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.

Basic Description:
As an F-1 student, you 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 legal 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 your studies in one of the following three situations:
  1. Part-time (20 hours a week or less) during the fall or spring semesters
  2. Full or part-time during summer vacation if you are currently enrolled and intend to register for the following semester
  3. Full-time during fall or spring if you have completed all coursework and are in the thesis, dissertation or comprehensive exams only phase of your degree

- **Post-Completion:** After completion of your studies (most students choose this option)

**IMPORTANT!** If choosing this option, your OPT application must be received by the DHS service center 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.

- 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 Optional Practical Training.

Approval process
DSO recommends OPT in SEVIS.

- Student files I-765 application for EAD with USCIS Lockbox Facility.
- Work can begin only after receiving EAD issued by USCIS, and on or after the start date on the EAD.
- Special rules govern applications for the 24-month STEM OPT extension.

If doing pre-completion OPT, must maintain a full course of study during the period of employment (unless done during school breaks).

Miscellaneous
Degree candidates that have completed all coursework must continue to make normal progress towards completing the thesis or dissertation required for their degree.
Application Procedure

How to Apply:
You apply for OPT to USCIS by first making a request for work authorization to a Designated School Official (DSO) in the Texas State International Office. The DSO will make a new I-20 which must be signed and dated by you. You may apply as early as 90 days before the completion of your studies and no later than 60 days after the completion of studies, and since OPT processing times may be lengthy, we recommend that you apply early. Before meeting with a DSO, prepare for the appointment using the checklist below.

Appointment Checklist
- Please bring the following documents to your appointment
  - The **Statement of Responsibility Form** signed and dated by you
  - Signed **Completion of Degree Form** or **Letter of Completion** from the Graduate College
  - Complete the **G-1145** form if you would like to be e-notified from USCIS (Type, do not hand write)
  - A completed **Form I-765** (download form here and save it on a USB drive). (Do not print it out)
  - Item #5, Leave blank if you would like to use International Office address
  - Item #27 should be coded:
    - Pre-completion OPT: (c)(3)(A);
    - Post-completion OPT: (c)(3)(B) (lowercase “c”)  
  - Leave Part 4 and 5 blank since you are preparing this application yourself.
  - **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
  - **Personal check** payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” for $410.00 (Do not write “DHS”). Leave the check blank if you have never written a check.

- **2 Passport photos** – For photo requirements, review information in link below: [https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/news/picture-perfect-passport.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/news/picture-perfect-passport.html). The instructions to USCIS Form I-765, however, state that the photos submitted in connection with that form must have been taken within 30 days of filing the form.
- Any **Form I-797A** Notice of Action (if applicable)
- Any previously issued OPT EAD card (if applicable)

OPT Application Package:
The International Office will mail the packet for you or the student can mail to USCIS directly using the following:

**For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):**

USCIS  
P.O. Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

**For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:**

USCIS  
Attn: NFB AOS  
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business  
Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067
OPT Statement of Responsibility

- **VERY IMPORTANT**: While on OPT, you are required to report ALL changes to your passport name, local address, and status of employment including changes to employer name or address information to the SEVP Portal. The use of this portal is mandatory and routinely reviewed by SEVIS. Once your OPT is approved you will receive an activation link from SEVP and must activate your SEVP Portal account within 14 days.

- **During post-completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment and you cannot exceed an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment**. OPT employment can be traditional paid employment, volunteer work, and an unpaid or paid internship over 20 hours a week.

- Employment cannot begin until you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card and the start date on the card has reached.

- **If you do not complete all coursework by the I-20 end date**, you may not work more than 20 hours a week (part-time), until all coursework has been completed. This does not apply to thesis or dissertation only students.

- **If you transfer to another school or begin a new program of study at another educational level**, your authorization to engage in OPT employment is automatically terminated upon the transfer date even if there is time remaining on your OPT.

- **Travel outside the US is permitted while your OPT application is pending and approved**. When pending, you must have a valid passport, valid F-1 visa, I-20 with a travel signature. Once your OPT is approved you must also bring your EAD card. *There is always a risk when traveling outside the US so to better your chances of being allowed to reenter you should have a letter from your employer indicating that you are returning for employment.*

- At the completion of your OPT you are granted a 60-day grace period. During this time, you are permitted to legally remain in the US but must plan to depart the US, be admitted to a new program, change visa status or transfer to a new institution before the grace period expires.

- **You are allowed one year of OPT per degree level**. You become eligible for another 12 months of OPT if you change to a higher educational level.

- **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) degree students are eligible for a 24-month extension**: To apply for the STEM-OPT, you must be employed by an employer who is registered for E-Verify and apply 90 days before your current OPT expires.

- **Please write your requested OPT start and end dates**. The EAD card is issued for a maximum of 12 months. If you are unsure, you can discuss your OPT dates during your OPT appointment with the international advisor.

Start Date: ____________________________________________  End Date: ____________________________

I have read the content of this handout and understand the regulations associated with OPT.

Name: ________________________________  Student ID#: _________________________

Family/Last  Given/First

Phone: ____________________________  Non-Texas State Email: ____________________________

Local Address: _____________________________________________________

Street  Apt number #  City  State  Zip

Student Signature: ____________________________  Date: ____________________________
# 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.

- **Name:** __________________________________________________________________________
- **Family/Last** ________________________________________________________________________
- **Given/First** ________________________________________________________________________
- **Student ID#:** ____________________
- **Student Signature:** _________________________________________________________________
- **Date:** ____________________________

## 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 the International Office 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 20___  Summer 20___  Fall 20___**

- **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 20___  Summer 20___  Fall 20___**

- **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.*