

# Optional Practical Training (OPT)

## Contents

What Should I Know Before I Apply for OPT?	1
How to Apply for OPT	2
Format Requirements	2
Create a USCIS Account	3
How to File Online OPT Application (Form I-765)	4
Next Steps	7
Frequently Asked Questions	11

## What Should I Know Before I Apply for OPT?

### 1. What is Optional Practical Training?

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is temporary employment authorization that allows F-1 students to work in **job directly related to their major**. It gives students the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have gained in the classroom to a practical work setting. Eligible F-1 students can have maximum of 12 **months** OPT for their academic program. Approval for OPT is granted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) and takes approximately 2-4 months to obtain.

- **Post-Completion OPT** – AFTER your program completion (Full-time)
- **Pre-Completion OPT** – DURING your program of study (Part-time). If students decide to pursue pre-completion OPT, then that time will be taken out of their total 12 months of OPT.

### 2. What are the eligibility requirements for OPT?

- Have been in full time F-1 status for at least one full academic year (3 quarters)
- Be in valid F-1 status at the time of your application.
- Intend to work in a position that is directly related to your major field of study.
- Students of English Language Programs (ESL) are not eligible for OPT

### 3. When can I apply for Post-Completion OPT?

You can apply up to 90 days before your program completion date and **no later than 60 days after your program completion date**. Please plan to have enough time to prepare all of the application materials, meet your academic advisor, receive your new OPT I-20 (with the OPT recommendation) from our office, and also submit the application before the deadline.

### 4. What is my program completion date?

The program completion date is the last day of final exams. **Please meet with your academic advisor if you are not sure what your program completion date is.**

## 5. What dates will I be given for Post-Completion OPT?

USCIS will give you a specific start date and end date. The start date will be the date you requested or the USCIS approval date, whichever is later. The end date of OPT must be no later than 14 months from your official program completion date. Please keep in mind that the dates granted for OPT may not be your exact preferred dates.

## How to Apply for OPT

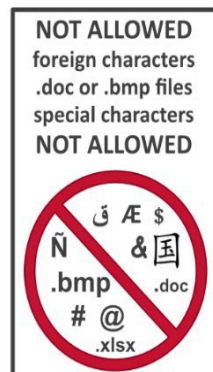
Follow the steps listed below in order. Do not skip.

1. Read this entire handout (including the Frequently Asked Questions) carefully.
2. [Apply for graduation](#).
3. Submit the [OPT Confirmation Request Form](#). Your advisor will review your request and submit the OPT Major Confirmation Form to F-1 specialist.
4. Prepare the following required documents and save them in your computer with the proper format. (see Format Requirements)
  - 2X2 passport photo
  - Passport ID page (or EAD)
  - Print out I-94 Arriva-Departure record <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>
  - Previous I-20s if they have a different SEVIS#

## Format Requirements

### Filling Out the Form—Format Requirements

- Photos: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- Documents: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF or TIFF
- Foreign language documents must have English translation
- Maximum size: 6 MB per file



#### Acceptable file name examples:

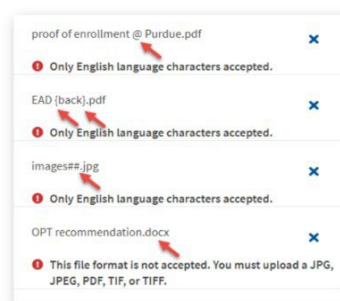
Harry Potter (photo).jpeg  
Harry\_Potter\_I-20.pdf  
Harry-Potter-I-94.pdf

### Filling Out the Form—Format Requirements

The **only** allowed characters are:

- English letters
- Numbers
- Spaces
- Periods .
- Hyphens -
- Underscores \_
- Parentheses ( )

\*\*\*Do NOT use special characters



5. Submit the [Optional Practical Training \(OPT\) Worksheet](#).
  - Request your OPT starting date, which is going to be on your OPT recommendation I-20. Keep in mind that the actual OPT starting date will be determined by USCIS; it may be the same date as your request or the date of USCIS approval, whichever comes later.
  - A copy of your OPT Worksheet will be emailed to your email address. **KEEP THE COPY** so you can use this information when you fill-in the USCIS online Form I-765 (OPT application).
6. F-1 specialist will review your OPT eligibility and check the completeness but not the accuracy of the information on your OPT Worksheet. It is your responsibility to enter the correct information.
7. F-1 specialist will issue you an OPT recommendation I-20. After you receive it, sign, scan, and save the document in your computer with a proper format.
8. Create USCIS account at <https://www.uscis.gov>
9. File Online OPT Application (Form I-765). **If you prefer F-1 specialist to observe your application process**, you can make an appointment. **If you prefer to do it by yourself**, use a copy of OPT Worksheet for reference. If you cannot complete it at once, save the form and continue later.

## Create a USCIS Account

Get started at [www.uscis.gov](https://www.uscis.gov), click Sign In, and click Create Account (or Sign In if you already have an account.)

The screenshot shows the USCIS website header with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services logo. A search bar is present, and a red arrow points to the 'Sign In' button. A dropdown menu is open, showing 'Access USCIS online services.', 'Sign In', and 'Create Account'. A second red arrow points to the 'Create Account' option. Below the header, a banner for 'July 22: USCIS Policy Manual Update: O-1 Nonimmigrant Status for Persons of Extraordinary Ability' is visible. The main content area shows a 'Sign Up' form with a message: 'You need to sign in or sign up before continuing.' The form includes fields for 'Email' and 'Email confirmation', a 'Sign Up' button, and a link for 'Already have an account? Sign In'.

**Create a USCIS account or sign in**

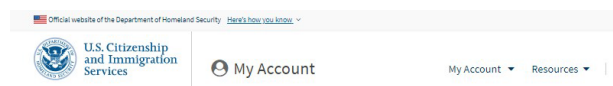
- Enter your email address & password
- System will send you one-time PIN (text message or email or both) for two factors authentication
- Repeat these steps every time you log in

## How to File Online OPT Application (Form I-765)

### Tips before you start to fill in the form:

1. Have a copy of your OPT Worksheet. Use Information from the worksheet to complete your Online I-765 Form.
2. Save documents in your computer for easy access.
  - 2x2 passport photo
  - I-94 Arrival-Departure record
  - Passport or EAD
  - OPT Recommendation I-20
  - Additional documents if necessary (e.g. I-20s with a different SEVIS #)

## Account Onboarding



File a Form

Once you start your form, we will automatically save your information for 30 days, or from the last time you worked on the form.

Select the form you want to file online.

- ☐ Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (I-90)
- ☐ Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (N-336)
- ☐ Application for Naturalization (N-400)
- ☐ Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document (N-565)
- ☐ Application for Certificate of Citizenship (N-600)
- ☐ Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate Under Section 322 (N-600K)
- ☐ Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)  
Only certain F-1 students seeking optional practical training (OPT) may file Form I-765 online. This includes:
  - Pre-completion OPT - (c)(3)(A) eligibility category;
  - Post-completion OPT - (c)(3)(B) eligibility category; or
  - a 24-month extension for STEM students (students holding a degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics) - (c)(3)(C) eligibility category.For all other eligibility categories, you must submit a paper [Form I-765](#).
- ☐ Petition for Alien Relative (I-130)
- ☐ Application To Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (I-539)

[Start form](#)


[Cancel](#)

### Read information pages before you start your application.

- I-765 Application for Employment Authorization
- DHS Privacy Notice
- Paperwork Reduction Act

## Start the online form.

Official website of the Department of Homeland Security [Here's how you know.](#)

 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account ▾ Resources ▾ Sign Out

### I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

What is your eligibility category?

**Getting Started** ▴

- Basis of eligibility**
  - Reason for applying
  - Preparer and interpreter information
- About You ▾
- Evidence ▾
- Additional Information ▾
- Review and Submit ▾

⚠ You can file your request online only for certain eligibility categories


If your eligibility category does not appear on the drop-down list, you must file a paper [Form I-765](#). If you submit online and are not eligible for one of the listed categories, your application may be denied.

c(3)(A) Student Pre-Completion OPT  
c(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT  
c(3)(C) STEM Extension

[Back](#) [Next](#)

If you graduated, choose **(c) (3) (B)** – **Post-Completion OPT** (most common as majority of Shoreline F-1 students apply for OPT after they graduated.)

Official website of the Department of Homeland Security [Here's how you know.](#)

 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account ▾ Resources ▾ Sign Out

### I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ▾

About You ▾

**Evidence** ▴

- 2 x 2 photo of you
- Form I-94
- Employment Authorization Document
- Previously authorized CPT or OPT
- Form I-20**

Additional Information ▾

Review and Submit ▾

### I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status

Upload a copy of the Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status endorsed by the Designated School Official (DSO). For the (c)(3)(B) eligibility category, your DSO must have entered the recommendation for OPT into your SEVIS record within 30 days of you submitting Form I-765. If you fail to do so, we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765.

#### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

[Choose](#) or drop files here to upload

[Back](#) [Next](#)

**IMPORTANT!!**

**Do not** submit online I-765 form without **OPT Recommendation I-20**. If you do so, your application will be **DENIED**.



# Filling Out the Form—Review & Submit

**Your fee**

**i** Your form filing fee is: \$410

Refund Policy: USCIS does not refund fees, regardless of any action we take on your application, petition or request, or how long USCIS takes to reach a decision. By continuing this transaction, you acknowledge that you must submit fees in the exact amount and that you are paying the fees for a government service.

**Alerts and warnings**

You have one or more alerts and warnings based on the information you provided in your application.

A red alert means you have incomplete responses or inconsistent data. You cannot submit your application with any alerts.

**Alerts and warnings**

**✓** We found no alerts or warnings in your application

- Review your entries before you pay
- Once you submit payment, you cannot make corrections

## Alerts and warnings

- RED:** You cannot submit the form until you make corrections.
- YELLOW:** There may be errors. Correct or leave (if no error). You can submit the form.
- GREEN:** You entered all necessary information. (completion of entry is not equal to accuracy. Make sure they are all accurate.)

# Filling Out the Form—Review & Submit

Application For Employment Authorization

USCIS  
Form I-765  
OMB No. 1545-0046  
Expires 07/31/2022

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

**For USCIS Use Only**

Anticipation Estimate: Valid From: Fee Stamp: Action Block

Anticipation Estimate: Valid Through: A: B:

Alien Registration Number (A-Number):

To be completed by an attorney or Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA)-accredited representative (if any):

Select this box if Form G-28 is attached: Attorney or Accredited Representative (USCIS Online Account Number (if any))

**START HERE:** Type or Print in Block and Answer all questions fully and accurately. If a question does not apply to you (the example of you have never been arrested and the question asks "Provide the name of your arrest (year)"), type or print "N/A" unless otherwise directed. If you answer to a question which requires a response, response is not or none (the example, "How many children do you have" or "How many times have you departed the United States"), type or print "None", unless otherwise directed.

**Part 1: Reasons for Applying**

I am applying for (check one):

1.a. ☐ Initial petition to accept employment

1.b. ☐ Extension of my status, if I am currently employed

1.c. ☐ Extension of my status, if I am currently unemployed

NOTE: Employment (concerning an employment authorization document due to USCIS only does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Follow the Extension for Card Error section of the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for filers (dual).

1.d. ☐ Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document)

**Part 2: Information About You**

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name (Last Name):

1.b. Given Name (First Name):

1.c. Middle Name:

1.d. Suffix:

2.a. Maiden Name:

2.b. Maiden Suffix:

2.c. Maiden Middle Name:

2.d. Maiden Suffix:

2.e. Maiden Full Name:

2.f. Maiden Suffix:

2.g. Maiden Middle Name:

2.h. Maiden Suffix:

2.i. Maiden Full Name:

2.j. Maiden Suffix:

2.k. Maiden Middle Name:

2.l. Maiden Suffix:

2.m. Maiden Full Name:

2.n. Maiden Suffix:

2.o. Maiden Middle Name:

2.p. Maiden Suffix:

2.q. Maiden Full Name:

2.r. Maiden Suffix:

2.s. Maiden Middle Name:

2.t. Maiden Suffix:

2.u. Maiden Full Name:

2.v. Maiden Suffix:

2.w. Maiden Middle Name:

2.x. Maiden Suffix:

2.y. Maiden Full Name:

2.z. Maiden Suffix:

Form I-765 Edition 08/2020 Electronic Form Only Page 1 of 7

## Review the I-765 form information

Here is a summary of all the information you provided in your application.

Make sure you have provided responses for everything that applies to you before you submit your application. You can edit your responses by going to each application section using the site navigation.

We also prepared a draft case snapshot with your responses, which you can download below.

[View draft snapshot](#)

Getting Started

Basis of eligibility

What is your eligibility category?

Make sure to print/download your form and review information before you submit.

c(3)(A) Student Pre-Completion OPT

# Filling Out the Form—Applicant's Declaration & Certification

## Applicant's statement

You must read and agree to the statement below.

- ☒ I can read and understand English, and have read and understand every question and instruction on this application, as well as my answer to every question.

- ☒ I have read and agree to the applicant's statement

## Applicant's signature

You must provide your digital signature below by typing your full legal name. We may deny your application if you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents. We will record the date of your signature with your application.

Enter your full legal name here

Sign the form by entering your full LEGAL name. (needs to match with your passport)

Pay the application fee **\$410**.

## Filling Out the Form—Paying the Fee

- After you agree to Applicant's statement, you will be taken to [pay.gov](https://pay.gov).
- [Pay.gov](https://pay.gov) is a secure government portal.
- Pay by ACH withdrawal, or debit or credit card.

The screenshot shows the 'USCIS I-765' payment page on the Pay.gov portal. It prompts the user to 'Please select a payment method:'. There are two radio button options: 'I want to pay with a withdrawal from a checking or savings account (ACH)' (unselected) and 'I want to pay with a debit or credit card' (selected). Below the second option are logos for Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Discover, and JCB. At the bottom are 'Cancel' and 'Continue' buttons.

## Filling Out the Form—Paying the Fee

**After you submit payment, you cannot make corrections. Review your application one more time!!**

- Enter payment information.
- Note the form type and agency tracking ID at the top.
- When you click “Continue” to pay the fee, your form will be submitted.

The screenshot shows the 'USCIS I-765 Review and submit payment' screen. It lists the following information: Agency Tracking ID: LNJ731CK7SQ1KH, Payment Amount: \$410.00, Payment Method: Plastic Card, Account Holder Name: Lee Smith, Card Type: VISA, Card Number: \*\*\*\*\*(1111), Billing Address: 20 Ninian Street, City: Springfield, Country: United States, State/Province: LA, ZIP/Postal Code: 39248. At the bottom, there is a checkbox for 'I authorize a charge to my card account for the above amount in accordance with my card issuer agreement' (checked), and 'Previous', 'Cancel', and 'Continue' buttons.

## Filling Out the Form—Submitting the Form

- You will receive confirmation your form was submitted.
- Click on “Go to my cases” to see your case card and receipt notice.

After you submit payment, click “Go to my cases” You can obtain your receipt number.

The screenshot shows the USCIS online account page with the header 'U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services'. The user is logged in as 'applicant' with email 'app\_800@demo.com'. The page displays the message: 'You successfully submitted your I-765. We will contact you if we have any questions or need additional information. You can track the status of your application through your USCIS online account.' A red arrow points from the text box to a blue button labeled 'Go to my cases'.

## Next Steps

### After you submitted the online application

- 1) Regularly track your case.
- 2) If you receive a Request for Evidence (RFE), take your action as soon as possible.

## Tracking Your Case

Your Cases

I-765 Application for Employment Authorization  
Submitted on April 13, 2021 | Receipt # ICS09308891  
View PDF

Case status Case history Documents

USCIS Notices

File	Date Sent	Action
<a href="#">Receipt Notice.pdf</a>	April 13, 2021	N/A

Your uploads

You may upload additional evidence that you believe may assist USCIS in adjudicating your application, even if the evidence was not specifically requested. USCIS will consider the timeliness and relevance of unrequested evidence when making a decision about your case.

File	Document	Date added
------	----------	------------

Unsolicited evidence

Unsolicited evidence is any additional information or evidence that we did not request from you. If you upload evidence that we did not request from you, USCIS will consider the timeliness and relevance of this information when making a decision about your case.

[Upload evidence](#)

### All notices are posted to your account

- Receipt notice
- Biometrics appointment notice
- Request for Evidence (RFE)
- PDF of your completed form
- Decision letter

\* Notices are also mailed to the address on file

### Tips:

- Sign up for a [USCIS Case Status Online Account](#) to get automatic case updates, including your U.S. Postal (USPS) tracking number to track your Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
- Register for [Informed Delivery](#) through USPS to get daily image for mail being sent to you. With Informed Delivery, you can automatically track packages you are expecting, set up email and text alerts, and enter USPS Delivery Instructions for your mail carrier



## When your OPT is approved

When USCIS approves your application, you will receive an email and/or text message. You will also receive two separate mails for Approval Notice (Form I-797B) and your Employment Authorization Document (EAD), also known as the “USCIS I-766 card” or “work permit”. If you requested on your OPT application, you will receive your Social Security Number (SSN) card separately from the Social Security Administration.

### 1. What do I need to when I receive my EAD card?

Review information on your card. (If information is incorrect or the length of OPT is more than 12 months, please contact an F-1 specialist immediately.) Scan and email your EAD to F-1 specialist. They will issue OPT Approved status I-20.



#### EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS

TYPE	FULL/PART-TIME	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
POST-COMPLETION OPT	FULL TIME	APPROVED	07 JULY 2022	30 MAY 2023

### 2. Create an SEVP Portal Account

When your OPT is approved and OPT start date has begun, you will receive an account creation email.

Email from: [do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov)

Subject line: **Optional Practical Training Approval - the next step. Create an SEVP Portal account.**

#### Step 1: Create your Portal account

1. Click the link in the email to open the registration page.
2. Enter your correct, most recent SEVIS ID on which practical training was approved and then click **Submit**.
3. A new page will open and welcome you by your name and display your email address.
4. Create a password for your account. Follow the instructions on the screen and refer to the [Make and Maintain User Password](#) page to create a password.
5. Type your password twice and click “**Create Account.**”

### Important notes:

You can only use the link once. If you are unable to start the registration process using the link provided in the email, you should ask an F-1 Specialist to have the email notice sent again. The system only allows you three chances to submit your SEVIS ID correctly. After three failed attempts, the portal will lock you out. If your portal account is locked, contact an F-1 Specialist to request a reset of your SEVP Portal account.

### Step 2: Successfully created your Portal account


After you click “Create Account”, the portal will open the login page and display a success message. This signifies that you have successfully created an SEVP Portal account and may now:

- Log in and out of the portal
- Access portal pages
- Manage your account

You can do the following at the SEVP Portal:

- Review your biographic information
- Edit physical address
- Edit mailing address
- Edit email address
- Edit telephone number
- Edit employment information
- View history of changes to your portal
- Manage your account (Change your password)

For more information, SEVP Portal Help: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help>

 **STUDY in the STATES**


[Translate this page](#)

**STUDENTS** ▾ **SCHOOLS** ▾ **BLOG** ▾ **TOOLS** ▾ **HELP HUBS** ▾

# SEVP PORTAL HELP

Students on post-completion practical training should use the SEVP Portal Help section to learn how to use the SEVP Portal and comply with reporting requirements. Eligible students can access the SEVP Portal from ICE.gov.


The SEVP Portal is an important tool that lets F-1 students on post-completion optional practical training (OPT) and M-1 students participating in practical training meet their legal reporting requirements. Use the resources below to learn how to get started with the SEVP Portal and maintain information in the portal.



### Watch the SEVP Portal Help Videos

View the SEVP Portal Help videos for step-by-step guides to navigating and updating the SEVP Portal.

[Watch the videos.](#)



### Watch the SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar: SEVP Portal Follow-up

Learn about recent SEVP Portal enhancements and answers to frequently asked questions in the SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar: SEVP Portal Follow-up.

[Watch the webinar.](#)

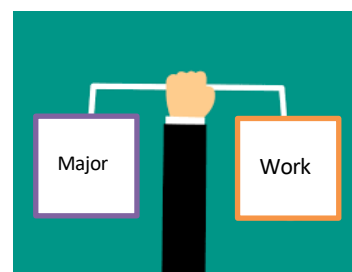
## Frequently Asked Questions

### Delivery issues

1. **My USPS tracking information shows my package was delivered but I have not received it. What should I do?**  
Contact your local post office **immediately**. USCIS mails your card to the address you provided on your application. If your mailing address changes after you file your application, you must update your address with USCIS and USPS as soon as possible. If you don't update your address promptly, your case could be delayed, your document(s) could get lost, and you may need to reapply and pay the fee again.
2. **If I do not receive my Social Security Number (SSN) card that I requested on my I-765?**  
Please call or visit an Social Security Administration office if you do not receive your SSN card within 7 business days after receiving your EAD.

### Employment

1. **Can I begin working before my OPT is approved?**  
NO. You may not begin employment until your OPT approved start date. (The date is on your EAD and Form I-797). Working before OPT has been authorized would be considered illegal employment.
2. **Do I need to be employed while I am on Post-completion OPT?**  
Yes. Your total unemployed time cannot be more than 90 days.
3. **How many hours do I need to work?**  
For post-completion OPT, the work must be for more than 20 hours a week.
4. **Does it affect my immigration status if I am not employed?**  
Yes. Regulations only allow for 90 days of TOTAL unemployment and your F-1 SEVIS record may be terminated when you exceed 90 days of unemployment. You could go home or transfer to another U.S. school prior to accruing 90 days of unemployment if you decide not to use the remainder of the OPT benefit.
5. **Does it affect my immigration status if my employment is not related to my major area of study?**  
Yes. Work done for OPT must be "directly related to the student's major area of study." Engaging in employment which is not related to your study is not authorized and your SEVIS record may be terminated.
6. **If I have one job that is related to my major area of study, can I have another job that is not related to my major area of study? For example, my major area of study was Biotechnology and I work as a Biotechnology Lab Specialist. I am thinking of getting a second job as a server at a local restaurant. Can I do that?**



No. All work done for OPT must be "directly related to the student's major area of study". If you engage employment which is not related to your study, it is a violation of your F-1 status and will result in termination of your SEVIS record and OPT authorization.

## **7. What types of employment satisfy the employment requirement?**

- **Regular paid employment**

In a position directly related to the student's program of study. For post-completion OPT, the work must be for at least 20 hours per week. Students may work for multiple employers, as long as it is directly related to the student's program of study.

- **Payment by multiple short-term multiple employers**

SEVP says that "Students, such as musicians and other performing artists may work for multiple short term employers (gigs). The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration. The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration."

- **Work for hire**

SEVP says, "This is also commonly referred to as 1099 employment where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. If requested by the Department of Homeland Security, students should be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods and the name and address of the contracting company."

- **Self-employed business owner**

SEVP says, "Students on OPT may start a business and be self-employed. The student should be able to prove that he or she has the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to his or her degree program."

- **Employment through an agency**

SEVP says, "Students on post-completion OPT must be able to provide evidence showing they worked an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency."

- **Volunteers or unpaid interns**

SEVP says, "Students may work as volunteers or unpaid interns, where this practice does not violate any labor laws. The work should be at least 20 hours per week for students on post-completion OPT. A student should be able to provide evidence, acquired from the student's employer, to verify that he or she worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment." Note that a volunteer position or unpaid internship would be a valid option for someone who otherwise might not meet the minimum employment requirement.



## Travel outside of U.S.

**We recommend you avoid travel outside of the U.S. while your application is in pending.**

### 1. What documents do I need if I travel outside the U.S. after applying for OPT?

- **Travel and re-enter BEFORE degree completion:**

You must have

- 1) Valid passport
- 2) Valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport
- 3) Valid I-20 with travel signature on page 2

We recommend carrying proof of registration and proof that you have funds available to complete your studies (e.g., a bank statement).



- **Travel and re-enter AFTER degree completion but your OPT is *pending*** (Traveling outside the U.S. before OPT approval and without a job offer may present some risks):

- 1) Valid passport
- 2) Valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport
- 3) Valid I-20 with travel signature on page 2 (no older than 6 months)
- 4) USCIS receipt notice (Form I-797C, Notice of Action)
- 5) If you have a job offer, carry a job offer letter.

- **Travel and re-enter after degree completion and your OPT has been approved:**

- 1) Valid passport
- 2) Valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport
- 3) Valid I-20 with travel signature on page 2 (no older than 6 months)
- 4) Employment Authorization Document
- 5) Verification of employment such as job offer letter or pay stub (Students without a job could be denied entry).

## Reporting Requirements

### 1. What do I need to report during OPT?

- Your employment status
- Your employer's information
- When you stop working
- Update your address, phone, and email

### 2. How to report?

You must report your practical training/employment using the **SEVP Portal**. If you do not report your practical training/employment, your F-1 SEVIS record may be terminated 90 days after the OPT start date printed on your EAD card. A terminated SEVIS record cancels the OPT authorization and requires you to leave the U.S.



## Other situations related to OPT status

### 1. What do I do if my F-1 visa stamp expires while I am on OPT?

You do not need a valid F-1 visa stamp to stay inside the U.S. if you are maintaining status. However, if you go outside of the U.S., you will need to get a new F-1 visa stamp to re-enter the U.S. In order to apply for an F-1 visa stamp while you are on OPT, please take your I-20 with a travel signature within the last 6 months, your EAD card, proof that you have a job, and your passport.

### 2. What if I want to transfer to university while I am on OPT or after I have finished it?

If you want to transfer to a university, please submit the online [Transfer-out Request form](#) along with your admission letter. If you are eligible, F-1 specialist will transfer your SEVIS record. Keep in mind if you engage in employment that is not related to your field of study or are unemployed for an aggregate of more than 90 days, you are considered out of Status. Your SEVIS record cannot be transferred in Active status.

#### **While you are on OPT:**

Your OPT will be cancelled when your SEVIS record is transferred. You cannot work after the release date.

#### **After completing OPT:**

You must request a SEVIS transfer within 60 days of completing OPT. (Your SEVIS record will complete on Day 61. You will be ineligible to transfer your SEVIS record in Active Status.

### 3. What should I do after OPT authorization ends?

You have a 60-day grace period after your OPT end date. You can:

- Stay in the U.S. and make preparation to leave the U.S.
- Start a new academic program at Shoreline (see academic advisor)
- Transfer to another US school
- Change your status

### 4. What if I change my mind and want to cancel my OPT application?

It is difficult and sometimes impossible to cancel an OPT application. We strongly recommend that you consider your situation carefully before applying for OPT. If you are not sure about your program completion date and other factors that might affect your OPT application, please make an appointment to see an advisor. Please contact F-1 specialist if you consider or decide to:

- cancel your OPT after you submit your application
- go home without using OPT

### 5. Am I eligible to continue my international student health insurance while I am on OPT?

Please check at the front desk for more information.