Pratt | OIA OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Information & Guide for F-1 Students

2020

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Introduction

Optional Practical Training is an F-1 student benefit granted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). **It allows you to work off campus in a job related to your major. It is meant to supplement your academic experience with practical experience.** There are various types of employment you may accept while on OPT.

Types of Employment

Regular paid: Employment for at least 20 hours per week.

Multiple employers: You work as many hours as you'd like. Remember to keep a diary of where and who you've worked for as well as the dates you've worked for them.

Payment by multiple short-term employers: Artists may work for multiple short-term employers. You should maintain a list of all employment, including dates and duration.

Work for hire: This is commonly referred to as "1099 Employment"where an individual performs a service based on a contract. You should keep a record of the length of each contract as well as the name and contact information for each contracting company.

Self-employed business owner: You must have the proper business licenses and you should consult with an accountant familiar with non-immigrant visas.

Employment by an agency: You must keep proof that you worked at least an average of 20 hours per week while employed by an agency.

Volunteers or unpaid interns: You may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern provided that you are not violating any labor laws. You should also keep a diary of when and how many hours you've worked.

Eligibility and Duration

To be eligible for Optional Practical Training, you must document that:

1) You are currently in VALID F-1 STATUS

2) You have been a FULL-TIME STUDENT for at least ONE FULL ACADEMIC YEAR (two consecutive semesters)

Eligibility and Duration

Optional Practical Training may be used during any of the following situations (or a combination of the following situations):

Pre-Completion OPT:

- During the semester (up to 20 hours per week)
- During annual vacation periods (summer and winter breaks, you can work full time)
- For graduate students only: After completion of all course requirements for the degree, while working on the thesis or dissertation (part time or full time)
- Note that pre-completion OPT is different from CPT.

Post-Completion OPT:

- After completion of study

Eligibility and Duration

Please note the differences below between Pre-Completion and Post-Completion OPT for students who have finished all degree requirements and who are working on their thesis or dissertation.

Pre-Completion OPT

- Unemployment is not counted
- Cannot apply for the 24-month STEM extension
- Not eligible for the H-1B Cap-Gap extension
- Must apply for Post-Completion OPT if employment will continue after your current period of authorized

Pre-Completion OPT

Post-Completion OPT

- Unemployment is counted (you are only allowed an aggregate of 90 days of unemployment during OPT)
- Must work full-time or volunteer for more than 20 hours per week
- Part-time employment is anything between 0-20 hours (so work more than 20 hours in total each week)
- Eligible for the H-1B Cap-Gap extension if you completed studies in spring semester
- Eligible for STEM extension of 24 months if you are in specific majors

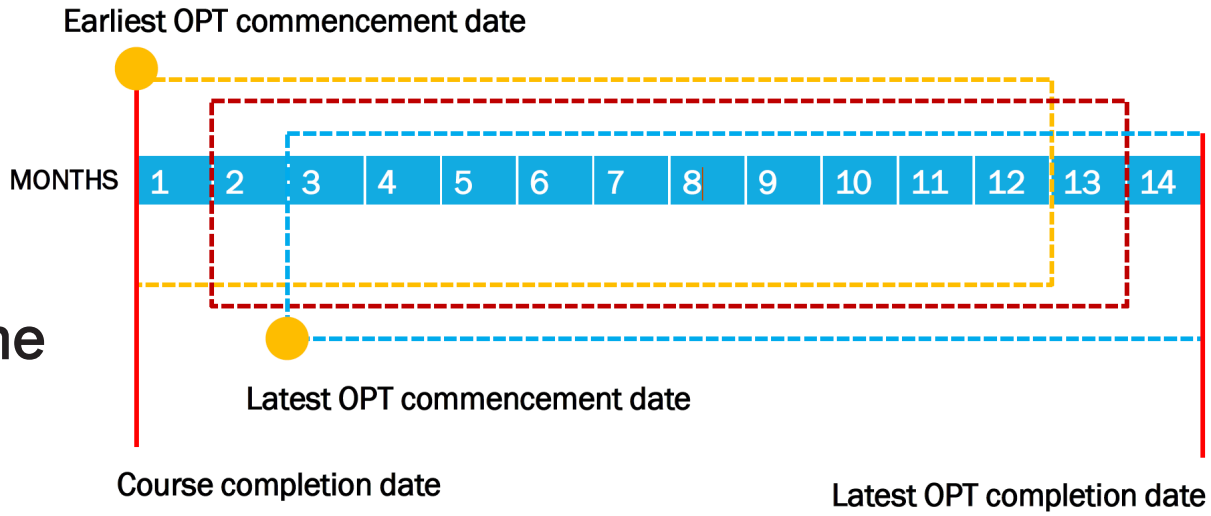
Eligibility and Duration

Optional Practical Training may be authorized for a total of **12 months of full-time OPT,** which must be completed within 14 months following the completion of your course of study.

DHS regulations read that OPT **will end no later than 14 months** from your completion date. This does not mean that the OPT will last for 14 months. It means that if your studies were completed by May 12, 2020, the OPT must end no later than July 10, 2020. Therefore, the OPT commencement day can be as early as the day after the semester officially ends and as late as 60 days after the official completion date.

Example:
Course completion date: May 12, 2020
Earliest OPT commencement date: May 13, 2020 ending May 12, 2021
Latest OPT commencement date : July 11, 2020 ending July 10, 2021

12 Months of Full-Time OPT Time Range

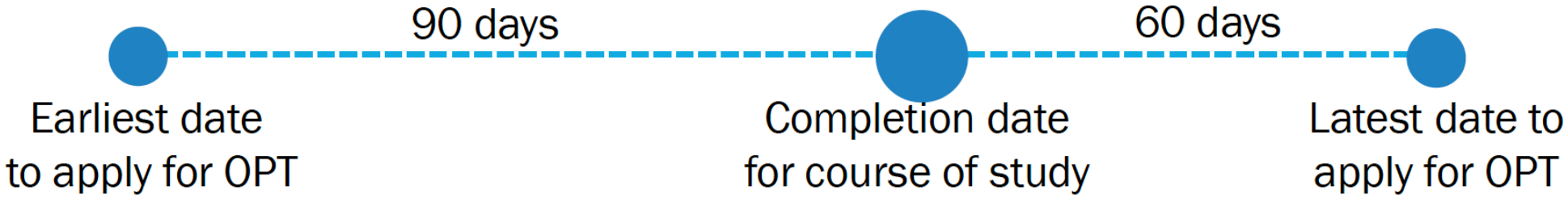


When to Apply

You can apply for OPT **up to 90 days before the "course of studies completion date". You can also apply up to 60 days after the "course of studies completion date"**.

However, it is in your best interest to apply as early as possible. Current practice has been that students who apply later in the process, lose as many as 5 months of their OPT. Each semester, OIA determines the last suggested date for you to apply. Although students have more time to apply, we have adjusted the suggested application deadline in effort to insure students receive all 12 months of OPT.

USCIS must receive your application no later than 60 days after your completion date. When you apply for OPT, the I-20 is updated (Program of Study section) to reflect the exact completion date of that particu-lar
semester. If the OPT application is not received by the 60th day, your OPT application will be denied and there is nothing the OIA will be able to do to assist you.



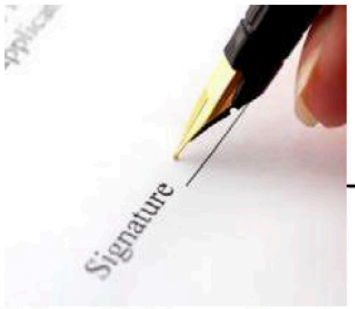
How to Apply for OPT

STEP 1: Submit the supporting documents from the OPT I-20 checklist to OIA.

STEP 2: OIA will enter your OPT recommendation into the SEVIS system, which will produce a new I-20 with the requested OPT dates.

STEP 3: After collecting your new I-20 with the OPT recommendation from the OIA, submit the documents from the OPT I-765 Application checklist for an Employment Authorization Document ("EAD Card" or "OPT Card") to the USCIS Service Center.

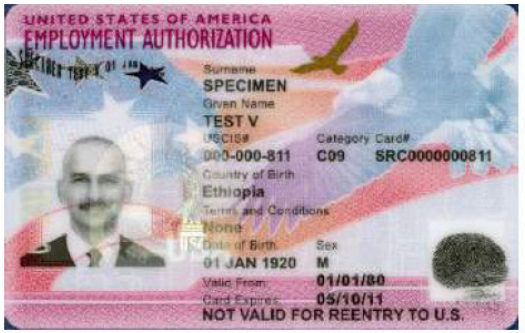
STEP 4: Receive your EAD card in the mail from the USCIS.



Bring OPT application & documents to OIA

OIA issues new I-20 with OPT recommendation

Mail documents to USCIS



Receive EAD card from USCIS

How to Apply for OPT

DO NOT STAPLE DOCUMENTS TOGETHER

OPT I-20 Checklist for OIA

1. Most Recent I-94 Record. Download your most recent I-94 record online.
2. Student Information Sheet
3. Completion of Studies Form
4. Maintaining F-1 Status sheet
5. Clean Degree Audit

How to Apply for OPT

DO NOT STAPLE DOCUMENTS TOGETHER

OPT I-765 Application Checklist for USCIS

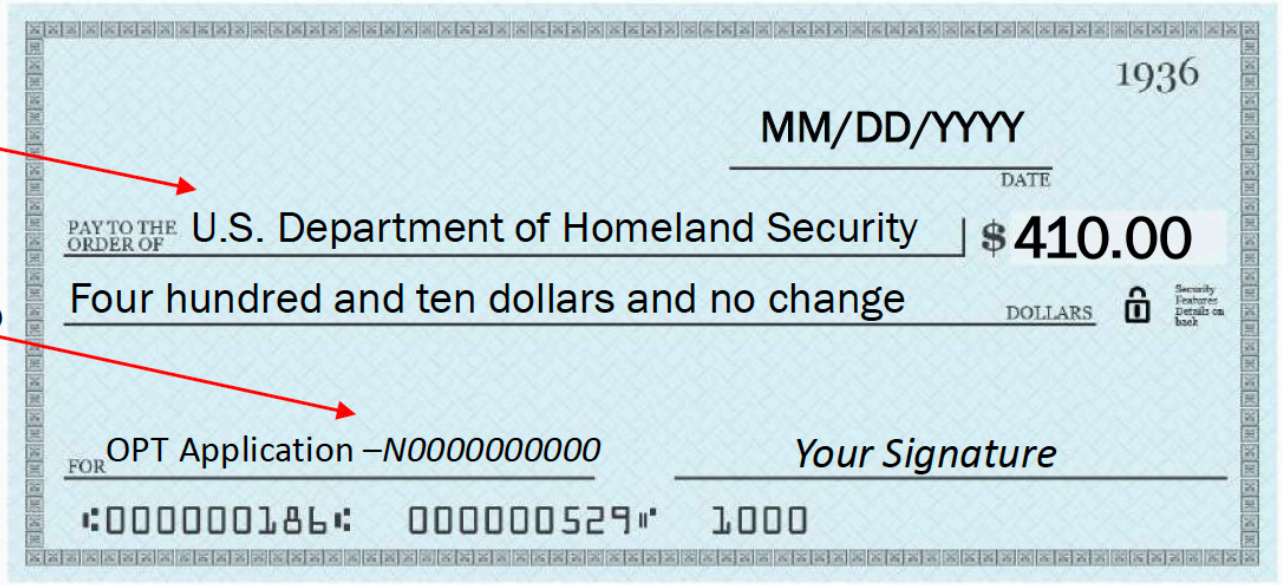
1. A personal check or money order for $410; make payable to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
2. Two passport style photos on a white/light background - write name and SEVIS ID on back
3. Form G-1145
4. OPT Cover Letter
5. Completed Form I-765 (please print this out single-sided)
6. Copies of **all I-20s** from every school you've attended in the U.S. (including high school, ESL, other U.S. institution, etc.)
7. Copy of your unexpired passport (must be valid six months into the future)
8. Most Recent I-94 Record. Download your most recent I-94 record online.
   * If you have a paper card and cannot access your online I-94 record, make a copy of the card.
9. Copy of F-1 entry visa (even if it has expired)
10. Copy of previous OPT card, if applicable

How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: Personal check or money order

Spell out U.S. Department of Homeland Security; do not use the initials "USDHS" or "DHS

ex Please make sure to write in your SEVIS ID number here *N0000000000*.



How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: 2 Passport Style Photos

2018 Update:

Please do not wear glasses in your photos. USCIS has changed their guidance and will reject applicants who are wearing glasses in their photographs.

Also make sure that your photos have never been used before, such as for your visa.

Composition Checklist

7 Steps to Successful Photos

- ☑ Frame subject with full face, front view, eyes open
- ☑ Make sure photo presents full head from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1⅜ inch (25 mm to 35 mm)
- ☑ Center head within frame (see Figure 2 below)
- ☑ Make sure eye level is between 1⅛ inch and 1⅜ inch (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
- ☑ Photograph subject against a plain white or off-white background
- ☑ Position subject and lighting so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- ☑ Encourage subject to have a natural expression

Figure 2. Head Position & Placement

Well-Composed Photos

Head Position & Background

- Head should be positioned directly facing the camera
- Photo should capture from slightly above top of hair to middle of chest
- Eyes should be open and looking at the camera
- Eyeglasses should be worn if normally used by the subject
- Glare on eyeglasses can usually be avoided with a slight upward or downward tilt of the head
- Background should be plain white or off-white
- Include headpieces if worn daily for religious purposes; they should not obscure or cast shadows on the eyes or any other part of the face

Head Not Facing Camera

Head Facing Camera

Glare on Glasses

No Glare on Glasses

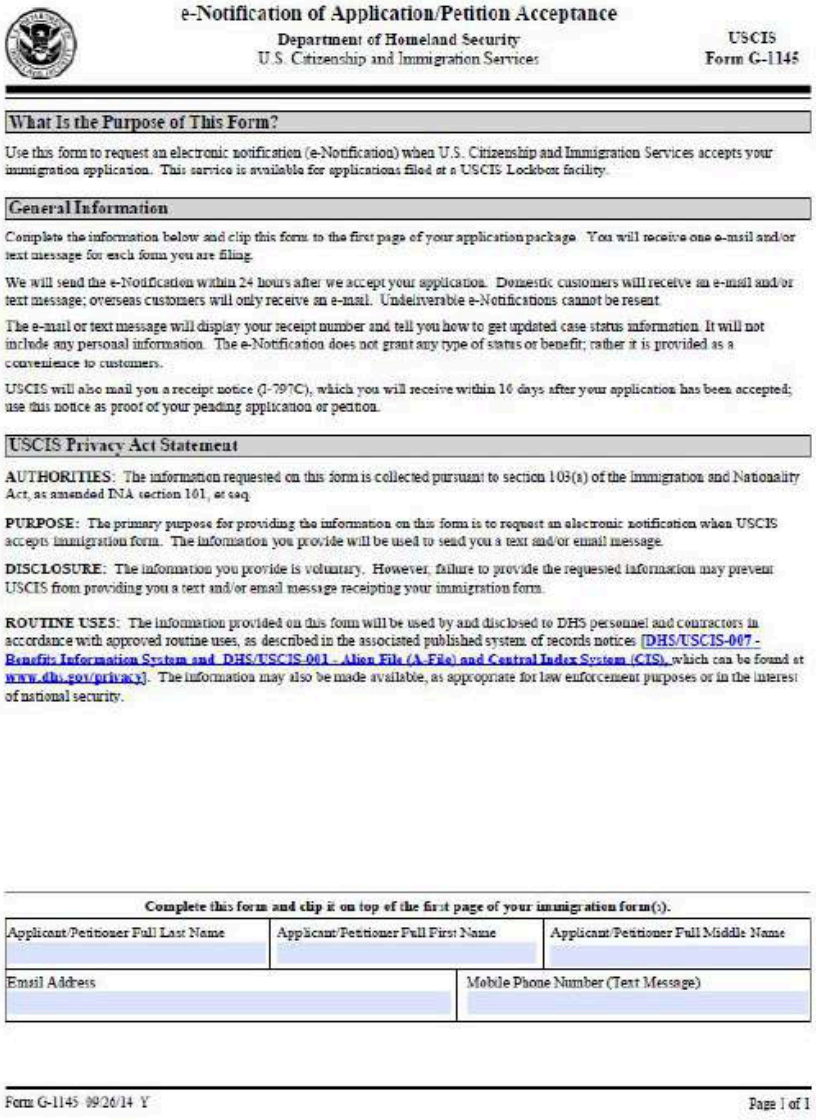
Background Not Plain

Plain Background

How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: Form G-1145

This form is a USCIS form where you can request a text message and/or email when USCIS accepts your application.



e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS
Form G-1145

What Is the Purpose of This Form?

Use this form to request an electronic notification (e-Notification) when U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services accepts your immigration application. This service is available for applications filed at a USCIS Lockbox facility.

General Information

Complete the information below and clip this form to the first page of your application package. You will receive one e-mail and/or text message for each form you are filing.

We will send the e-Notification within 24 hours after we accept your application. Domestic customers will receive an e-mail and/or text message; overseas customers will only receive an e-mail. Undeliverable e-Notifications cannot be resent.

The e-mail or text message will display your receipt number and tell you how to get updated case status information. It will not include any personal information. The e-Notification does not grant any type of status or benefit; rather it is provided as a convenience to customers.

USCIS will also mail you a receipt notice (I-797C), which you will receive within 10 days after your application has been accepted; use this notice as proof of your pending application or petition.

USCIS Privacy Act Statement

AUTHORITIES: The information requested on this form is collected pursuant to section 103(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended INA section 101, *et seq.*

PURPOSE: The primary purpose for providing the information on this form is to request an electronic notification when USCIS accepts immigration form. The information you provide will be used to send you a text and/or email message.

DISCLOSURE: The information you provide is voluntary. However, failure to provide the requested information may prevent USCIS from providing you a text and/or email message receipting your immigration form.

ROUTINE USES: The information provided on this form will be used by and disclosed to DHS personnel and contractors in accordance with approved routine uses, as described in the associated published system of records notices [DHS/USCIS-007 - Benefits Information System and DHS/USCIS-001 - Alien File (A-File) and Central Index System (CIS), which can be found at www.dhs.gov/privacy]. The information may also be made available, as appropriate for law enforcement purposes or in the interest of national security.

Complete this form and clip it on top of the first page of your immigration form(s).

Applicant/Petitioner Full Last Name	Applicant/Petitioner Full First Name	Applicant/Petitioner Full Middle Name

Email Address	Mobile Phone Number (Text Message)

Form G-1145 09/26/14 Y

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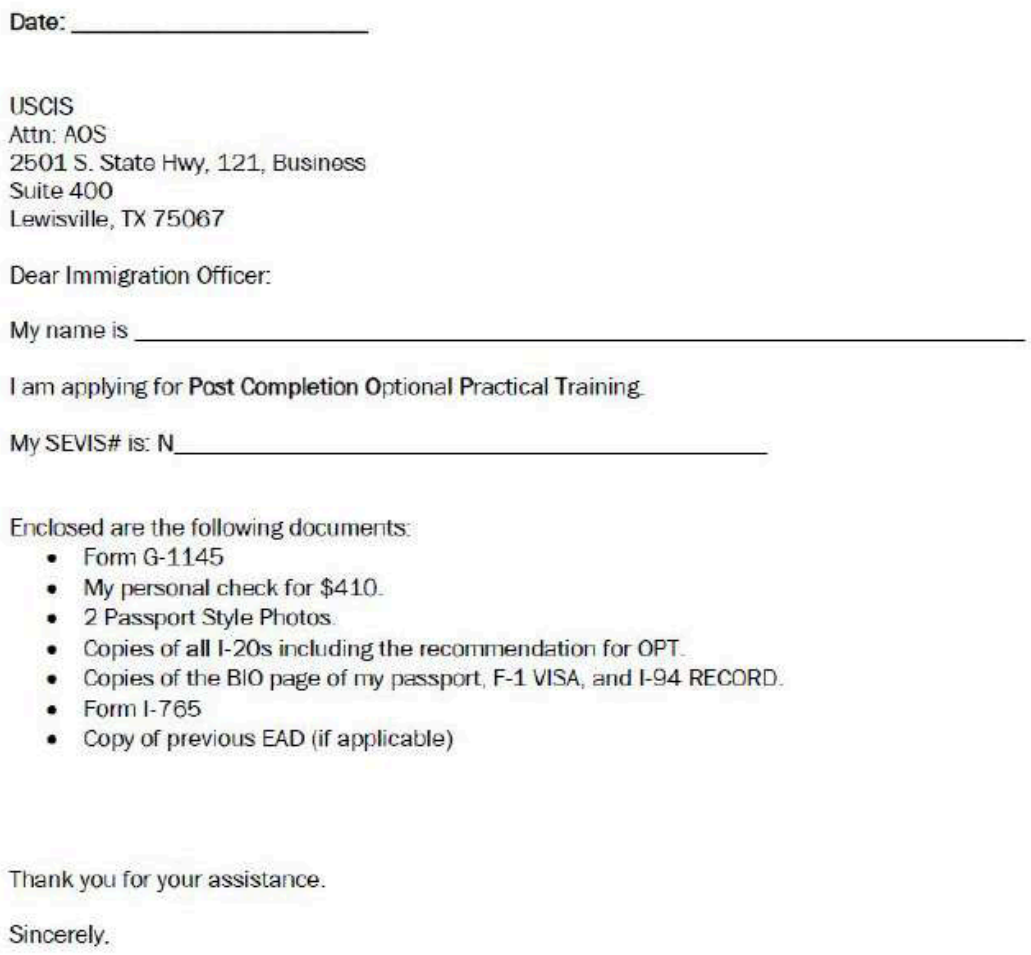
How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: OPT Cover Letter

This letter will be the cover letter on all the documents you send to USCIS.
The mailing address for all your documents is on the top of the cover letter.



Date: _____

USCIS
Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy, 121, Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

Dear Immigration Officer:

My name is _____

I am applying for **Post Completion Optional Practical Training**.

My SEVIS# is: N_____

Enclosed are the following documents:

- Form G-1145
- My personal check for $410.
- 2 Passport Style Photos.
- Copies of **all** I-20s including the recommendation for OPT.
- Copies of the BIO page of my passport, F-1 VISA, and I-94 RECORD.
- Form I-765
- Copy of previous EAD (if applicable)

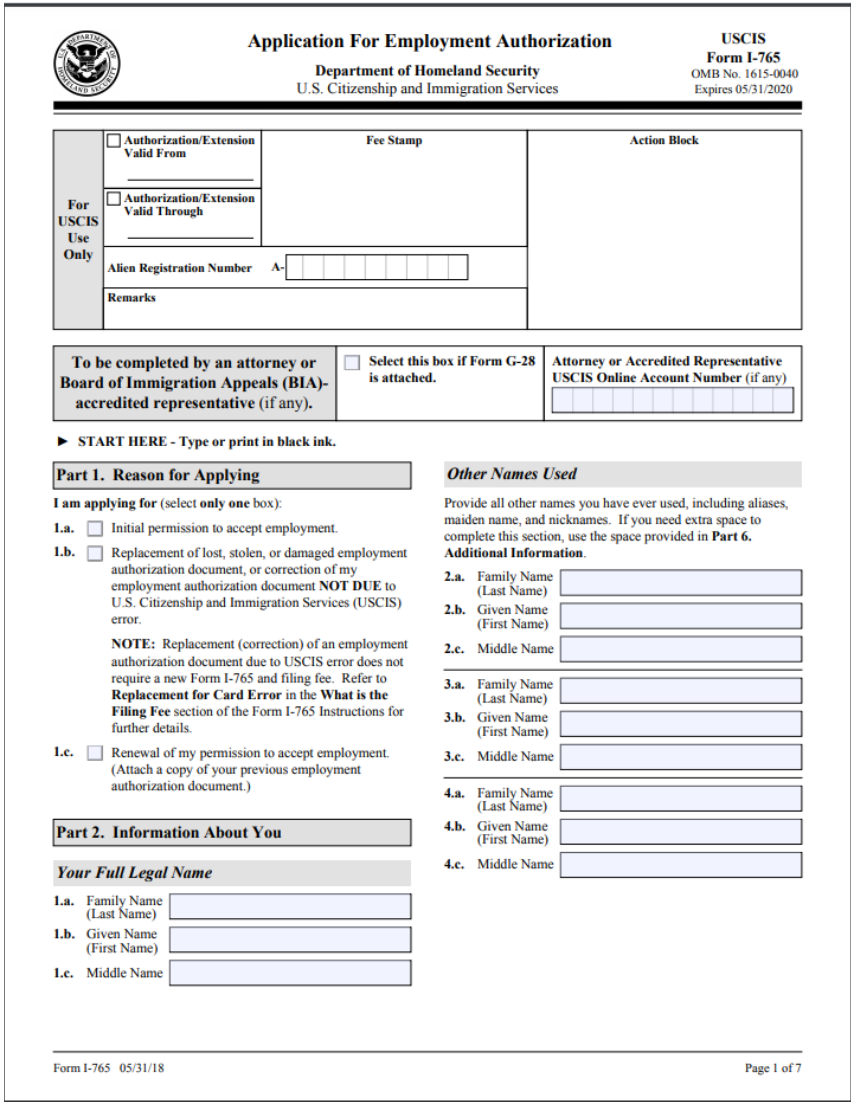
Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely.

How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: Form I-765

Please review our 'Specific Instructions for Form I-765' instructions on how to complete all 7 pages line by line.



Application For Employment Authorization

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS
Form I-765
OMB No. 1615-0040
Expires 05/31/2020

For USCIS Use Only	Fee Stamp	Action Block
☐ Authorization/Extension Valid From _____		
☐ Authorization/Extension Valid Through _____		
Alien Registration Number A-		
Remarks		

To be completed by an attorney or Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA)-accredited representative (if any).	☐ Select this box if Form G-28 is attached.	Attorney or Accredited Representative USCIS Online Account Number (if any)

► START HERE - Type or print in black ink.

Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select **only one** box):

1.a. ☐ Initial permission to accept employment.

1.b. ☐ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document **NOT DUE** to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.

NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to **Replacement for Card Error** in the **What is the Filing Fee** section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.

1.c. ☐ Renewal of my permission to accept employment. (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)
1.b. Given Name (First Name)
1.c. Middle Name

Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in **Part 6. Additional Information**.

2.a. Family Name (Last Name)
2.b. Given Name (First Name)
2.c. Middle Name

3.a. Family Name (Last Name)
3.b. Given Name (First Name)
3.c. Middle Name

4.a. Family Name (Last Name)
4.b. Given Name (First Name)
4.c. Middle Name

Form I-765 05/31/18 Page 1 of 7

How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: I-20 Copies

- Include copies of all I-20s from every school you've attended in the U.S. (including high school, ESL, other U.S. institution, etc.).
- When you make copies, please only include the two pages which hold information on them (e.g. the first page with your SEVIS ID and the other page with the travel signature box). You do not need to make a copy of the page with the 'Instructions to Students'.
- Please make all your copies the same way, so that they all are single-sided or all are double-sided. We recommend copies in single-sided format to ensure USCIS cannot miss anything during the scanning process.
- If you lost any I-20s, please proceed to the next page for instructions.

How to Apply for OPT

Loss of I-20

What if I lost or misplaced an I-20?

If you've lost or misplaced an I-20 you should contact the school for which the I-20 is missing. If they no longer have a copy of your documents, you can write a letter to USCIS explaining the missing document(s). The letter should include the following:

- The school that you attended;
- The dates of attendance at that school;
- What you studied and what level (Associate, Bachelor's, Language Training, etc.) at that school;
- That you've never applied for off-campus employment **OR**
- If you did apply for any off-campus work permission such as Economic Hardship or any prior periods of Optional Practical Training whether Pre-Completion or Post-Completion, this must be disclosed.
- Make sure to sign and date the letter.

How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: I-94 Record

You must access the most recent record of your I-94. Please review the following:

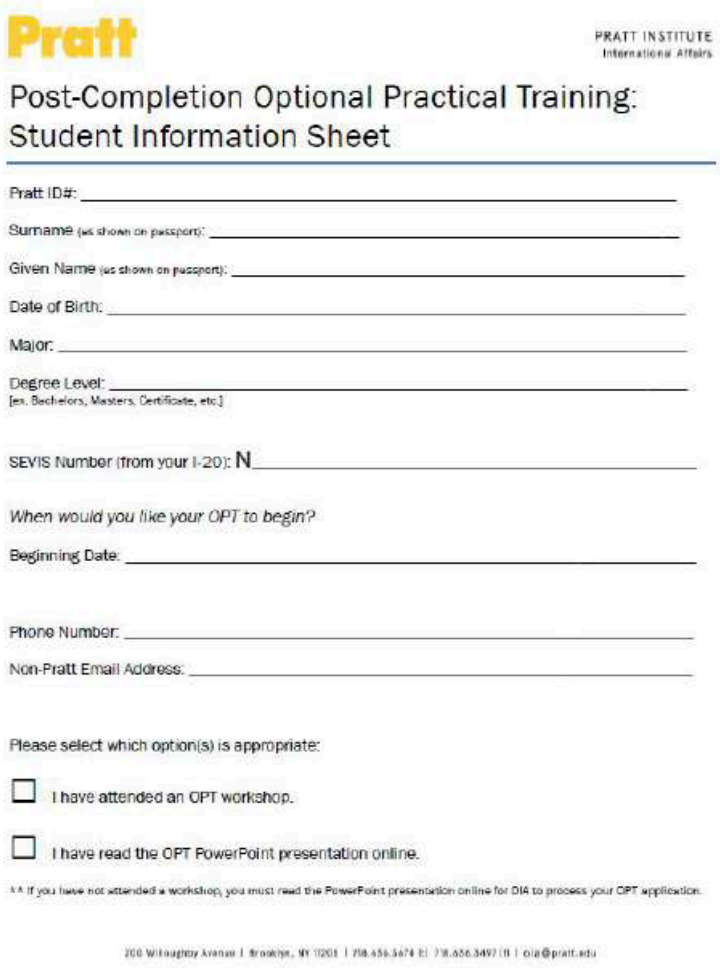
- Most Recent Date of Entry (make sure this is accurate)
- Class of Admission (should read F1)
- Admit Until Date (should read D/S)

How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: Student Information Sheet

Please complete all blank spaces on this form. If you are not certain of what Beginning Date you want to select for OPT, leave it blank and come talk with an advisor about your options.

We recommend not choosing a weekend or a major holiday (such as the 4th of July) as a start date for your OPT.



Pratt

PRATT INSTITUTE
International Affairs

Post-Completion Optional Practical Training:
Student Information Sheet

Pratt ID#: _____

Surname (as shown on passport): _____

Given Name (as shown on passport): _____

Date of Birth: _____

Major: _____

Degree Level: _____
[ex. Bachelors, Masters, Certificate, etc.]

SEVIS Number (from your I-20): N_____

When would you like your OPT to begin?

Beginning Date: _____

Phone Number: _____

Non-Pratt Email Address: _____

Please select which option(s) is appropriate:

☐ I have attended an OPT workshop.

☐ I have read the OPT PowerPoint presentation online.

** If you have not attended a workshop, you must read the PowerPoint presentation online for DIA to process your OPT application.

200 Willoughby Avenue | Brooklyn, NY 11205 | 718.636.3674 (f) 718.636.3497 (t) | oia@pratt.edu

How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: Completion Of Studies Form

You must have your department complete the form. **You cannot complete the form as the student.**

This form indicates to us when you are completing your studies. Please have your Chair or Academic Advisor complete the form.

The Chair/Advisor will indicate which semester you are completing by circling the semester you are completing and writing in the year. If you are not completing in the spring or fall semester, then the Chair/Advisor must write in your date of completion (month/day/year) in the Comment Box and sign the form.

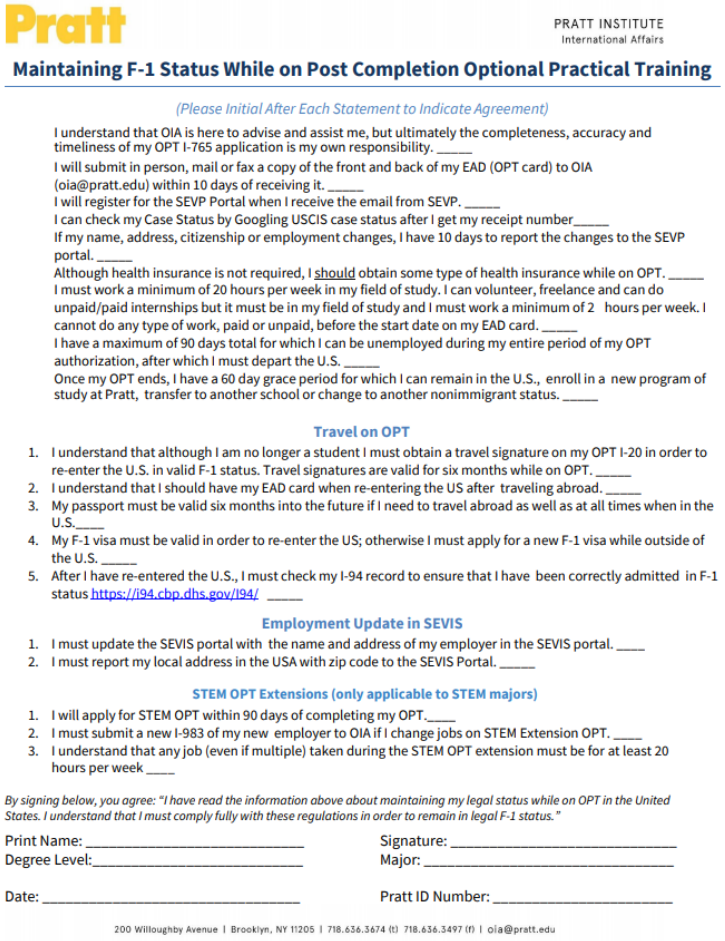
If the form is not filled in correctly, we cannot process your request for OPT.

How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: Maintaining F-1 Status Sheet

Please initial after each statement to indicate your understanding and agreement to maintain your status while on OPT.

This form is available for download from out website. It should be reviewed and signed before coming to OIA. You should keep this sheet for reference.



Pratt

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International Affairs

Maintaining F-1 Status While on Post Completion Optional Practical Training

(Please Initial After Each Statement to Indicate Agreement)

I understand that OIA is here to advise and assist me, but ultimately the completeness, accuracy and timeliness of my OPT I-765 application is my own responsibility. _____
I will submit in person, mail or fax a copy of the front and back of my EAD (OPT card) to OIA (oia@pratt.edu) within 10 days of receiving it. _____
I will register for the SEVP Portal when I receive the email from SEVP. _____
I can check my Case Status by Googling USCIS case status after I get my receipt number_____
If my name, address, citizenship or employment changes, I have 10 days to report the changes to the SEVP portal. _____
Although health insurance is not required, I should obtain some type of health insurance while on OPT. _____
I must work a minimum of 20 hours per week in my field of study. I can volunteer, freelance and can do unpaid/paid internships but it must be in my field of study and I must work a minimum of 2 hours per week. I cannot do any type of work, paid or unpaid, before the start date on my EAD card. _____
I have a maximum of 90 days total for which I can be unemployed during my entire period of my OPT authorization, after which I must depart the U.S. _____
Once my OPT ends, I have a 60 day grace period for which I can remain in the U.S., enroll in a new program of study at Pratt, transfer to another school or change to another nonimmigrant status. _____

Travel on OPT

1. I understand that although I am no longer a student I must obtain a travel signature on my OPT I-20 in order to re-enter the U.S. in valid F-1 status. Travel signatures are valid for six months while on OPT. _____
2. I understand that I should have my EAD card when re-entering the US after traveling abroad. _____
3. My passport must be valid six months into the future if I need to travel abroad as well as at all times when in the U.S._____
4. My F-1 visa must be valid in order to re-enter the US; otherwise I must apply for a new F-1 visa while outside of the U.S. _____
5. After I have re-entered the U.S., I must check my I-94 record to ensure that I have been correctly admitted in F-1 status https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/ _____

Employment Update in SEVIS

1. I must update the SEVIS portal with the name and address of my employer in the SEVIS portal. ____
2. I must report my local address in the USA with zip code to the SEVIS Portal. _____

STEM OPT Extensions (only applicable to STEM majors)

1. I will apply for STEM OPT within 90 days of completing my OPT.____
2. I must submit a new I-983 of my new employer to OIA if I change jobs on STEM Extension OPT. ____
3. I understand that any job (even if multiple) taken during the STEM OPT extension must be for at least 20 hours per week ____

By signing below, you agree: "I have read the information above about maintaining my legal status while on OPT in the United States. I understand that I must comply fully with these regulations in order to remain in legal F-1 status."

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____
Degree Level:_____ Major: _____

Date: _____ Pratt ID Number: _____

200 Willoughby Avenue | Brooklyn, NY 11205 | 718.636.3674 (t) 718.636.3497 (f) | oia@pratt.edu

How to Apply for OPT

Form Details: `Clean' Degree Audit

You must have a **`clean' degree audit**. You can download a copy of your audit from **mypratt.edu** or you can pick up a copy from the Registrar's Office.

Your audit is considered dirty if it states "1 course needed" or "3 credits needed" and we cannot deter-

mine that there's either an "IP, INC, NG" grade for which we understand that you have taken the course and are awaiting a grade. This is also true of courses for which you may have received an "F" grade.
An exception is if you have to submit your thesis to the Library – that course does not stop you from applying for OPT.

You must speak with your department to clear up discrepancies and then take the audit, with the remarks from your Chair/Advisor, to the Registrar's Office. Once the Registrar's Office has updated your audit and it appears that you are indeed completing your studies, bring the `clean' audit to the OIA along with the other needed documents.

Until the audit is clean, the OIA cannot process your request for OPT.

How to Apply for OPT

Bring all of the 'OPT I-20 Checklist' documents to the Office of International Affairs (OIA), 2nd Floor in Myrtle Hall.

OIA processes OPT applications Monday/Wednesday/Friday from

9:00 AM to 4:00 PM and Tuesday/Thursday from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

Note that OIA is closed on Tuesday and Thursday mornings until

12:00 PM.

You MUST have your documents reviewed by an advisor in order to have the Recommendation I-20 for Post-Completion OPT issued. This is a document that you are required to send with your OPT application to USCIS.

Mailing Instructions

Where and how to send the application:

Mailing Instructions

Be sure to photocopy your entire OPT application for your personal records!

You must come to the OIA to get a new I-20 which recommends you for OPT. If you do not come to get the recommendation, your application will not and cannot be processed by the Service Center.

- **Please refer to the website listed below to determine where your application should be mailed**. Once your OPT application has been sent, make sure that your name is on your mailbox. USPS is very sensitive about delivering mail from government agencies. Do not move while the application is pending. If you do move, you must notify OIA and USCIS immediately. A change in address while the application is pending can cost you time and money. If the card is sent back to USCIS they have a choice of either mailing it out again or destroying it. Once destroyed you will have to pay the fee again as well as re-file the application. (Currently the fee is $410.)

- **What address do I mail my application to?**

The most up-to-date address can be found at the USCIS link below, under "foreign students"

https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses

After Applying: When Can You Work?

How long is the OPT application process?

Processing time at the USCIS is estimated to be 3 months. However, processing times vary widely depending on the time of year and the workload at the Service Center to which you send your application. You can check the USCIS website for current processing times: https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/processTimesDisplayInit.do

You cannot begin employment until you have received your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the USCIS and the "Start Date" becomes effective.

This is directly from the federal regulations that govern your stay here: " **A student may not begin OPT employment prior to the approved start date on his or her Employment Authorization Document" 214.2(f)(11)(i)(D)**

After Applying: Employment

Do I have to find a job?

The **Interim Final OPT Rule** published on April 8, 2008 requires F-1 students to find a job within **90 days** of the start of their OPT, and to report their employer's name and address to their school within that time frame.

Possible consequences to remaining in the U.S. after the 90-day deadline without a job include loss of visa status, denial of future immigration benefits, etc. The Department of Homeland Security further clarified how

unemployment may affect your status. Starting in early 2009, the SEVIS record of any student who does not report employment within 90 days will automatically be terminated. The auto-termination will take place 6 months after the start of the OPT. Therefore, it is imperative that you not only find employment, but that you report it via the SEVP Portal immediately.

What if I find a job after the 90–day Deadline?

You should report your employment in the SEVP Portal immediately. As long as your SEVIS record is still active, you may continue working in the U.S. Possible consequences to missing the 90-day deadline include loss of status, denial of future immigration benefits, etc.

After Approval: Reporting Employment

You have reporting requirements that you must fulfill for OPT. **Within 10 days of the change**, you must report any:

- Change to your legal name
- Change to your address
- Changes in employment or interruption of employment

Previously, you would submit this information to OIA via email. There is a new way for you to submit this information starting March 23, 2018: through the SEVP Portal. You will not be able to set up your account until AFTER your OPT is approved.

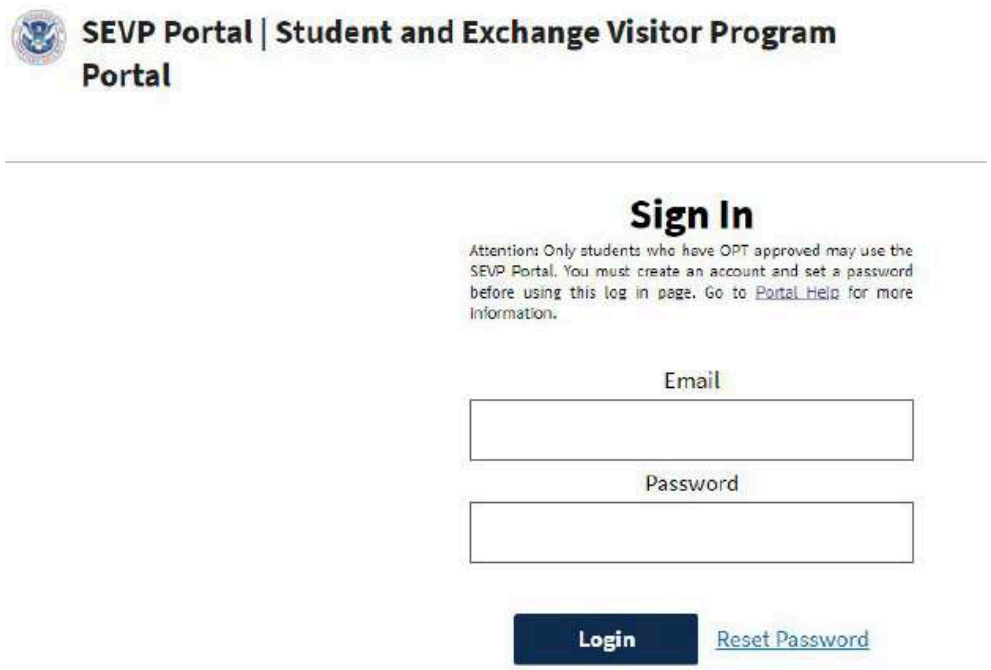
Only students who have OPT approved may use the SEVP Portal. You must create an account and set a password before using this log in page. Go to Portal Help for more information.

After Approval: SEVP Portal

Only students who have OPT approved may use the SEVP Portal.

There are four basic steps for creating an account in the SEVP Portal:

1. SEVIS notifies the SEVP Portal of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) approval of the student's OPT or practical training; the portal emails the student instructions for creating a portal account.
2. Student receives the email which contains a link they must use to create the account. This link is unique to the student and cannot be shared or reused. The link expires if the student does not create their account in a timely manner. If the link expires contact the OIA to reset the portal and send a new email.
3. Student clicks the link in the email, enters their SEVIS ID and creates a password.
4. The SEVP Portal creates the student's user profile.



On OPT: OPT Facts

What I need to know about my status when I'm on OPT:

- Applying for and obtaining OPT is not a change of status.
- You are in F-1 status for the duration of OPT and even 60 days (grace period) beyond the expiration of your OPT.
- OPT is not a work visa.
- OPT is a benefit of maintaining your F-1 status.
- If you are not in F-1 status, you are not eligible for OPT.
- If your F-1 status is completed, terminated or canceled, then your OPT is completed, terminated or canceled.
- You must maintain your F-1 status while on OPT.

On OPT: OPT Facts

How do I maintain my F-1 status?

- You must bring in, scan and email or fax a copy of the front and back of your OPT card to the OIA within 10 days of receiving it.
- **You must update the SEVP Portal with any of the following changes within 10 days of the change:**
  - Change of address
  - Change of name
  - Change of citizenship
  - Begin, End or Change of employment
- If you wish to travel outside the U.S., you must get a travel signature on the I-20 for which you were recommended the OPT. A travel signature while on OPT is only valid for 6 months at a time.

Travel Abroad on OPT

- You are allowed to travel while on OPT. However, it is more risky to travel while on OPT because you are no longer a student.

- After you have applied for OPT and you are past the Program End Date, you will be required to have the following documentation to enter the U.S.:
    - Original EAD Card
    - OPT Recommendation I-20 with DSO travel signature issued within the last 6 months
    - Valid passport
    - Valid F-1 visa

- The least risky situation is if the following is true:
    - You have a job in your field of study and a letter from your employer.
    - You have a valid F-1 entry visa.
    - You have the EAD card.
    - You have a travel signature given within the last 6 months from OIA on the I-20 with the OPT recommendation.
    - You have an unexpired passport (valid at least six months into the future).

- It is especially risky to travel if:
    - Your F-1 entry visa has expired.
    - You do not have a job and have been unemployed for an aggregate of 90 days.

- Consult with the Office of International Affairs before you travel if you have any concerns or questions.

Completion of OPT

Cap Gap Extension

- You are only eligible to request the Cap-Gap Extension if you completed your program of study in the Spring or Summer semester. If you completed in the Fall semester, you are not eligible to request Cap-Gap.
- The Cap-Gap Extension is meant to cover the period of time between the end of your OPT and thestart of your H-1B.
- If you have been approved for the H-1B starting on October 1st, but your OPT expires before this date, you are eligible for an extension of your F-1 status through September 30th.
- Per DHS, you **do not** file an application for the extension or receive a new EAD to cover the additional time. Instead, you must submit specific documents to OIA BEFORE your OPT ends to receive an updated I-20 that shows an extension of your OPT. This updated I-20 serves as proof of continued employment authorization.
- For more guidance on this rule, please visit the following website: www.ice.gov/SEVIS and search "Cap Gap".

Completion of OPT

When the OPT is over:

You are not required to leave the U.S. immediately on the last day of your Optional Practical Training. Instead you are given a grace period of 60 days to depart the U.S. as long as you have maintained your F-1 status.

- **You can remain in the U.S. for the length of the 60 days, however, you cannot continue to work, or travel in and out of the U.S.**
- You can always leave the U.S., but it will be impossible to return to the U.S. on an expired I-20 and OPT card.

What can you do during the 60-day grace period following OPT?

- Travel around the U.S. but it is advisable that you stay away from Hawaii and Puerto Rico.
- Pack up your belongings so that you can exit the U.S.

Completion of OPT

Two other possible scenarios when you are done with OPT:

• New Program of Study

Perhaps you've applied for and have been accepted into a new program of study and wish to have your SEVIS record transferred to that program. If it is a program at Pratt, we'll tell you what documents you'll need to get a new I-20 for the new program. If it is a program at another school, you will need to give us their "Transfer Form" so that we can complete it. You will also need to complete our Student Exit Form and a copy of the Admission letter.

• H1-B or O visa

Perhaps your employer really loves your skills, your multiple language abilities and your great Pratt education and therefore wishes to sponsor you for the H1-B or O visa. In this case, you must contact an attorney to guide you through the process.

Note: Your application for the H-1B application can/should be mailed by April 1. In 2015, the H-1B cap of 65,000 was reached by April 7th. USCIS received about 172,500 H-1B petitions during the filing period which began April 1.

Completion of OPT

Remember

- If you will not be using your OPT, notify OIA via email so we can complete your record and the government doesn't get the incorrect impression that you stayed/worked and not reported and are not in compliance with regulations.
- You must either leave the U.S. before the 60 grace period expires or you must be maintaining your F-1 status in order to remain in the U.S.
- If you are still in the U.S. and it's the 61st day after your OPT has expired, and you haven't transferred out or received a new I-20 from Pratt for a new program of study, then you are here illegally. You've overstayed your welcome and depending upon how long you overstay, can determine how long you may be barred from returning to the U.S. in the future.

Tips to Know: RFE

In the OPT application process, sometimes students receive a RFE, or Request for Evidence.

You need to make sure you respond to the RFE in a timely manner. The RFE will have a date by which you must respond.

Please review the RFE and gather any evidence requested, then come to OIA during our office hours to request assistance in replying to the RFE. You can also request an appointment with an advisor.

USCIS Website: "A request for evidence is made when an application/petition is lacking required documentation/evidence (initial evidence) or the officer needs more documentation/evidence (additional evidence) to determine an applicant's eligibility for the benefit sought. We may send you a request for evidence at any stage of our review. The request will indicate what evidence or information is needed for us to fully evaluate your application or petition. The notice will explain where to send the evidence and will give the deadline for your response. Your application or petition will be held in suspense during that time. If you receive a request for evidence and have questions about what you need to submit, you may call our National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283."

Tips To Know: Case Status

Check your Case Status online with USCIS at https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do after you have received your Receipt Notice with your case number. This website is updated within 24 hours of any action taken by USCIS, but please note that it does take USCIS approximately three months from the date they receive your application to process your request, although sometimes it can take more time.

The National Customer Service Center does not like it when you call before the 90-day window from when they received your application has ended, so keep this in mind if you call for an update.

There is no way to speed up the processing of your application with USCIS and OIA does not have any impact on their processing times.

Health Insurance

Health Insurance while on OPT

While health insurance is not required on OPT, it is advisable that you either continue paying for the plan you already have (but Pratt's health plan is not an option to continue while on OPT) or find a new health insurance plan.

OIA Contact Information

Come visit us in person:

- **Brooklyn Campus,** Myrtle Hall
- 2nd Floor, Room 2E.3

Email us at: oia@pratt.edu

Call us at: +1 718 636 3674

Pratt
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