



OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) - POST-COMPLETION

Instructions and Application

1. Definition of OPT

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is defined as “*temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major of study*”. You may be authorized up to 12 months of OPT per educational level. If a student begins a new academic program at a higher level, the student is then eligible for another 12 months of OPT. For example, if a student completed OPT after a Bachelor’s degree, and then enrolled for a Master’s program, the student is eligible to apply for OPT after completing the master’s program.

Please Note: Students in certain qualifying majors may be eligible for an additional 17 months of OPT in addition to the regular 12 month OPT. Those majors are: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). For more information please refer to the OPT 17 month Extension Instructions for STEM Degree Holders on our website.

2. Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for OPT you must:

- Be enrolled for at least one full academic year **and**
- Be in valid F-1 status **and**
- Be in good academic standing **and**
- Seek employment in your area of study

A job offer is not required to apply for OPT, but the student is expected to work or be actively seeking employment in the student’s area of study after the Employment Authorization Card (EAD) is issued.

3. Types of OPT

- Pre-completion OPT (Before completion of studies): Limited to 20 hours a week (part-time) while school is in session and student still has coursework to complete, or full-time during summer vacations. (For more information, please inquire with the International Student Advisor)
- Post-completion OPT (After completion of studies): is granted for full-time use only.

4. Application Procedure

All students are required to attend an OPT workshop prior to completing the application. These workshops are held during the semester and dates and times are listed on the website and also available from our office. After attending the workshop follow the steps below to apply for OPT.

Step One - Complete the following and submit to International Services to request your OPT I-20:

- Optional Practical Training Request Form (NOT the I-765 form)

Step Two – When you bring the request form to International Services, schedule an appointment with Beth Calamia Scheckel. Your appointment will be approximately one week after submitting the Optional Practical Training Request Form.

Bring the following documents with you to the appointment:

- Completed Form I-765. The form is given out during the OPT workshop and is also available at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765.pdf>
 - For post-completion OPT enter (c) (3) (B) in the brackets under item 16.

- Under item #3, use only the International Services address. When we receive your Receipt Notice and the EAD card we will notify you by email/phone. Make sure you provide us with a working email/phone number. The address is:

C/O Montclair State University
22 Normal Avenue, Montclair NJ 07043

- When completing the Form I-765 make sure to **print legibly**. Sign the form using **blue** ink, in between the signature lines.
- **Photocopies** of all pages of previous I-20s issued by MSU and all other schools attended (make clear copies making sure that any date/visa stamps on the I-20s are clearly visible). Do not staple the copies.
- Check in the amount of **\$380.00** payable to:
 - U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
 - **Photocopy** of any previous Employment Authorization cards, if applicable
 - **Photocopy** of Biographical page(s) of passport - page(s) with your name, date of birth, picture, and passport expiration
 - **Photocopy** of I-94 card- front and back (make clear copy making sure the date/visa stamp is clearly visible)
 - **Photocopy** of F-1 visa stamp, or **photocopy** of change of status approval notice
 - **Photocopy** of MSU ID card showing your picture
 - Two color pictures passport style – see instructions on reverse side of page

On the back of the pictures, write in pencil, your full name and your SEVIS ID number

Step Three – Once you have received your OPT I-20 and the advisor at International Services has checked all the documents for accuracy, mail the documents by Certified mail through the Post Office or by FedEx to:

<p>For U.S. Postal Service deliveries:</p> <p>USCIS PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266</p>	<p>For FedEx deliveries:</p> <p>USCIS Attn: AOS 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</p>
--	--

Be sure to make a complete copy of your application for your records (including the check) before mailing the application.

5. OPT Filing Window

A student applying for post-completion OPT will be able to file up to 90 days prior to program completion date.

6. Selecting Dates for OPT

If you are applying for post-completion OPT, you are given a 60 day grace period following the completion of your studies. Completion of studies is the last day of finals. (Last day of finals for fall 2010 semester is December 20, 2010)

Your OPT beginning date **must** be between the date you completed studies and the end of 60 days following completion of studies.

For example, if you complete studies on December 20, 2010, then the last day that you may request to start your OPT will be February 18, 2011. If you have previously used any OPT, then please check with an International Student Advisor for your beginning and ending dates.

7. Points to Remember

- Once you mail the application, our office, International Services, will receive a Receipt Notice informing us that USCIS has received your application. We will inform you by email that we have received the notice and you can pick it up from our office. You can check the status of your application on-line by visiting www.uscis.gov (follow the link 'Case Status & Processing Dates'). You will need to enter the Receipt Number from the notice (use the EAC number located on the top left of the receipt notice).
- Once the application is mailed to USCIS it is not possible to change the start and end dates of the OPT.
- Upon approval, the Employment Authorization Card (EAD) will be mailed to International Services. We will inform you by email that your card has arrived and you can pick it up from our office.
- You will require a valid Social Security Number (SSN) to work in the US. If you do not have a Social Security Number contact an International Student Advisor.
- If you are working on campus, you must stop on campus employment by final exams (even if you get a letter from payroll stating otherwise).
- You have a 60 day grace period after the end of your OPT. You are not allowed to work during this 60 day grace period. During this time you may prepare to leave the US, transfer to a new degree program and get a new I-20, or change your status. If you are transferring to another degree program at Montclair State University or at another institution, you must contact an International Student Advisor to obtain a new I-20 or to get your SEVIS record released to another institution. **Note: This must be done within the 60 day grace period. After that your SEVIS record is automatically terminated.**
- Once OPT has been granted you cannot cancel it.
- If during your OPT you choose to begin a new degree program full-time, whether at Montclair State University or at another institution, you must obtain an I-20 for that degree program. You will lose your remaining OPT time. You are required to cease employment upon receiving a new I-20 for the new degree program, or when your SEVIS record is released from Montclair State University to another institution.

8. Types of Employment allowed while on OPT

All OPT employment must be in a job that is **related to the student's degree program**. This employment may include:

- Paid employment - Students may work part time or full time in their field of study
 - Multiple employers – Students may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be in their field of study
 - Short-term multiple employers (performing artists) – Students, such as musicians and other performing artists may work for multiple short term employers (gigs). The student must maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration.
 - Work for hire – 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.
 - Self-employed business owner – Students on OPT may start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, the student must work full time. The student must be able to prove that he or she has the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to the student's field of study.
 - Employment through an agency – 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.
- Unpaid employment – Student may work as volunteers or unpaid interns, where this does not violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week for students on post-completion OPT. These students must be able to provide evidence from the employer that the student worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment.

9. Reporting Requirements while on OPT

During post-completion OPT you are still considered to be in F-1 status. This means that you are required to report to International Services:

- Any change of your name or your address within 10 days.
- Name and address of your employer
- Any interruption of employment or a change in employer name and address

Visit www.montclair.edu/international and complete the on-line 'OPT Student Report Form'

10. Reporting Changes in Employment to International Services

Students are encouraged to report changes in employment to International Services as soon as possible. It is recommended that students report changes within 10 business days of the change to avoid situations where it may be determined the student is out of status. The following table suggests the best way to report employment or a change in employment:

Situation	Report
New Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name of the employer• Start date of employment• Mailing address for the employer
Change to a new job	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name of the previous employer• Ending date of the employment with the previous employer• Start date of employment• Mailing address for the employer
Multiple short-term gigs in one period with less than 10 days between gigs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report at the beginning of the first gig and indicate "Multiple short term gigs"
Work for hire (start)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate "Self-employed work for hire"• Indicate the start date of the contract
Work for hire (ending more than 10 days between the end of one contract and the beginning of another contract or a new job)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate "Self-employed work for hire"• Indicate you have no current contract• Ending date of the last contract worked
More than 10 days of unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate "unemployed"• Ending date of last job
Self-employed business owner (start)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate "Self-employed business owner"• Indicate date went into business
Self-employed business owner (end)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate "Self-employed business owner"• Indicate date business closed or student no longer worked for the business full time
Student decided to exit the United States and complete his or her F-1 status prior to the end date of OPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate "Completing OPT and exiting the United States"• Date of exit

11. Limited Periods of Unemployment to Maintain Status

During post-completion OPT F-1 status is dependent upon employment. Students may have up to 90 days of unemployment. Each day during the period when OPT authorization begins and ends that the student does not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment.

12. Travel during OPT

If you wish to travel abroad during OPT you must have the following documents with you in order to reenter the US:

1. Valid OPT I-20 which must be signed by an International Student Advisor at International Services
2. Valid Employment Authorization Card (EAD)
3. Valid passport
4. Valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport
5. Valid employment letter. This letter from your employer must be on company letterhead and must state type of work, salary information, statement that the employment is temporary, and that the student will be employed after returning from travel.

If you do not have all of the documents listed above or plan to leave the US while OPT is pending, it is not advisable to travel. Contact an International Student Advisor for further guidance.

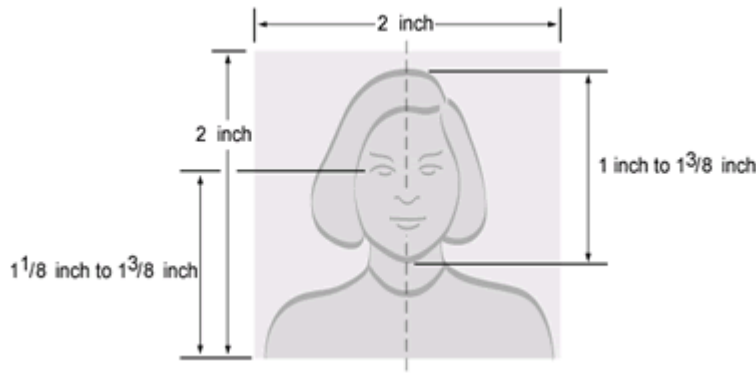
13. H-1B Cap-Gap Extension and OPT Work Authorization until October 1

Duration of F-1 student status and work authorization will be extended for a student on post-completion OPT who is the beneficiary of a timely filed H-1B petition requesting a start date of October 1 of the following fiscal year. This applies to all students, not just students in STEM majors. The extension of status and work authorization would automatically terminate upon the rejection, denial, or revocation of the H-1B petition filed on the student's behalf.

Contact International Services for to file for the H-1B Cap-Gap Extension.

14. Guidelines for Passport Style Pictures

You will need to submit two color passport style pictures with your OPT application. Make sure the pictures are in color against a plain white background or off-white background. See below examples of good passport style pictures.



Good Picture Composition



Local Photo Studio in Montclair

Photo Cullen
551 Valley Road #A
Montclair, NJ 07043
(973) 746-1234



For Office Use Only

Date received: _____ Received by: _____
Appointment Date: _____
Date entered in FSA: _____ Entered in FSA by: _____

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) REQUEST FORM

Part 1: To Be Completed by Student

Name: _____
Last Name First Name Middle Name
Email address: _____ Phone: _____
Level of Studies currently pursuing: Undergraduate _____ Graduate _____ Doctorate _____ Certificate _____
Major: _____ Concentration: _____
Are you currently a Graduate Assistant on campus? Yes _____ No _____
OPT Beginning date: _____ OPT Ending date: _____ (See section on 'Selecting Dates for OPT')

List all periods of previously authorized practical training (attach separate sheet if needed):

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)				Optional Practical Training (OPT)			
Start Date	End Date	Degree Level	Full-time/ part-time	Start Date	End Date	Degree Level	Full-time/ part-time

List all institutions attended prior to Montclair State University and attach copies of all I-20s issued to you (attach separate sheet if needed):

Name of Institution	Year attended (From – To)

By signing this form:

- I certify that the information provided is true and accurate and I understand the rules and regulations concerning Optional Practical Training.
- I understand that accruing an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during my post-completion OPT may result in a violation of the F-1 student status.
- I understand that I must report to International Services any change to my name or address, or any interruption of OPT employment within 10 days.
- I give International Services permission to open correspondence that arrives from USCIS to ensure a timely response to any queries that may arise.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Part 2: To Be Completed by Academic Advisor

The completion of this section by you is required for an international student in F-1 student status to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Please complete in full and return it to the student. If you have any questions, please contact an International Student Advisor. Thank you for your cooperation.

I anticipate that the above named student will complete all requirements for the current program of study on or about:

Please indicate year: _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Summer _____

Advisor's Name & Title _____ Advisor's Signature _____

Department _____ Telephone _____ Date _____