Optional Practical Training
Ph: 512-245-7966, Email: international@txstate.edu
www.international.txstate.edu

STOP: Before you apply for Optional Practical Training, you must read this form in its entirety and sign in the box at the bottom of OPT Statement of Responsibility and Legal Advice and ISSS Advising Statement of Understanding.

F-1 students may apply to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for authorization for 12 months of temporary employment for Optional Practical Training (OPT). The employment should be directly related to your major area of study. To be eligible for OPT, you must be in active F-1 status at the time of application and have completed one academic year as a full-time student (not necessarily in F-1 status). OPT can be authorized for the following:

- **Pre-Completion**: Before completion of studies in one of the following:
  1. Part-time (20 hours a week or less) during the fall/ spring semesters;
  2. Full/ part-time during summer vacation if currently enrolled and intend to register for the following semester.

- **Post-Completion**: After completion of studies

  IMPORTANT! If choosing this option, your OPT application must be received by USCIS no later than 60 days after your program completion date. However, it is strongly recommended to apply before you complete your studies. Also, your 12 months of OPT must be completed within 14 months of the date of completion of your studies.

### Preconditions
- Student must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis at a DHS-approved school for one full academic year before being eligible for OPT. Students in English language training programs are not eligible for OPT.

### Location
- Students may engage in OPT for any employer for the duration of OPT authorization, as long as the employment qualifies under OPT standards.

### Duration
- Standard OPT is available for a cumulative maximum of 12 months per educational level.
  - A one-time extension of 24 months (for a total of 36 months) is available to certain STEM degree recipients who are employed by an employer registered with E-Verify.

### Hours per week
- 20 hours/week limit for pre-completion OPT done while school is in session and student still has coursework to complete.
  - Full-time employment can be requested for pre-completion OPT done during official school breaks, and for students who have completed all requirements for their degree except for thesis or dissertation.
  - For post-completion OPT, according to SEVP guidance a student must be adequately employed to avoid limits on unemployment.

### Field of work
- Must be directly related to the student's course of study.

### Offer of employment
- No offer of employment is required to apply for standard OPT, but the student is expected to work during the OPT EAD validity period. **Students on post-completion OPT are limited to a maximum of 90 days of unemployment.**
  - To apply for a 24-month STEM extension, student must have an offer of employment from an employer registered with E-Verify.

### Effect on other work
- Prior use of full-time Curricular Practical Training for one year or more eliminates eligibility for OPT.

### Approval process
- DSO recommends OPT in SEVIS.
  - Student files I-765 application with required documents to USCIS for EAD.
  - Work can begin only after receiving EAD issued by USCIS, and on or after the start date on the EAD.

### Miscellaneous
- If doing pre-completion OPT, must maintain a full course of study during the period of employment (unless done during school breaks).
  - Degree candidates that have completed all coursework must continue to make normal progress towards completing the thesis or dissertation required for their degree.
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Application Procedure

How to Apply:
You apply for OPT to USCIS by first meeting with a Designated School Official (DSO) at International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). The DSO will make a new OPT requested I-20 which must be signed and dated by you. You may apply as early as 90 days before and no later than 60 days after the completion of your studies. Due to USCIS processing time, you should apply early.

Appointment Checklist:
Bring required documents to your appointment, if you do not you will be asked to reschedule.

✓ Signed Statement of Responsibility Form
✓ Signed Legal Advice and ISSS Advising Statement of Understanding
✓ Signed Completion of Degree Form
✓ Completed and Typed Form G-1145 E-Notification of Application https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145
✓ Completed and Typed Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization https://www.uscis.gov/i-765
  ▪ Use the correct Form Edition. Refer to the USCIS website for latest form edition and effective dates of new forms.
  ▪ Review the Form I-765 instructions page and ISSS template
  ▪ Item #27 Use code: Pre-completion: (c)(3)(A); Post-completion: (c)(3)(B)
  ▪ Staple the passport photos and check to the Form I-765
✓ Passport, valid for at least the next six months (color copy)
✓ US Visa page stamped in passport (color copy)
✓ Most recent I-94 and travel history
✓ Check or money order payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” for $410.00 (Do not write “DHS”). Check the USCIS website for the most up to date filing fee: https://www.uscis.gov/i-765
Use this guide when writing a check.

✓ 2 recent Passport photos – For photo requirements, see here: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/requirements/photos.html
✓ Any Form I-797A Notice of Action (if applicable)
✓ Any previously issued OPT EAD card and approval letter (if applicable)

All required documents must be received by USCIS no later than 30 days after the DSO updates SEVIS with the OPT recommendation.

Mailing Instructions:
Once you receive your new OPT requested I-20, mail your OPT application with all required documents to the appropriate USCIS Service Center.

Find the direct filing address on the USCIS Form I-765 website: https://www.uscis.gov/i-765 – Click Where to File as a Foreign Student.
I have read the content of this handout and understand the regulations associated with OPT.

Name: ___________________________ Student ID#: ___________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Non-Texas State Email: ___________________________

Local Address: ____________________________________________________________

  Street ___________________________ Apt number # ___________________________ City ____ State ___ Zip ___

Student Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Legal Advice and ISSS Advising
Statement of Understanding

Acknowledge the following statements by placing a mark (x) in the box provided.

I understand that:

☐ International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) offers best practices information on temporary employment authorization such as Optional Practical Training (OPT) as a courtesy to international students under a Texas State University issued Form I-20. Please note that all information provided is not considered legal advice.

☐ Applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) is my application and my responsibility. I may choose to compile and submit my application for temporary employment authorization on my own. If I choose to compile and submit my OPT application on my own, I will inform ISSS accordingly through email.

☐ I have reviewed the OPT website, OPT packet, Overview PowerPoint, and have gathered ALL required documents.

☐ I must complete the Form I-765 and Form G-1145 before my OPT appointment.

☐ I am required to arrive 10 minutes before my OPT appointment and I will be asked to reschedule if I arrive late or without bringing ALL required and completed documents.

In signing this Statement of Understanding, I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand this document, and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers to my satisfaction. I shall not hold Texas State University liable for any loss or damage to my application for temporary employment authorization, including any costs involved, as a result of any information given to me.

Signature

Name (as per your passport)

Date (mm/dd/yy)
**OPT Completion of Degree Form**

### To Be Completed by the Student

Please fill out this section and take this form to your department to complete the next section. This form must be signed by your academic or faculty advisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Student ID#:</th>
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Student Signature:  

### To Be Completed by an Academic or Faculty Advisor

F-1 international students may qualify for Optional Practical Training (OPT), which is temporary work authorization for up to one year allowing the student to gain practical experience in their field of study. The above-mentioned student is applying for OPT. In order for ISSS to be able to recommend this student for this training, we need to know his/her expected date of completion. If you have any questions, please call 512-245-7966 and ask to speak with an international student advisor.

Please choose the category below that reflects this student’s situation regarding the completion of their degree requirements. Then please sign below and return the form to the student.

- **Category 1**: This student is currently enrolled in classes and expected to complete all degree requirements in the following semester:  
  - ☐ Spring  
  - ☐ Summer  
  - ☐ Fall  
  Year: ___

- **Category 2**: A graduate student with only thesis / dissertation / comprehensive exams remaining may apply for OPT if the student has completed, or will complete, all other degree requirements excluding the thesis / dissertation / comprehensive exams. The student’s required coursework was completed, or will be completed, in the following semester:  
  - ☐ Spring  
  - ☐ Summer  
  - ☐ Fall  
  Year: ___

- **Special Situation**: If you have completed your thesis of dissertation but missed the initial deadline for submission of your thesis to Alkek Library and your graduation has been postponed to the following semester, you may still be able to begin your OPT prior to your graduation. To do so, **you must obtain a “Letter of Completion” from the Graduate College** to certify that all requirements for your degree have been completed. (E-mail gradcollege@txstate.edu).

Comments: ____________________________________________________________

Advisor’s Signature: ___________________________ Phone Number: _____________ Date: _____________

Printed Name: ___________________________ Title: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________

This form must be completed in its entirety otherwise the OPT request will not be processed. The student must bring this form to the OPT appointment.