position held
- Proof of job duration
- Job title
- Supervisor contact
- Job description
- Pay Stubs

When can I Apply for Social Security Number?

You can apply for a social security number as of this date.

Cap-Gap Extension

Year OPT  |  H1-B
---|---
Cap Gap  |  OCT 1

Read ISSO News and Sign Up for Alumni Email

http://cuit.columbia.edu/email-alumni
Helpful URLs

OPT forms and detailed instructions:
http://www.tinyurl.com/issonOPT

Track your case with USCIS:
http://www.uscis.gov

Thank You!

Contact Information
International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)
524 Riverside Drive in International House North
(between 122nd Street and Tiemann Place)
(212) 854-3587
isso@columbia.edu
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isson/

Fall Office Hours:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
10:30 – 4:00 pm.
Closed on Wednesday.

Fall Phones:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
1 – 4 p.m.