



OPT Checklist

1. Completed G-1450 payment form or Check/Money Order for \$410.
 - a. Make Check/Money Order Payable to: US Department of Homeland Security.
2. Completed I-765 form.
3. Copy of Passport showing expiration date and most recent VISA
4. Copy of I-94 Travel Record.
5. 2 passport style photos with your name written on the back in pencil
6. Previous EAD cards (if applicable).
7. Copy of I-20 with OPT Request.

Mail Completed Packets to:

USCIS Chicago Lockbox

U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS
PO Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680

FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:

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

OPT FAQ's

Who is Eligible for OPT?

F-1 Visa students who have been enrolled for full time for at least a year and are graduating either from an undergraduate or graduate program.

When Can I apply for OPT?

90 days before graduation and up to 60 days after graduation.

Do I need a Job offer before I apply for OPT?

No, you do not need a job. However, the job that you do find MUST be related to your CURRENT program. You cannot file OPT based on previously earned degrees.

Can I have more than 12 months of OPT?

No. Not unless you qualify for a STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) program. Talk to your international counselor if you have questions about STEM OPT.

If I apply for OPT and then decide not to use it, can I get my time back?

You must cancel your OPT request before your EAD card is issued. Otherwise your OPT will be considered used.

What is the difference between OPT and CPT?

Curricular practical training is a paid internship during enrollment that directly relates to the major. Occupational Practical Training is employment for one year after the completion of a degree related to the major.

Can I change my OPT to CPT?

No.

What If I can't get a job or become unemployed?

You cannot accrue more than 90 days of unemployment at a time during your 12 month OPT period. Any time that is spent unemployed cannot be added to the end of your OPT, it is time LOST. After the 91st day of unemployment your status will end, and you will be required to leave the country.

When do I have to leave the country after my OPT is completed?

You have 60 days to leave the country unless:

- You file for a change of status (i.e. employment visa).
- You begin a new degree program.

Who do I report my employment information to?

You must report your employment to your international counselor.

Tips to Prevent Application Delays

1. Apply EARLY

- a. The OPT acceptance process can take between 60 to 90 days. So it is best that you apply within the 90 pre graduation window.
- b. You are not allowed to work until your EAD card arrives. Any employment that is not under the CPT program or OPT program is considered unauthorized work and will result in termination of your I-20 and immediate deportation.

2. Check your application for completeness

- a. If your application is missing any signatures or information it WILL be mailed back to you. If you continue to miss information and your application keeps getting sent back to you then this will delay processing and could result in your application being rejected.

3. Make sure to mail off your application within 30 timeline.

- a. You have **30 days** from the date your OPT is requested in SEVIS for your application to be received by USCIS in order for your application to be considered for acceptance.
- b. If your application is rejected and sent back to you that counts against your 30 days.
- c. If your application is received outside of the 30-day timeline your application will be denied.

4. Make sure you have ALL items included from the OPT checklist

- a. Your application will be sent back to you if you do not have all of the items on your checklist.

5. Make sure your Passport is Valid

- a. Your Student Visa can be expired, however, your passport must be valid.

6. Make sure the SEVIS ID on your VISA matches the SEVIS ID on your I-20.

- a. The School listed on your F-1 Visa can be different if you transferred schools, however, you must have the same SEVIS ID.