Optional Practical Training

OPT Overview

Temporary employment for F-1 degree seeking students after completing all degree requirements for the program listed on their I-20

12 months of training, internship, self-employment or employment

Application Dates (Post Completion)

Earliest date: 90 days before your program completion date (Listed on I-20)
Latest date: 60 days after your program completion date

Employment Start Date (Post Completion)

You can select a Start Date between:
Earliest - Your program completion date
Latest - 60 days after your program completion

You cannot begin OPT Employment until:
1. You have received your approved OPT EAD card
2. Until your OPT start date listed on your EAD card.

Application Procedure

1. Complete the following documents:
   (For the Office of International Student Services only)
   - Optional Practical Training Eligibility Form
   - Advisor Recommendation Form

   (For USCIS)
   - Check or Money Order for $410, made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”
   - Two passport-style color photographs (must be taken within 30 days of your application)
   - Form I-765 – type and print, then sign in blue ink (download latest version from uscis.gov)
   - Form G-1145 – Permission for email/text notification (download from uscis.gov)
   - Original OPT I-20 (it will be issued for you at application meeting with your ISSS advisor)
   - Copies of all past I-20’s (First Page and Travel Signature Page)
   - Printed copy of I-94 (print out under proof of visitor status: i94.cbp.dhs.gov)
   - Copy of the biographical photo page in your passport
   - Copy of your F-1 visa

   If applicable:
   - Copy of any previous EAD card(s) – (front and back)
   - Thesis/Dissertation Student Acknowledgment Statement

2. Schedule an appointment with an International Student Advisor (iss@umsl.edu). We will review all documents. You will receive an email when your OPT I-20 is ready for pick up. Please note that you need to attend OPT workshop in the semester of your graduation prior to making an OPT Application appointment.
3. Mail your application to USCIS. USCIS must receive your application within 30 days of the date your new I-20 was issued:

For U.S. Postal Service:          For express mail:
USCIS
PO Box 21281                   USCIS
Phoenix, AZ 85036            Attn: AOS
                               1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S
                               Suite 100
                               Phoenix, AZ 85034

The USCIS standard OPT processing time is 60 - 90 days.

While on OPT

Reporting Status: All changes must be reported to SEVP Portal within 10 days of the change – after your OPT is approved you will receive email from SEVP to create an account and set a password. More information can be found here: studyinthestates.dhs.gov

- Residential or mailing address
- Company name
- Company address
- Your job title
- Start date
- End date (if known)
- Full time/part time

Job Requirements while on OPT:

No more than 90 days of unemployment

MUST be employed in a position directly related to the program of study listed on your I-20

Acceptable employment types:
- Regular paid employment
- Multiple short term employers
- Self-employment
- Volunteer/unpaid internship

While on OPT, you must carry the following when traveling abroad:
- I-20 endorsed in the last 6 months
- Valid F-1 stamp in passport
- Passport valid at least 6 months after date of entry
- Employment letter showing you will return to resume employment
Optional Practical Training Eligibility Form

Section 1

Name: ____________________________  Student Number: __________________
Email: ____________________________  Phone Number: __________________
Alternate Email: ____________________  Degree Level: ___________________
Current Local Address: ____________________________
(street address and apt. #) (city) (state) (zip code)

This request is for:
☐ Full-time Post-Completion OPT
☐ Full-time Pre-Completion OPT
☐ Part-time Pre-Completion OPT (20 hours/week maximum)

I am a doctoral/thesis option student.  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Dates of employment _____/_____/______ to _____/_____/______

Section 2

1. Have you received a job offer?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
   If yes, list the start date, name and address of the company, source of how you found the job, and salary below. Also include a copy of the offer with your application.

2. Have you ever applied for Optional or Curricular Practical Training before?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
   If yes, list type and dates of authorization.

3. Will you move from your current local address within the next 3 months?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
   If yes, list your new local address if known.

4. Do you have any dependents (spouse, children) in the U.S. with you?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

5. Would you like to serve as a contact for other UMSL international students in your major who have questions about finding a job?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

6. Have you been a full time student since first gaining F-1 status?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

7. Are you on academic probation?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

8. Have you ever received a delayed (DL) or F/N grade?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
   If yes, list the semester(s) of each DL or F/N grade.

By my signature below I certify that I: 1) understand it is my responsibility to report to the Office of International Student & Scholar Services any changes to my legal name, local address, employment status and main employer within 10 days of the change; 2) I understand that I am responsible for maintaining my F-1 status while on OPT by engaging in acceptable employment that is directly related to my field of study and keeping my days of post-completion unemployment within allowed limits.

Signature ____________________________  Date (mm/dd/yyyy) ____________________________
Advisor Recommendation: Optional Practical Training

Notice to Advisors

Please complete this form and send to International Student Services in 362 SSB. For questions, please contact ISS at 314-516-5229 or iss@umsl.edu.

F-1 students may be eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT allows F-1 students to work off-campus for up to 12 months, depending on their F-1 status, academic standing, and past use of OPT time.

Doctoral and thesis option Graduate students are eligible to apply for their full-time OPT benefit once they have completed all course requirements, excluding thesis or dissertation. Doctoral or thesis option students who wish to request the full 12 months of OPT can only do so on a post-completion basis. This means that they will no longer be eligible for extensions if more time is needed to complete the dissertation. It also means that all degree requirements must be completed within the work authorization period to avoid violating their F-1 student status.

Student Name

Student Number

Student Degree Level

Major or degree program

Academic Advisor Name

This student (please check only one):

___ 1. Has completed, or is expected to complete, the course of study by the end of the semester and year indicated below.

☐ Fall Semester _______  ☐ Spring Semester _______  ☐ Summer Semester _______

(if applicable) In order to be eligible for graduation this student must resolve the following academic issues:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

___ 2. Is a doctoral or thesis option Graduate student and has completed all course requirements, excluding thesis or dissertation and is choosing to apply for post-completion OPT with the knowledge that all outstanding degree requirements must be met before the OPT period ends.

___ 3. Is a doctoral or thesis option student and has completed all course requirements, excluding thesis or dissertation and is requesting a work period that will end before the completion of studies.

___ 4. Will be on practical training while school is in session (work must not exceed 20 hours per week). The practical training sought by this student is directly related to his or her field of study, commensurate with his or her educational level, and recommended by this department.

___ 5. Will take an annual vacation semester during the summer semester, and intends to register for the following semester. The practical training sought by this student is directly related to his or her field of study, commensurate with his or her educational level, and recommended by this department.

Advisor Signature ___________________________________________ Date __________________________

International Student & Scholar Services | 362 SSB, 1 University Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63121
314.516.5229 | iss@umsl.edu
To be completed by student

**Thesis Pending Acknowledgement Statement**
(if applicable)

Changes to the federal regulations regarding Optional Practical Training (OPT) have added restrictions to full-time OPT for doctoral and thesis option students.

**Who should complete this form?**
Doctoral or masters thesis students who are requesting post-completion OPT that will begin before their thesis or dissertation is complete.

Please read the statement below and sign this page. Submit this form to ISS at 362 SSB.

- I understand that I can no longer request my full 12 months of OPT as pre-completion. If I choose to use all of my work authorization benefit at this time, it will be granted on a post-completion basis.
- I understand that by requesting my full 12 months of OPT before finishing my degree, I am asking the international student advisor to shorten my program end date to a day that is prior to the OPT start date I am requesting.
- I understand that by shortening my program end date, I will no longer be eligible for extensions of my I-20 document.
- I also understand that this means I must finish my degree before the end of my OPT authorization period.
- I understand that by choosing this option, I am limiting myself to finishing all degree requirements within a fixed amount of time that could be shortened if I am unable to find appropriate employment.
- I understand that in order to maintain my F-1 status and keep my OPT authorization period valid, I must not exceed 90 days of unemployment. This 90 days is a cumulative maximum that applies to the entire 12 month OPT period.
- I understand that if I exceed 90 days of unemployment and my degree requirements have not been satisfied, I am considered to be out of status and must either apply for reinstatement, or leave the U.S. to finish my degree.
- I understand that if I do fall out of status while I am on my 12 months of full-time OPT, I cannot automatically return to being a full-time student in order to finish my degree.

I have read and understand the risks outlined above and still choose to apply for 12 months of full-time OPT.

Name: ___________________________ Student Number: ____________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________

Please Print