Optional Practical Training (OPT)

International Student & Scholar Services
Montclair State University
Outline

- What is OPT?
- Types of OPT
- Eligibility requirements
- Types of Employment allowed
- When can you apply for OPT?
- Application Process
- What happens next?
- Your responsibilities while on OPT
- Travel while on OPT
What is OPT?

- Temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major of study
- 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 eligible for another 12 months of OPT
Types of OPT

- Pre-completion OPT (before completion of studies)
- Post-completion OPT (after completion of studies)
Eligibility Requirements

Pre Completion OPT

- Limited to part-time only while school is in session
- Student still has coursework to complete
- For most students, Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a better option

Post Completion OPT

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

Note:

You do not need to have a job offer to apply for OPT

For more information, contact International Student & Scholar Services by email, intserv@montclair.edu to schedule an appointment.
Types of Employment allowed

OPT employment must be a minimum of 20 hours per week in a job that is related to your degree program.

- Paid employment
- Multiple employers
- Work for hire (commonly referred to as 1099 employment)
- Self employed business owner
- Employment through an agency
- Unpaid/volunteer work or unpaid interns (this must not violate any labor laws)
When can you apply for OPT?

Application timeline

- The earliest you can apply for OPT is 90 days before the program completion date (last day of classes)
- OPT start date must be within your 60 day grace period after the program completion date

Example:

Completion of courses for Fall 2018 is December 20, 2018 = Program Completion date

- You can choose OPT start date as early as December 21, 2018
- You can choose OPT start date as late as February 17, 2019
- End date will be one year from your start date (i.e. a January 1st start date will have a December 31st end date)
Application Process

- Request an OPT I-20
  - At least 10 business days processing time
- Pick up OPT I-20 from ISSS
- Mail your application materials to USCIS
  - After USCIS receives your application, allow approximately 90 days for processing. This process may take longer
- Receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

**Note:**

Once USCIS receives the OPT application, it is not possible to change the requested start and end dates
Request OPT I-20

- Complete the online [OPT I-20 Request Form](#)
- Upload the completed [I-765 Form](#) to the online application
OPT I-20 Request Form
OPT Application

User Home Page: Available Program Terms

To create your application, select the term and year to which you are applying. When you are ready to create the application, click on the 'Apply' button at the bottom of the page.

Available Terms

| Terms     | Request, 2018 |

Apply  Cancel
OPT Application

**Record Page (Pre-Decision)**

**Simulated User**

- **Request:** Optional Practical Training (OPT) (F-1)
- **Term/Year:** Request, 2018
- **Dates:** TBA

**Instructions**

You must complete the steps below to apply for OPT during (pre-completion or after post-completion) your studies.

1. Complete all requirements on this page, including the OPT Quiz.
2. Upload copy of completed Form I-76 under "Attached Documents*"
3. If you are applying for post-completion (after completing degree requirements) OPT, you must also send the OPT Recommendation for Post-Completion recommendation request.
4. Once all requirements are complete, based on your employment type, click Submit to have them reviewed by ISSS.

**Attached Documents**

The following files have been attached. Click the filename to download the attached document.

No documents have been attached.

You can attach documents to this record by choosing the file (pdf only) from your drive, selecting the type of document you are attaching, and clicking on the ‘Upload’ button.

**Learning Content**

Click the following to view, read, and mark these learning content pages as having been read.

- **Title:** OPT Eligibility Information
- **Completed:**

**Assessments**

Click the following to view and complete the following online assessments.

- **Title:** OPT Quiz
- **Completed:**

**Signature Documents**

Click the following to view and digitally sign important documents to indicate your agreement and understanding.

- **Title:** OPT Statement of Understanding
- **Completed:**

**Questionnaire(s)**

Click the following to view and complete the following online questionnaire(s). You may begin a questionnaire and save it for later completion, but note that you must click Submit in order for the questionnaire to be logged as complete and ready for review.

- **Title:** OPT Student Request Form
- **Completed:**

**Recommendations**

**Requests**

- **OPT Recommendation for Post-Completion (1 required)**: If you are applying for post-completion OPT authorization, your academic advisor/department head must confirm your academic progress. Please click the 'Request Electronic Recommendation' link below and search for your academic advisor/department in the Directory Lookup.
- **Request Electronic Recommendation**: 1 or more required recommendations have not yet been requested.
I-765 Form

- Complete the form by typing answers into the PDF form
- **Do not** handwrite the information on the form
- Answer all questions fully and accurately. State that an item is not applicable with “N/A”. If the answer is none, write “None”
- Once complete, print the form single sided, sign and date in **blue ink**
Form I-765

- Part 1.a. Check Initial permission to Accept Employment if this is your first OPT.
- Part 2.1.a, b, c.
  Your name as it appears on your passport and I-20
I-765

Part 2. #5.a.: (in care of)
Put the name of a trusted friend if you think you will be moving during your pending application.

5.b. Address must be valid when EAD card is sent.

• #14. If you do not have an SSN you can request one here
• #18a. Country of Citizenship
• #18b. If you are a citizenship of second country, enter that here. Or leave it blank
#24. and 25. Write F-1 Student

#27. Write (C)(3)(B)

Do not use commas.

#28 to 31. Leave blank
Part 3

Check box 1.a.
3. Telephone number
4. Mobile number
5. Email address

7.a. When signing, make sure your signature fits INSIDE the box.

Part 4. Leave blank
Any CPT and Previous OPT (at any school) Any previous SEVIS ID

• Use **Part 6. Additional Information** to provide all previously used SEVIS numbers and evidence of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.

• If you need more space than what is provided in Part 6, you may make copies of Part 6. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number to which your answer refers;
Prepare documents for mailing

- USCIS fee of $410. Check made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Payment of fee through credit card [https://www.uscis.gov/forms/fingerprints/pay-credit-card](https://www.uscis.gov/forms/fingerprints/pay-credit-card)
- Two color pictures passport style (with name and SEVIS ID written lightly in pencil on back of each photo)
- Form G-1145. To confirm receipt and obtain case number in advance of paper notification (Optional but recommended)
- Form I-765. Typed and signed in blue ink
- Photocopy of OPT I-20 that was issued by International Student & Scholar Services within the last 30 days (page 1-3). Sign the I-20 in blue
- Photocopies of all previous I-20s issued by Montclair State and all other schools attended
- Photocopy of any previous EAD card if applicable
- Photocopy of passport biographical page
- Photocopy of paper form I-94 (both sides) or electronic I-94 record
- Photocopy of F-1 visa stamp or photocopy of change of status approval notice
- Do no mail any dependents’ documents

*Application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of DATE ISSUED on page 1 of OPT I-20*
Guidelines for Passport Style Pictures

- The photos required to use for OPT application must meet the specifications of U.S. Style passport photos. For full description visit the U.S. Department of State website.
- The photos must be taken within 30 days of filing your application.
- The photos must be 2” by 2” in color against a plain white or off-white background.
Mailing OPT Application

- Prior to mailing the application packet make copies of all the documents, including the check.
- Do not staple any documents

### USCIS Mailing Addresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Express Mail (Fedex, UPS)</th>
<th>U.S. Postal Service Mail (choose priority mail option)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USCIS</td>
<td>USCIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attn: AOS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2501 S. State Hwy. 121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>PO Box 660867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suite 400</td>
<td>Dallas, TX 75266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What happens next?

- You will receive Receipt I-797 in the mail approximately 2 weeks after mailing
- If you submitted the form G-1145, then you should receive email/text earlier
- Using the receipt number you can check the status of your application at the USCIS website
- Once approved you will receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- You cannot start working unless you have the actual EAD card in hand and until the approved start date listed on the card
Your Responsibilities during OPT

1. Reporting Requirements
2. Employment Requirements
3. Traveling while on OPT
4. Applying for F-1 Visa while on OPT
Your Responsibilities during OPT

● Reporting Requirements
  ○ You must report any changes to your employment, address, and/or name within 10 days.
  ○ Complete the [OPT Student Report Form](#)

● Employment Requirements
  ○ You must work a minimum of **20 hours per week** in a position related to your field of study
  ○ You cannot exceed more than **90 days of unemployment** while on OPT.
Travel while on OPT

Traveling while on OPT

- Valid OPT I-20 which must be signed by an International Student Advisor
  - Complete the [Travel Signature Request Form](#)
- Valid Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- Valid passport. Passport must be valid six months in advance of your return date
- Valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport
- Employment Confirmation Letter from employer

**Note**

Traveling outside the U.S. while OPT is pending is not recommended
Travel while OPT is pending

Travel after program completion, but before EAD is received:

- There is a higher risk associated with travel and return while your OPT application is pending. If there are problems with your application, you may not be able to respond to USCIS in a timely manner, which could delay processing.
- If your OPT application is denied while outside the U.S., you will not be able to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status.
Applying for F-1 visa while on OPT

If you are traveling abroad and your F-1 visa has expired, you must obtain a new F-1 visa in your home country before returning to the U.S. For the visa interview take the following documents:

- Valid passport (must be valid six months in advance of your return to U.S.)
- Valid OPT I-20 with travel signature from the advisor at International Student & Scholar Services
- EAD Card
- Job offer/confirmation of job in your field of study
- Evidence of sufficient funds