

## OPT Checklist

Step 1: Complete and submit the following to the International Student Center (ISC)

- Optional Practical Training Request Form

*If eligible, DSO certifies in SEVIS and prints a new Form I-20 with OPT recommendation.*

Step 2: Upon DSO approval, submit the following documents:

- Original Form I-765 Please download the most current form at <http://uscis.gov>. Your signature should NOT touch any line and must be handwritten (not electronic). Make a copy for your record.
- A personal check or money order made payable to "Department of Homeland Security." Please check the USCIS website (<http://uscis.gov>) for the current filing fee.
- 2 passport type photos. Print your name legibly on back of each photo.
- A copy of new Form I-20 (all 3 pages) with OPT endorsement on page 2. **Note:** Must send within 30 days of I-20 creation date or your case will be denied.
- A copy of passport (identity and expiration date)
- A copy of I-94 card. Print a copy here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home#section>
- A copy of all other I-20s issued to you (if applicable)

Mail to: USCIS (Attn: I-765 C03)  
P.O. Box 805373  
Chicago, IL 60680-5374

**For Express mail:** USCIS - Attn: I-765 C03 (Box 805373)  
131 South Dearborn – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60680-5374

**\*Mail Certified & Return Requested from US Post Office**

Step 3: Processing Period for the OPT Application:

- Receipt Notice (Form I-797):** After you submit the OPT application to USCIS, you will receive a confirmation of receipt (Form I-797). You can track your case status online at <http://uscis.gov> by using a case number on your Form I-797. Please bring your Form I-797 to ISC so that we can make a copy.
- Address/Name Changes:** Any changes in address/name must be reported to ISC immediately. While your application is pending, you also need to notify the address change to USCIS. You should include a copy of your Form I-797 in any correspondence with USCIS.

Step 4: Approval

- EAD Card:** Bring this in to ISC, so we can make a copy.  
**Note:** Employment is permitted only after you finally receive the EAD card and only during the period specified on the card. If you fail to complete your degree requirements, you cannot start your employment until/unless you complete the requirements.
- SEVP Portal:** You will receive an email from SEVP to sign into the Portal. Use this to update your address and employment information directly.
- Employment:** You must report the name and address of the company of where you will be working to SEVP or ISC. You have 90 days to report this information to SEVP or ISC.
- Denial:** In the situation that your OPT is not approved by USCIS, please speak to an F-1 Advisor for options as your status may be affected.

### **IMPORTANT:**

- If you transfer to another school, your OPT will be terminated.
- After your EAD expires, you have up to 60 days to 1) leave the U.S., 2) transfer to another school, or 3) file an extension/change of nonimmigrant status application.
- Traveling outside of the U.S., make sure to have the following documents: a valid passport, a valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport (except Canadian citizens), an I-20 endorsed for reentry within the last six months, a valid EAD card, evidence of employment such as a job offer or employment verification letter.  
**Note:** Traveling outside of the U.S. while your OPT application is pending is not recommended. You may not be permitted to re-enter the U.S. Come to ISC before you make any travel plans!
- **Health Insurance:** You will not be automatically enrolled in health insurance while on OPT (even if you sign up for a class and you are charged the amount through Admissions). If you need health insurance, please come to ISC and pay for it manually by filling out the payment form.

**NOTE:** You need to have the work permit, Employment Authorization Document (EAD), from USCIS prior to beginning employment along with a social security number. OPT is automatically terminated when you transfer to another school or begin study at another educational level.

09/14/2021