12 MONTH POST COMPLETION OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING
APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Practical Training is defined in the regulations as "temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study." There are 4 types of practical training for F1 visa students:

PRACTICAL TRAINING DURING STUDIES:
1. Curricular Practical Training (CPT): Practical training in an Internship or Cooperative Education program during a student’s studies. Requires academic and IPGE approval, and enrollment in a Fieldwork course.

2. Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training: Practical Training application to USCIS during a student’s studies. Not common at Sacramento State due to CPT options. Pre-Completion OPT reduces Post Completion OPT time.

PRACTICAL TRAINING AFTER COMPLETION OF CLASSES:
3. POST COMPLETION OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING – 1 Year of practical training allowed after completion of coursework at each advanced degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, Phd). See eligibility information below.


Students who have questions about CPT, Pre-Completion OPT, or STEM OPT should visit International Programs & Global Engagement for additional information. This package will provide information for Post Completion OPT only.

ELIGIBILITY & FILING
To be eligible for Post-Completion OPT, students must be in valid F1 status, and have been lawfully enrolled full-time for at least 2 semesters at a college/university. In addition, the following requirements must be met:

• Undergraduate Level students must be verified as graduating at the end of the current term.
• Graduate Level students: Must be verified as:
  o Graduating at the end of the current term having completed all courses and Master’s Project/ Thesis/ Exam requirements, OR -
  o Verified as having already successfully completed all coursework required for graduation AND already enrolled for at least 1 semester in the Master’s Thesis, Project or Culminating Exam, OR -
  o Verified as expecting to complete all coursework required for graduation by the end of the current term AND already enrolled for at least 1 semester in the Master’s Thesis, Project or Culminating Exam.

Recommended Filing Period: Regulations allow students to file for OPT up to 90 days before their final term ends and up to 60 days after the term ends.

DURATION
12 months maximum per educational level.

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS
• Offer of Employment: Not required when applying for Post Completion OPT.
• Location: In the US. OPT is not a general work permit. Acceptable practical training work experiences are authorized ONLY for positions directly related to the student’s degree field of study and appropriate for the student’s degree level completed.
• Hours: Minimum 20 hours per week of appropriate employment is required.
• Unemployment: Maximum 90 days of unemployment allowed. Students exceeding 90 days of unemployment are not meeting their F1 visa requirements and are considered in violation of their status. **SEVIS will soon have the capability to terminate student records that exceed 90 unemployment days. It is critical students update their employer information with IPGE Advisors.**
• Payment: Positions may be paid or unpaid.
12 POST COMPLETION OPT REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

Application materials must be submitted to International Programs & Global Engagement for review and processing. Eligible students with completed applications will receive a new I-20 recommending the Post Completion OPT. Students then mail a complete OPT application package to USCIS. The package must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the OPT I-20’s issue date. Average processing time by USCIS is 2-3 months (usually 80-90 days). Employment cannot begin until the EAD is received.

APPLICATION MATERIALS: Turn in Items A – G to International Programs & Global Engagement

A. ACADEMIC LETTER: Obtain a letter from your academic department supporting your application. The letter is used to determine a student’s eligibility to apply for Post Completion OPT in the current term (see Eligibility on the previous page). Specifically, the letter should provide the following information:

- **Undergraduate:** Confirm the semester of anticipated graduation with a statement how/why practical work experiences related to the student’s major would be beneficial before the student’s departure from the US.

- **Graduate:** Confirm the semester of anticipated graduation with a statement how/why practical work experiences related to the student’s major would be beneficial before the student’s departure from the US.

**Note:** If the applicant is not graduating in the current term, then the letter should verify the student has already completed – OR - is expected to complete all coursework required for graduation by the end of the current term – AND – has already enrolled for the Master’s Project/ Thesis/ Culminating Exam.

B. PHOTOS: 2 US Passport Photos (see description for photo measurements). List your name lightly on the back.

C. I-765 IMMIGRATION FORM: Complete the USCIS Form I-765 items 1-15 in black ink or typed from online (http://www.uscis.gov/i-765) as follows:

- Ensure you are using the form that expires 5/31/2020 (seen on upper right and lower left)

  PART 1:
  - #1a: Mark “Initial permission to accept employment”

  PART 2:
  - #1a -1c: Type your name as shown on your I-20.
  - #2a-4c: Type previous names you have used. (i.e. name change on your passport, name change due to marriage, etc.)
  - #5a: Enter the mailing address where you would like your OPT card mailed. Use “In Care Of Name” if being sent to an individual other than yourself.
  - #6: Yes or No. If No, provide physical address in 7a-7d
  - #8: You may have an A-Number if you previously had an EAD or other immigration benefit. Check your previous EAD, if any.
  - #9: You may have a USCIS Online Account Number if you have previously filed an application or petition using the USCIS online filing system.
  - #10: Check One
  - #11: Check One
  - #12: Check One
  - #13a: Yes or No. If No, skip to #14. If Yes, complete 13b-17b. USCIS will provide your information to the Social Security Administration and apply for a Social Security number on your behalf.
  - #18a-18b: Include all countries of citizenship
  - #19a-20: Provide birth information
  - #21a: I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number
  - #21b: Current passport number
  - #21c: Travel document Number (if any). Most students will not have this.
  - #21d: Country that issued your passport
  - #21e: Expiration date of passport
  - #22: Use the date on your I-94. If you do not know, make an estimate.
  - #23: Refer to your I-94 Port of Entry. This is the city where you entered the US and went through passport control.
  - #24: “F-1 Student”
  - #25: “F-1 Student”
  - #26: Your SEVIS Number is found on the top of your current I-20
  - #27: Use code (e) (3) (B) for Post Completion OPT.
  - #28-31b: Leave Blank

PART 3
- #1: Check this box
- #1b-2: Leave Blank
• #3-5: Complete your contact information
• #7a-b: SIGN AND DATE IN BLACK INK INSIDE OF THE BOX. DO NOT CROSS OVER THE BOX
PART 4-5: Leave Blank
PART 6: Use this page to include additional information, if necessary.

D. I-765 APPLICATION FEE: $410.00. Check or money order payable to “US Department of Homeland Security”.

E. SIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS DURING OPT FORM

F. IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS: Prepare copies of the documents.**
- All previous I-20s in chronological order
- Your current valid passport
- Your most recent visa
- Your I-94. Go online to https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94 to obtain your current I-94 printout.
- Previous Employment Authorization Document (if you have applied with USCIS previously)

**Note: If you are currently out of state and cannot submit your package in person, please mail copies of the documents listed in section G. Do not send original I-20, passport, visa, or EAD documents.

G. REQUESTED OPT DATES: Applicants must select their preferred OPT starting date.
- Earliest starting date: The Saturday after final exams end in the current semester.
- Latest starting date: Up to 60 days after the Friday of final exam week in the current semester.

The actual starting date that will be approved on the EAD permit will be based on the student’s requested starting date and the date USCIS approves the OPT (whichever date is later). For example:

APPLICATION IPGE PROCESSING
Your advisor in International Programs & Global Engagement will review your application materials to ensure the application is complete and correct. If the application is complete, and the student meets all eligibility requirements for Post Completion OPT, then the IPGE Advisor will issue a new I-20 recommending the Post Completion OPT, listing the requested start date and USCIS recommendation. A package copying appropriate forms will be provided to the student for mailing. Application packages must be mailed and received by USCIS within 30 days of processing by IPGE.

If you live in: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, then mail your package to:

**USPS regular mail:** US Phoenix Lockbox
USCIS
PO Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

Express Mail/Courier (UPS, FedEx, DHL)
USCIS
ATTN: AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

If you live in: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia

**USPS regular mail:** US Dallas Lockbox
USCIS
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

Express Mail/Courier (UPS, FedEx, DHL)
USCIS
ATTN: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy 121 Business, Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067
WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU SUBMIT YOUR OPT APPLICATION?

USCIS Service Center staff will process your application payment within 1-2 weeks. They will also send an application Receipt Notice by mail within 3-4 weeks. The Receipt Notice confirms the date your application was received by USCIS, and provides applicants with a Case Number.

Applications for Post Completion OPT are usually processed within 80 - 90 days of receipt. This is an average processing time. Early applications can be faster; applications submitted later in the term may take longer than 90 days due to a higher volume of applications arriving at the service center.

While waiting for the application to be approved, students are allowed to:

- Search for practical training opportunities related to their field of study and at an appropriate professional level
- Interview for appropriate positions
- Accept an offer of employment pending OPT approval.

However, students are NOT authorized to begin any employment until after they have been approved for OPT, and have the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) in their possession. Online confirmation of OPT approval is NOT work authorization. Once students receive their EAD card, the dates listed on the card are the dates of authorized employment.

OPT Application Photos - 2 Photos Required

The Optional Practical Training Application requires 2 US Passport Photos to be submitted. I-765 instructions state photos must have been taken within 30 days of filing the form.

REQUIREMENTS: 2 US Passport sized photos required with the following

Make sure the photo presents the full head from the top of the hair to the bottom of the chin. Center the head with the frame.
The person in the photo should have a neutral expression and be facing the camera.

Paper Photo Head Size Template

Photo must be 2 inches by 2 inches
The height of the head (top of hair to bottom of chin) should measure 1 inch to 1 3/8 inches (25 mm - 35 mm)
Make sure the eye height is between 1 1/8 inches to 1 3/8 inches (28 mm – 35 mm) from the bottom of the photo.

The applicant should lightly print his or her name on the back of the photos with a pencil or marker.

***Starting November 1, 2016, eye glasses are no longer allowed in photos***