



Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Application Guide & Tutorial

for F-1 International Students

International Student and Scholar Services (ISS)

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What is Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

“Temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major area of study”

- OPT is off-campus employment authorization for F-1 students that may be obtained from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to lawfully pursue employment in your academic field of study.
- You are eligible to apply for OPT once you have maintained your F-1 status for a minimum of one academic year. At DePaul University this is equivalent to at least three (3) consecutive quarters.
- F-1 students may apply for a total of 12 months of OPT to be used before completion of studies (pre-completion OPT) and/or after completion of studies (post-completion OPT).
- F-1 students are eligible to apply for 12 months of OPT at each educational/academic level (i.e. Bachelor’s, Master’s, PhD). Students who complete two degrees at the same educational/academic level (e.g. two Master’s degrees) are not eligible for additional OPT time after completion of the second degree.
- Some students in an eligible STEM (science, technology, engineering or mathematics) degree program may be eligible to apply for a 24-month extension of their OPT authorization.

OPT Quick Start Guide

OPT Application Process

Your OPT application is completed in three steps:

1. Request your OPT I-20 from ISS. *Pages 9-10*
2. Prepare your application forms and supporting documentation. *Pages 15-24*
3. Mail your complete OPT application to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). *Pages 27-28*

ISS strongly recommends that you carefully review this entire OPT tutorial for detailed instructions and important information about your OPT authorization requirements and responsibilities

OPT Highlights

- As long as you meet the requirements, you may be eligible for 12 months of OPT time per educational/academic level that you complete.
- OPT may be requested both before and/or after degree program completion.
- A job offer is not required to apply for OPT.
- OPT employment may occur anywhere in the United States.
- No special permission is needed to quit a job or change employers during OPT authorization. However, you must report changes to your employment information in Campus Connection:
 1. Login to <https://campusconnect.depaul.edu> by using your Campus Connection ID and password.
 2. Click on Menu>Self Service>Student Resources>ISS Forms Requests
 3. Select “OPT Update” to proceed
- During OPT authorization, you remain in F-1 status.
- An extension of OPT may be allowed for up to 24 months if you have a degree in a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) field and your employer is enrolled in the E-Verify program. For more information on your eligibility for the 24-month OPT extension, please see your ISS Advisor.

Types of OPT

Pre-Completion OPT

Employment authorization before degree completion

Post-completion OPT

Employment authorization after degree completion

| When employment occurs | Hours per week allowed to work | Comments |
|--|--|---|
| Annual vacations or school breaks (Pre-completion) | Employment authorization may be part-time (20 or fewer hours per week) or full-time (more than 20 hours per week). | Authorized pre-completion OPT will be deducted from your 12-month allowance. Part-time OPT is deducted from the 12 month allowance at a half-time rate. For example, if you work part-time for 4 months, only 2 months will be deducted. You will have a remaining balance of 10 months of OPT. |
| Regular academic year (fall, winter, spring quarters) (Pre-completion) | Employment authorization can only be part-time (20 or fewer hours per week) and you must continue to maintain full-time enrollment. The 20 hours per week maximum includes all employment, both on and off-campus. | |
| After degree completion (Post-completion) | Employment authorization is full-time. Students must work a minimum average of 20 hours per week during post-completion OPT in order to maintain lawful F-1 student status. | No more than 90 days of unemployment are allowed during the 12-month post-completion OPT authorization period. |

Application Deadlines

Pre-completion OPT

No earlier than 90 days before desired employment start date.

Post-completion OPT

USCIS must receive your application no earlier than 90 days prior to your degree program completion date and no later than 60 days following your degree program completion date.

In most cases, we recommend that you apply as early as possible to avoid unexpected delays.

For a definition of “program completion date” as it refers to OPT, see page 37.

Should I Apply for OPT?

Pre-Completion OPT

Have you been in F-1 student status for one academic year? At DePaul University, one academic year means full-time enrollment for at least three (3) consecutive quarters. You may be able to count the time you spent at other U.S. schools in degree programs as long as your SEVIS record was transferred directly to DePaul University. Enrollment in English language programs cannot be counted toward meeting this requirement.

Have you considered using Curricular Practical Training (CPT) instead? For many students, CPT can be a better option. It allows you to get work experience in your field of study without using any of your 12-month OPT allowance. Please see the ISS website for a detailed description of [Curricular Practical Training](#).

Will your job offer still be valid three months from now? OPT processing can take 60 to 90 days and you may not begin employment before receiving authorization. If your employer is not willing to wait for your authorization approval, OPT may not be the best option for you.

Do you plan on applying for the 24-month OPT extension or the H-1B cap gap extension in the future? Only eligible post-completion OPT students may apply for these two extensions. If you plan on applying for either of these extensions in the future, you must have at least part of your original 12-month OPT allowance remaining to use as post-completion OPT.

Are you willing to use some of your 12-month OPT allowance? You will not have a full year of post-completion OPT time after degree program completion if you are authorized for any pre-completion OPT.

Post-Completion OPT

Have you been in F-1 status for one academic year? At DePaul University, one academic year means full-time enrollment for at least three (3) consecutive quarters. You may be able to count the time you spent at other U.S. schools in degree programs as long as your SEVIS record was transferred directly to DePaul University. Enrollment in English language programs cannot be counted toward meeting this requirement.

Will you be completing your program of study at DePaul University within the next 90 days? Your application for OPT cannot be submitted to USCIS any earlier than 90 days before your degree program completion date.

Are you enrolled full-time this quarter or authorized by ISS to have a reduced course load? If eligible, you must receive a reduced course load authorization from ISS before enrolling less than full-time.

Prepare Your Application Materials and Request Your OPT I-20

- ☐ Complete your OPT I-20 Request Form with your Academic Advisor
- ☐ Select your desired or “recommended” OPT start date
- ☐ Request your OPT I-20 from ISS
- ☐ Complete USCIS Forms G-1145 and I-765
- ☐ Prepare your supplementary application documents
- ☐ Mail your complete application to USCIS

The OPT I-20 Request Form

To request your OPT I-20, you must submit a completed OPT recommendation form to the OISS.

[Download the OPT I-20 Request Form \(pdf\) here.](#)

Choosing Authorization Dates

On the OPT recommendation form, you must indicate what dates you would ideally want your employment authorization to begin and end before submitting it to ISS. Your recommended OPT dates are subject to change based on USCIS processing times.

Your recommended OPT dates will be printed on your new OPT I-20 and cannot be easily changed after processing. If approved by USCIS, your OPT dates cannot be changed and will be printed on your EAD card.

- Your recommended OPT start date is the day you would ideally like your EAD card to become valid and when you would ideally like to begin off-campus employment.
- Your recommended OPT end date is usually 12 months later minus one (1) day unless you request a shorter period of time.

If you change your mind about your authorization dates

You will **NOT** be able to adjust your recommended OPT dates once you have mailed your application to USCIS without withdrawing your application completely. Consider the authorization dates carefully before submitting your OPT recommendation form to ISS.



International
Student and Scholar Services

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING I-20 REQUEST FORM

| | | | | |
|---|---|-------------|--|--|
| Student Information | Last Name (Family Name): | | First Name (Given Name): | |
| | Student ID #: | | Telephone #: | |
| | Email address: | | | |
| | Have you been authorized for full time curricular practical training (CPT) in the past? | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> *Yes – From: _____ To: _____ <small>(mm/dd/yyyy) (mm/dd/yyyy)</small> *List all dates | | | |
| This section must be completed by the student. | Have you been authorized for OPT in the past? | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – From: _____ To: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <small>(mm/dd/yyyy) (mm/dd/yyyy)</small> | | | |
| | Level of past OPT (if applicable): <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> Master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | | |
| | For which type of OPT are you applying? <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Completion <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Post-Completion* (always authorized at full-time) | | | |
| | * The earliest a post-completion OPT application can be submitted is 3 months prior to completion of degree requirements. | | | |
| Requested OPT Authorization Dates: | | Start Date: | End Date: | |
| Note: Start date must be within 60 days AFTER completion of degree requirements. | | | | |
| I have been enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one academic year. I have followed the rules for maintaining lawful F-1 student status and understand the responsibilities required for maintaining my lawful status during my period of OPT authorization as stated on the reverse side of this page. | | | | |
| Signature of Student: | | Date: | | |
| Academic Recommendation | Student's Major | | Program Completion Date* | |
| | | | Term: _____ Date: _____ <small>(mm/dd/yyyy)</small> | |
| | | | *Term in which all degree requirements expected to be completed. | |
| | Number of Credits student will be taking during his/her final term: | | | |
| | The student above wishes to secure practical training employment by working in a job related to her/his field of study. I confirm that the information provided in this section is true and correct. I recommend this student for optional practical training (OPT) to enable the student to apply the principles learned in the classroom in a professional setting. | | | |
| This section must be completed by your academic advisor. | Signature: | | Date: | |
| | Advisor's Name: | | Department: | |
| | Email: | | Extension: | |

(GG -3/15)

DePaul University, ISS, 1 E. Jackson Boulevard, DePaul Center, Suite 9300, Chicago, IL 60604
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The OPT I-20 Request Form

Academic Recommendation

Your Academic Advisor will complete the bottom portion of the OPT I-20 Request Form.

Expected Program Completion Date

The degree completion date for OPT purposes is the last day of the quarter in which you complete your degree requirements. Your degree completion date may not necessarily be the day of your graduation ceremony or the expiration date on your current I-20.

PLEASE review the [Academic Calendar](#) for DePaul University's term end dates.

For students completing their program in the **Summer term**: please be sure that your course schedule is finalized before submitting your OPT I-20 request form. Ask your ISS Advisor if you have any questions.

If you do not complete your program as expected

Once your OPT I-20 has been issued, changing your degree program completion date can create serious complications for your OPT application. Consider your expected completion date carefully and make every attempt to finish your program on that day. Students who do not complete all degree requirements by their program end date may extend their program before the I-20 expiration date but this could affect your OPT authorization. Please see your ISS Advisor if you have applied for OPT and your degree completion date changes.

Academic Advisor Signature

A signature from your Academic Advisor is required on this form. This signature verifies your expected degree program completion date at the time of application for OPT.

Signatures from Faculty Advisors or professors will not be accepted.



International
Student and Scholar Services

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING I-20 REQUEST FORM

| | | | | |
|---|--|-------------|--|--|
| <p>Student Information</p> <p>This section must be completed by the student.</p> | Last Name (Family Name): | | First Name (Given Name): | |
| | Student ID #: | | Telephone #: | |
| | Email address: | | | |
| | Have you been authorized for full time curricular practical training (CPT) in the past? | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> *Yes – From: _____ To: _____ <div style="text-align: center;">(mm/dd/yyyy) (mm/dd/yyyy)</div> <p style="text-align: center;">*List all dates</p> | | | |
| | Have you been authorized for OPT in the past? | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – From: _____ To: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <div style="text-align: center;">(mm/dd/yyyy) (mm/dd/yyyy)</div> | | | |
| | Level of past OPT (if applicable): <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> Master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | | |
| | For which type of OPT are you applying? <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Completion <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Post-Completion* (always authorized at full-time) <p>* The earliest a post-completion OPT application can be submitted is 3 months prior to completion of degree requirements.</p> | | | |
| Requested OPT Authorization Dates | | Start Date: | End Date: | |
| Note: Start date must be within 60 days AFTER completion of degree requirements. | | | | |
| <p><i>I have been enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one academic year. I have followed the rules for maintaining lawful F-1 student status and understand the responsibilities required for maintaining my lawful status during my period of OPT authorization as stated on the reverse side of this page.</i></p> | | | | |
| Signature of Student: | | Date: | | |
| <p>Academic Recommendation</p> <p>This section must be completed by your academic advisor.</p> | Student's Major | | Program Completion Date* Term: _____ Date: _____ <div style="text-align: center;">(mm/dd/yyyy)</div> <p><small>*Term in which all degree requirements expected to be completed.</small></p> | |
| | Number of Credits student will be taking during his/her final term: <i>The student above wishes to secure practical training employment by working in a job related to her/his field of study. I confirm that the information provided in this section is true and correct. I recommend this student for optional practical training (OPT) to enable the student to apply the principles learned in the classroom in a professional setting.</i> | | | |
| | Signature: | | Date: | |
| | Advisor's Name: | | Department: | |
| | Email: | | Extension: | |
| | | | | |

(GG -3/15)

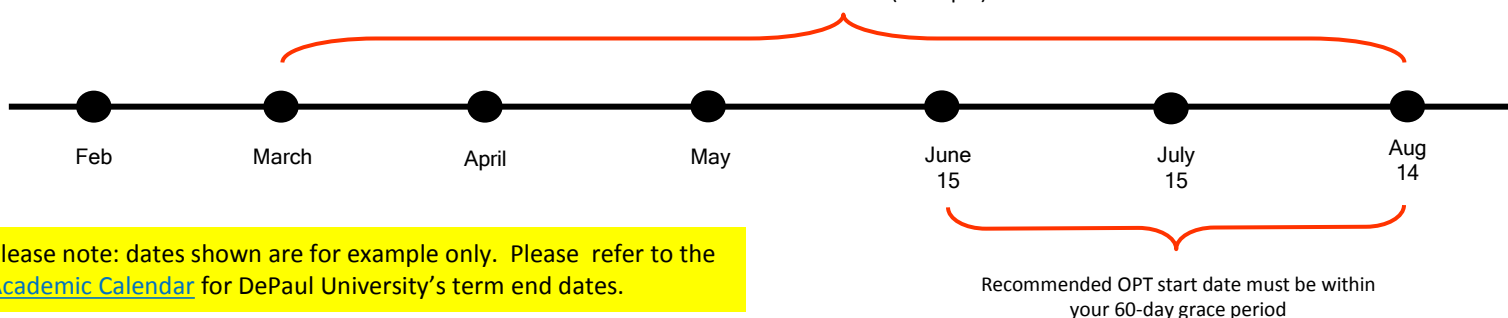
DePaul University, ISS, 1 E. Jackson Boulevard, DePaul Center, Suite 9300, Chicago, IL 60604
312-362-8376, Fax: 312-362-8018, iss@depaul.edu, www.iss.depaul.edu

The OPT Application Timeline

OPT Application Period: Window opens 90 days before degree program completion and closes 60 days after degree program completion.

Degree program completion date (example)

60-day grace period ends



Please note: dates shown are for example only. Please refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for DePaul University's term end dates.

Points to Consider

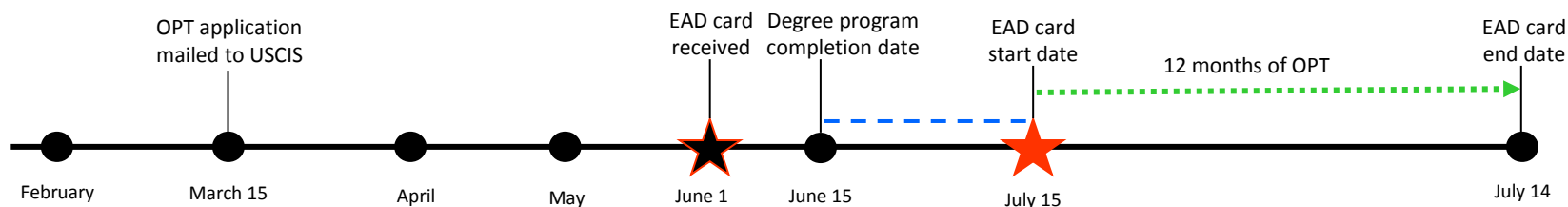
- USCIS can receive your OPT application up to 90 days before your degree program completion date and no later than 60 days following your degree program completion date
- If you leave the United States during your 60-day grace period and you haven't applied for OPT, you will lose your opportunity to apply for OPT
- USCIS must receive your OPT application no later than 30 days after your OPT has been requested in SEVIS by your ISS Advisor or your application may be denied
- It can take 60 to 90 days (sometimes more, rarely less) for an OPT application to be reviewed and (hopefully) approved by USCIS
- Your recommended OPT start date must be within your 60-day grace period
- You cannot begin employment until you have received your EAD card and the start date on the EAD card is valid/current
- You cannot change your recommended OPT start date once your OPT application has been mailed to USCIS without withdrawing your application completely
- As long as you have mailed a timely application for OPT to USCIS, your F-1 status remains active and you can continue to stay in the United States while your OPT application is pending
- Travel outside of the United States while your OPT application is pending and once it has been approved can be risky; please schedule an appointment with your ISS advisor for more information as far in advance as possible

Timelines illustrating two common scenarios can be seen on the next page.

Choosing Authorization Dates – Typical Examples

Scenario 1: Student with a job offer submits his OPT application early

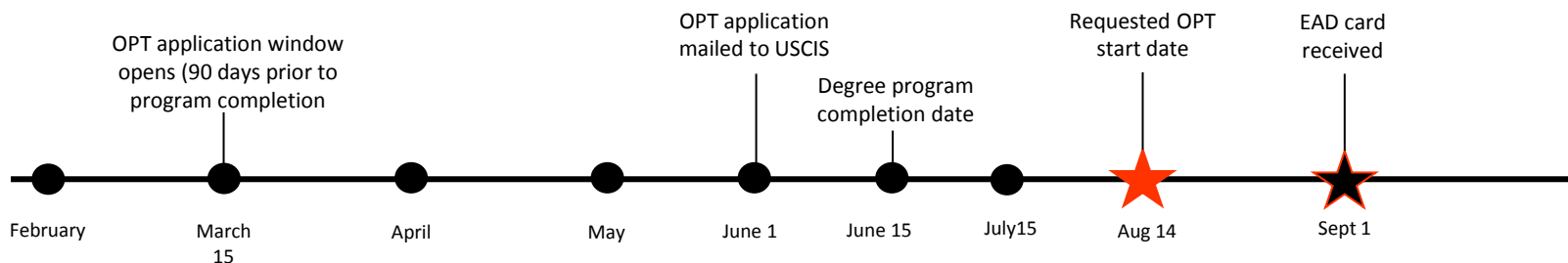
On March 15th, Alex mails his application for OPT to USCIS. He is completing his program on June 15th and chooses July 15th as his recommended OPT start date because he has a job offer beginning that day. Alex receives his EAD card on June 1st. His employer is pleased to see proof of work authorization early even though he cannot begin working until July 15th, as noted on his EAD card. Alex decides to go home for one month for vacation.



Please note: dates shown are for example only. Please refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for DePaul University's term end dates.

Scenario 2: Student with no job offer submits her OPT application rather late

Becky doesn't have a job offer or time to search for one until after she finishes her degree. She chooses the latest date possible to start her OPT -- August 14th -- which is 60 days after her completion on June 15th. She knows that she can lawfully stay in the United States as long as she has submitted her OPT application on time. She finally mails her OPT application on June 1st. On August 14th, Becky still hasn't received her EAD card, so she can't begin working. Becky receives her EAD card on September 1st and it expires the following year on August 13th. Becky has lost 13 days of her OPT authorization because her application was approved after the latest available OPT start date.



Your OPT I-20

Approximately one week after submitting your OPT I-20 Request Form to ISS, you will get a new OPT I-20. This sample shows how your I-20 will be updated for OPT purposes.

Check It for Accuracy!

I-20 Page 1

When you pick up your OPT I-20, make sure to check the following items:

Education Level: Be sure that the education level printed on your I-20 reflects the degree that you will earn upon degree program completion. If this is not accurate, contact your ISS Advisor.

Program End Date: Your I-20 program end date will be shortened to match the completion date listed on your OPT I-20 Request Form. It may look like the I-20 will expire soon, but don't worry, the I-20 remains valid for the length of your OPT authorization period (as noted on page 2 of your OPT I-20) as long as you continue to maintain lawful F-1 status.

This issue is important to note especially if you plan to travel abroad during your OPT authorization.

ISS Advisor Signature: Make sure your ISS advisor has signed your OPT I-20. Also, make sure the I-20 was issued fewer than 30 days in the past.

Student Signature: Sign and date your I-20 after receiving it from the ISS. **Signatures must be in BLUE ink!**

I-20 Page 3: No Changes

Page 3 of your I-20 will not change. It contains a description of the F-1 student regulations. You should have already read them at some point during your stay in the U.S. If not, it's never too late--read them now!

SEVIS ID:

| | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME | GIVEN NAME | CLASS |
| PREFERRED NAME | PASSPORT NAME | F-1 |
| COUNTRY OF BIRTH | COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP | ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE |
| DATE OF BIRTH | ADMISSION NUMBER | |
| FORM ISSUE REASON CONTINUED ATTENDANCE | LEGACY NAME | |

SCHOOL INFORMATION

| | |
|--|---|
| SCHOOL NAME DePaul University DePaul University - Lincoln Park | SCHOOL ADDRESS 2400 N. Sheffield Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614 |
| SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Daniel Bordage Advisor, OISS | SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE CHI214F0118001 21 DECEMBER 2002 |

PROGRAM OF STUDY

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| EDUCATION LEVEL MASTER'S | MAJOR 1 Journalism 09.0401 | MAJOR 2 None 00.0000 |
| NORMAL PROGRAM LENGTH 24 Months | PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required | ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient |
| PROGRAM START DATE 10 SEPTEMBER 2014 | PROGRAM END DATE 24 NOVEMBER 2015 | |

FINANCIALS

| ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR: 10 MONTHS | | STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR: 10 MONTHS | |
|--|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Tuition and Fees | \$ 21,760 | Personal Funds | \$ 36,760 |
| Living Expenses | \$ 15,000 | Funds From This School | \$ |
| Expenses of Dependents (0) | \$ 0 | Funds From Another Source | \$ |
| Other | \$ | On-Campus Employment | \$ |
| TOTAL | \$ 36,760 | TOTAL | \$ 36,760 |

REMARKS

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

SCHOOL ATTESTATION

I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.

| | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| ISS Advisor | DATE ISSUED 09 November 2015 | PLACE ISSUED Chicago, IL |
| SIGNATURE OF: Daniel Bordage, Advisor, OISS | | |

STUDENT ATTESTATION

I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Your signature | mm/dd/yyyy |
| SIGNATURE OF: | DATE |
| | |
| NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN | SIGNATURE |
| | |
| ADDRESS (city/state or province/country) | DATE |

Your OPT I-20

Approximately one week after submitting your OPT I-20 Request Form to ISS, you will get a new OPT I-20. This sample shows how your I-20 will be updated for OPT purposes.

Check It for Accuracy!

I-20 Page 2

When you pick up your OPT I-20, make sure to check the following items:

Employment Authorization: Your recommended OPT start and end dates should be listed in this section (as well as any other active employment recommendations or authorizations you may have). If the dates are different from those that you requested on your OPT I-20 Request Form, please notify your ISS Advisor immediately. Remember that at the time you receive your OPT-recommended I-20 and actually apply for OPT, you have not yet been approved for OPT authorization. This is why the Employment Status section should read "Requested" as in the example on the right.

Other Authorizations: You will also see your recommended OPT start and end dates again under this section, as well as any other active employment recommendations or authorizations, or reduced course load authorizations.

I-20 Page 3: No Changes

Page 3 of your I-20 will not change. It contains a description of the F-1 student regulations. You should have already read them at some point during your stay in the U.S. If not, it's never too late--read them now!

| Department of Homeland Security U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement | | I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status OMB NO. 1653-0038 | |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------|
| SEVIS ID: | (F-1) | NAME: | |
| EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION | | | |
| EMPLOYMENT STATUS REQUESTED - FULL TIME | TYPE POST-COMPLETION OPT | | |
| EMPLOYMENT START DATE 23 JANUARY 2016 | EMPLOYMENT END DATE 22 JANUARY 2017 | | |
| EMPLOYER NAME | EMPLOYER LOCATION | | |
| The student has met the 1 full academic year requirement | | | |
| COMMENTS | | | |
| CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION | | | |
| REQUESTED VISA TYPE | REQUEST/PETITION STATUS | RECEIPT NUMBER | BENEFIT START DATE/REQUEST DATE |
| EVENT HISTORY | | | |
| EVENT NAME Registration | | EVENT DATE 19 SEPTEMBER 2014 | |
| OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS | | | |
| AUTHORIZATION OPT Recommendation for Post-Completion OPT | START DATE 23 JANUARY 2016 | END DATE 22 JANUARY 2017 | |
| TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT | | | |
| This page when properly endorsed, may be used for reentry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each certification signature is valid for one year. | | | |
| SCHOOL OFFICIAL | TITLE | SIGNATURE | DATE ISSUED |
| | | X | |
| | | X | |
| | | X | |
| | | X | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Preparing and Mailing Your Application

- ☐ Gather the required OPT application documents
- ☐ Complete USCIS [Form I-765](#), Application for Employment Authorization
- ☐ Complete USCIS [Form G-1145](#), e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
- ☐ Compile the application documents, add your OPT I-20 photocopy, attach photos and payment
- ☐ Make an electronic or photo copy of your application for your records
- ☐ Mail your application packet to the USCIS Service Center

Required Documents for USCIS

- ☐ Two (2) U.S. passport photographs (with your name and I-94 number written lightly in pencil on the back of each) taken within the past 30 days
- ☐ Cashier's check or money order for **\$410** made payable to: "U.S. Department of Homeland Security." Write your name, address, and I-94 number in blue pen in the memo section of your cashier's check or money order if there is one (do not write on the back!)
- ☐ Original [Form I-765](#)
- ☐ Original [Form G-1145](#) to confirm receipt and obtain USCIS case receipt number
- ☐ Photocopy of OPT I-20 that was issued by ISS within the past 30 days (Pages 1 and 2). Don't forget to sign the I-20!
- ☐ Photocopy of passport biographical page
- ☐ Photocopy of F-1 visa stamp or F-1 change of status approval notice
- ☐ Photocopy of paper Form I-94 card (both sides) or [electronic I-94](#) record (electronic I-94 record is available ONLY to those with an admission stamp in their passport)
- ☐ Photocopies of any previous DePaul University I-20s authorizing Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- ☐ Photocopies of previous EAD card(s) and corresponding I-20(s), if applicable

No documents need to be submitted for F-2 dependents.

Prepare the Required Application Materials

Photocopy or scan each document for your own records.

Application Fee \$410

Purchase a cashier's check or money order made payable to: "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"

Write your name, address, and I-94 number in blue pen in the memo section of your cashier's check or money order if there is one (do not write on the back!)

Cashier's checks or money orders can be purchased at your bank or the U.S. Postal Service



Form G-1145 and Form I-765

Pages 18-24 of this guide will give you instructions on how to download and complete these forms

Photocopies of your:

1. New OPT I-20
2. Previous DePaul I-20s that include CPT authorization (if applicable)
3. Previously issued EAD cards (front and back) and corresponding I-20s (if applicable)

Make sure all of your I-20s are signed before copying them and keep the originals for your records

Only I-20s with Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization or I-20s that correspond with an EAD card should be included

Photocopy of your paper I-94 card or a print out of your electronic I-94 record

If you have a small, white card stapled into your passport, include a copy of both sides of the I-94 card, even though the back side may be blank

If you have a recent passport admission stamp, print out your [electronic I-94](#) record

Photocopy of passport and visa

Your passport biographical information page and F-1 visa stamp (or F-1 change of status approval notice)



Two (2) U.S. passport photographs

Photographs for your OPT application need to be a certain size and taken within the past 30 days. See Page 26 of this guide for additional information.

Write your name and I-94 number lightly in pencil on the back of each photo in case they get separated from your application.



Form G-1145

e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance

Submit Form G-1145 with your OPT application and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will alert you via SMS text message and/or email that your application has been accepted for review. You will also receive your receipt number in this text/email.

A sample G-1145 form is shown here. Complete the form with your name, E-mail address, and mobile telephone number as directed.

Download [Form G-1145](#) and USCIS instructions.



e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance

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

USCIS
Form G-1145
OMB No. 1615-0109
Expires 09/30/2016

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 provide 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.

Paperwork Reduction Act

An agency may not conduct or sponsor an information collection and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at 3 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions and completing and submitting the form. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Regulatory Coordination Division, Office of Policy and Strategy, 20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529-2140. OMB No. 1615-0109. **Do not mail your completed Form G-1145 to this address.**

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

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Applicant/Petitioner Full Last Name Last Name | Applicant/Petitioner Full First Name First Name | Applicant/Petitioner Full Middle Name Middle Name |
| E-mail Address your.email@address.com | | Mobile Phone Number (Text Message) +1 (123) 456-7890 |

Form I-765

Application for Employment Authorization

Form I-765 is the other USCIS form you will need to submit with your OPT application. A sample Form I-765 form is shown here (Page 1 of 2).

Important: You are required to use the most current version of Form I-765. It is best to download Form I-765 right before you mail your application since USCIS updates forms frequently.

How to Complete Form I-765

Completing Form I-765 for OPT is a simple task, but a few items can be confusing. The following pages will cover how to complete those “tricky” questions so you can avoid any delays in receiving your work authorization.

Please note if you are completing the form on your computer and printing it out (RECOMMENDED), not all information may fit (e.g. address information). For these areas, please hand write the information.

Download [Form I-765](#) and USCIS instructions.

| Application For Employment Authorization | | USCIS Form I-765 | |
|--|-----------|---|--------------------------------|
| Department of Homeland Security U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services | | OMB No. 1615-0040 Expires 02/28/2018 | |
| For USCIS Use Only | Fee Stamp | Action Block | Initial Receipt Resubmitted |
| | | | Relocated |
| | | | Received Sent |
| | | | Completed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application Approved | | <input type="checkbox"/> Application Denied - Failed to establish: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid From _____ | | <input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (a) or (c) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid To _____ | | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic necessity under 8 CFR 274a.12(c)(14), (18) and 8 CFR 214.2(f) | |
| Subject to the following conditions: _____ | | <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant is filing under section 274a.12 _____ | |
| ▶ START HERE - Type or print in black ink. | | | |
| I am applying for: | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Permission to accept employment. | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Replacement (of lost employment authorization document). | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document). | | | |
| 1. Full Name | | | |
| Family Name First Name Middle Name | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 2. Other Names Used (include Maiden Name) | | | |
| Family Name First Name Middle Name | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 3. U.S. Mailing Address | | | |
| Street Number and Name Apt. Number | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| Town or City State ZIP Code | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 4. Country of Citizenship or Nationality | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 5. Place of Birth | | | |
| Town or City State/Province Country | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 7. Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female | | | |
| 8. Marital Status | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed | | | |
| 9. Social Security Number (Include all numbers you have ever used, if any) | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 10. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or Form I-94 Number (if any) | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS? | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Complete the following questions.) | | | |
| Which USCIS Office? Dates | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation) | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No (Proceed to Question 12.) | | | |
| 12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S., on or about (mm/dd/yyyy) | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S. | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 14. Status at Last Entry (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.) | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 15. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.) | | | |
| _____ | | | |
| 16. Eligibility Category. Go to the "Who May File Form I-765?" section of the Instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc. | | | |
| () () () | | | |

Form I-765 01/17/17 N Page 1 of 2

Completing the I-765

Do not write in the space at the top of the I-765 form.



| For USCIS Use Only | Fee Stamp | Action Block | Initial Receipt | Resubmitted |
|---|---|--------------|--|-------------|
| | | | Relocated | |
| | | | Received | Sent |
| | | | Completed | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid From _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid To _____ Subject to the following conditions: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Application Denied - Failed to establish: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (a) or (c) </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Economic necessity under 8 CFR 274a.12(c)(14), (18) and 8 CFR 214.2(f) </div> </div> | | Approved | Denied |
| | | | A# _____ | |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant is filing under section 274a.12 _____ | |

Begin by selecting the box labeled "Permission to accept employment." on Page 1



I am applying for:

- ☒ Permission to accept employment.
- ☐ Replacement (of lost employment authorization document).
- ☐ Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document).

Completing the I-765

Items 1-8 (Page 1)

Item #1: Name

Your Family (last) Name must be in ALL CAPS. Your First Name (and Middle Name, if applicable) can be entered as you would normally write it (see example).

Item #2: Other Names Used

You only need to complete Item #2 if you had a name change while studying in the U.S.

Item #3: Address in the United States

The address you put here is where your new EAD card will be mailed if approved. This address needs to be valid for at least the next 3 months, the typical length of time it will take to process your OPT application. If you think you may move in the months after you mail the application, use a **reliable friend or family member's address** to receive your EAD.

If you are using an address other than your own, use "c/o" to indicate that your mail is being delivered "in care of" the resident of that address. If you have questions about using a "c/o" address please contact your ISS advisor.

3. U.S. Mailing Address

| Street Number and Name | Apt. Number | |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| c/o 123 Friend's Street Name | 1Z | |
| Town or City | State | ZIP Code |
| City Name | IL | 60604 |

1. Full Name

| Family Name | First Name | Middle Name |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| LAST NAME | First Name | |

2. Other Names Used (include Maiden Name)

| Family Name | First Name | Middle Name |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | | |
| | | |

3. U.S. Mailing Address

| Street Number and Name | Apt. Number | |
|------------------------|-------------|----------|
| 123 Street Name | 1Z | |
| Town or City | State | ZIP Code |
| City Name | IL | 60604 |

4. Country of Citizenship or Nationality

| |
|--------|
| Canada |
|--------|

5. Place of Birth

| Town or City | State/Province | Country |
|--------------|----------------|---------|
| Quebec City | Quebec | Canada |

6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

01/02/1980

7. Gender ☐ Male ☒ Female

8. Marital Status

☒ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed

Completing the I-765

Items 9-16 (Page 1)

Item #9: Social Security Number (SSN)

If you have never worked in the U.S., you may not have a SSN. If this is the case, you can leave this space blank. You will be able to apply for a SSN after you receive your EAD card.

Item #10: I-94 Number

Use your current I-94 number. This is the 11-digit number found on the top left corner of your paper I-94 card or on your electronic I-94 record (access [here](#)).

Item #11: Previous Employment Authorization

Check "Yes" if you have ever received an EAD card previously. Fill in the next three lines with the information related to that previous work permit. A photocopy of your EAD card(s) must be included with your application package. (If you have lost it/them, write "lost EAD" in this space).

If you have never received an EAD card, check the "No" box here. If you have worked on-campus or have been authorized for CPT, you will still check "No" here.

Please note: the example here is for a student who has **NOT** had a previous EAD card.

Item #12: Date of Last Entry into the U.S.

This is the date of your most recent entry into the U.S. This entry date can be found stamped on your paper I-94 card, on your electronic I-94 record, or in your passport admission stamp.

Item #13: Place of Last Entry into the U.S.

This is the name of the city where you landed in the U.S. This information is found on your passport admission stamp (usually as a code like "CHI" for Chicago). If you drove across from Canada or Mexico, enter the name and the city where you entered the U.S.

Item #14: Status of Last Entry

This is the status you had upon entering the U.S. Most students entered in F-1 status, however, you may have initially entered with an H-1B work visa or in another status.

Item #15: Current Immigration Status

Your current status should be F-1 Student. If not, talk to your ISS Advisor immediately.

Item #16: Eligibility Category

Use the following codes depending on the type of OPT you are requesting:

(c) (3) (A) Pre-Completion OPT

(c) (3) (B) Post-Completion OPT (see sample here)

(c) (3) (C) 24-month OPT extension

Please note: the code (c) (3) (C) should only be used for 24-month OPT extensions for eligible students. Please see your ISS Advisor if you have questions about your eligibility for the 24-month OPT extension.

9. Social Security Number (Include all numbers you have ever used, if any)

123-45-6789

10. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or Form I-94 Number (if any)

12345678910

11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?

☐ Yes (Complete the following questions.)

Which USCIS Office?

Dates

Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)

☒ No (Proceed to Question 12.)

12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S., on or about (mm/dd/yyyy)

01/01/2016

13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S.

CHI

14. Status at Last Entry (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)

F-1 Student

15. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.)

F-1 Student

16. Eligibility Category. Go to the "Who May File Form I-765?" section of the Instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.

(c) (3) (B)

Completing the I-765

Items 17-19 (Page 2)

Item #17: (c)(3)(C) Eligibility Category (24-Month Extension)

Only those individuals who are eligible for the 24-month OPT extension need to complete this section. If you entered (c) (3) (A) or (c) (3) (B) on Item #16, you are not required to fill out this item.

Item #18: (c)(26) Eligibility Category

Leave this line blank.

Item #19: (c)(35) and (c)(36) Eligibility Category

Leave this line blank.

17. (c)(3)(C) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(3)(C) in Question 16 above, list your degree, your employer's name as listed in E-Verify, and your employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in the space below.

Degree Employer's Name as listed in E-Verify

Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number

18. (c)(26) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(26) in Question 16 above, please provide the receipt number of your H-1B principal spouse's most recent Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-129.

19. (c)(35) and (c)(36) Eligibility Category

- a. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) or (c)(36) in Question 16 above, please provide the receipt number of the Form I-140 beneficiary's Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-140.

- b. Have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime? ☐ Yes ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered "Yes" to Item Numbers 19.b., refer to Item Number 5., Item H. or Item I. in the Who May File Form I-765 section of these Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.

Finishing the I-765

Sign your name, include the date of your signature, and enter your telephone number at the bottom of the form.

Please note that your signature must fit in the space provided on the form. If your signature is too big your EAD card may not contain your signature or your application may be returned to you and delay the processing time of your application. Be conservative and use a signature smaller than your normal handwriting.

SIGNATURES MUST BE IN BLUE INK!

If you prepare your own I-765 you do not need to complete the bottom portion of the form.



Certification

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the "Who May File Form I-765?" section of the instructions and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in Question 16.

Applicant's Signature

Don't forget to sign!

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

09/05/2016

Telephone Number

3121234567

Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Applicant

I declare that this document was prepared by me at the request of the applicant and is based on all information of which I have any knowledge.

Preparer's Signature

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

Printed Name

Address



Request for Evidence (RFE)

If you receive a “Request for Evidence (RFE)” from USCIS

We strongly advise you to see your ISS Advisor. In most cases, USCIS will not call you at the telephone number you put on the I-765. If there is a problem with your application, they will send you a notice by mail called a “Request for Evidence (RFE).” An RFE does not mean that your application has been rejected. It simply means that you need to send in additional documents before USCIS can make a decision on your OPT application.

Please make note of the deadline to respond to your RFE if you receive one. If you fail to meet this deadline, your application will be denied.

Receiving an RFE will delay the processing of your OPT application. For this reason, it is important to make sure that you have completed Form I-765 correctly and sent the proper documents to USCIS.

Once USCIS receives an RFE response, application processing resumes and a decision is made fairly quickly.

Photo Specifications

The photos you are required to use for the OPT application must meet the specifications of U.S.-style passport photos. To see a full description of these specifications, go to the [U.S. Department of State](https://www.state.gov/passport-photos/) website.

Most places that take passport photos are already familiar with the specifications. However, you may want to print this page, or the pages from the website above to take with you when you get your photo taken.

Frequently Asked Questions

What type of paper are the photographs to be printed on?
The photos should be printed on thin photo-quality paper.

Do the photos have to be in color?
Yes, the photos must be in color.

How big must the photos be?
The photos must measure exactly 2 inches by 2 inches.

Can hats or religious headgear be worn for the photo?
Unless worn daily for religious reasons, all hats or headgear should be removed for the photo. In all cases, no item or attire should cover or otherwise obscure any part of the face.

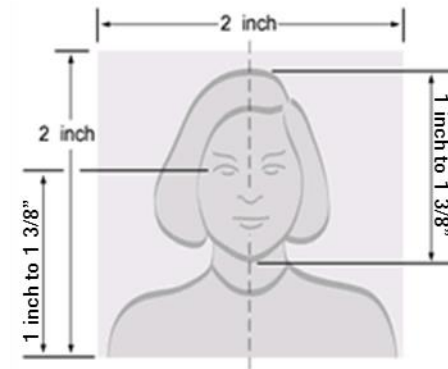
Can eyeglasses be worn for the photo?
Eyeglasses worn on a daily basis can be worn for the photo. However, there should be no reflections from the eyeglasses that obscures the eyes. Dark glasses or nonprescription glasses with tinted lenses are not acceptable unless you need them for medical reasons.



A well-composed photo

7 Steps to Successful Photos:

1. Your photo should show your full face, front view, eyes open
2. Make sure the photo shows your full head from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1-3/8 inches (25 mm to 35 mm)
3. Your head should be centered within the frame
4. Make sure eye height is between 1-1/8 inches to 1-3/8 inches (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
5. The background should be plain white or off-white
6. There should be no distracting shadows on the face or in the background
7. Make sure you have a natural expression



Write your name and I-94 number *lightly* on the back of each photo in case they get separated from your application.

Preparing and Mailing the OPT Application

Mailing Options

Priority Express Mail (USPS) and Federal Express (FedEx) or United Parcel Service (UPS)

We recommend [Priority Express Mail](#), [Federal Express](#), or [United Parcel Service](#) as the most reliable options for shipping your application.

If you use express mail or a courier service, use the express mail address for USCIS, which is different from the standard post mail address (see next page).

Certified Mail and Return Receipt

Certified Mail and return receipt services are available through the [U.S. Postal Service](#). You can request this service at the post office and pay a minimal fee. With certified mail, you will get a receipt showing what date USCIS received your application.

A sample of the Certified Mail form and receipt is shown to the right.

In some cases, it may take up to 10 days for your application sent through the standard U.S. Postal Service post to be officially received. For this reason, standard U.S. Postal Service post is not recommended.

See a U.S. Postal Service employee at your local [post office](#) to learn more about your mailing service options.

SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION

- Complete items 1, 2, and 3, and attach complete item 4. If Registered Mail is needed.
- Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you.
- Attach item 4 to the back of the envelope, or on the front if space permits.

1. Address/Address to:

**USCIS
PO Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036**

2. Article Number (Date of birth, service label)

PS Form 3811, March 2001

COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY

3. Signature (checked with an X)

4. Agent (checked with an X)

5. Address (checked with an X)

6. Yes (checked with an X)

7. No (checked with an X)

8. Service Type

- ☒ Certified Mail
- ☒ Registered Mail
- ☒ Insured Mail
- ☒ Express Mail
- ☒ Return Receipt for Mailed Item
- ☒ C.O.D.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

First Class Mail, Postage & Fees Paid, USPS, Permit No. 6-111

* Sender: Please print your name, address, and ZIP+4 in this box *

Joe Kwon
123 Main Street
Chicago, IL 60604

**U.S. Postal Service
CERTIFIED MAIL RECEIPT
(Business Mail Only, No Insurance Coverage Provided)**

OFFICIAL USE

Package #

Certified Fee

Return Receipt Fee (Postmark Required)

Registered Mail Fee (Postmark Required)

Insured Mail Fee (Postmark Required)

Total Postage & Fees

Postmark Here

Serial #

Sender, Agent, or Addressee (Print Name and Address)

City, State, ZIP+4

PS Form 3811, January 2001

Mailing Your Application: A Final Review Before Mailing

Checklist Review

Put the following items in an 8.5" x 11" envelope and mail them to one of the USCIS addresses noted on this page.

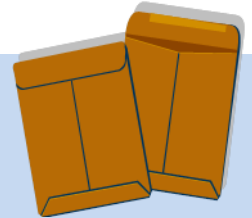
- ☐ Two (2) new passport photos taken within the past 30 days (with name and I-94 number written lightly on the back in pencil)
- ☐ Cashier's check or money order for **\$410** made payable to: "U.S. Department of Homeland Security." Write your name, address, and I-94 number in blue pen in the memo section of your cashier's check or money order if there is one (do not write on the back!)
- ☐ Original, signed Form I-765
- ☐ Original Form G-1145
- ☐ Photocopy of OPT I-20 (pages 1 and 2) issued within the past 30 days (don't forget to sign your I-20 before photocopying!)
- ☐ Photocopy of passport biographical page and F-1 visa stamp or F-1 change of status approval notice
- ☐ Photocopy of paper I-94 card (both sides) **or** printout of electronic I-94 record
- ☐ Photocopies of DePaul University I-20s that contain CPT authorization(s), if applicable
- ☐ Photocopy of any previously issued EAD card(s) and corresponding I-20(s), if applicable

Application Deadline

Don't delay! Mail your complete application to USCIS as soon as you receive your OPT I-20. USCIS must receive your application no later than 30 days from the date your OPT was recommended by ISS. Please account for mailing time. Questions? Contact your ISS Advisor for more information.

USCIS Mailing Addresses

*for people who live in Illinois**



For Express Mail:

USCIS
Attn: AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

For Regular or Certified Mail:

USCIS
PO Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

Mail your OPT application to the appropriate USCIS Service Center based on your residential address (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses>) using a **fast and trackable mailing service** like Priority Express, certified USPS mail, FedEx, UPS or DHL. Please do not use regular USPS mail, as it may take too long and/or get lost.

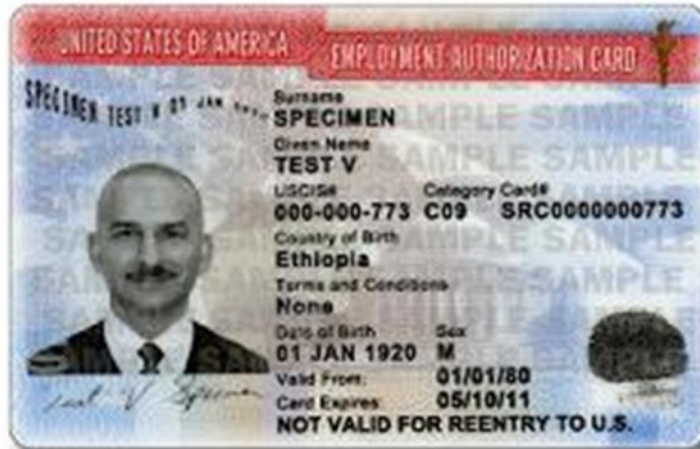


Do not E-file your OPT application!

e-Notification

To receive an email and/or a text message confirmation that your OPT application has been received by USCIS, complete Form G-1145 and attach it to your application (see page 18 of this tutorial for instructions).

The Employment Authorization Document (EAD card)



OPT Reporting Requirements

- All students on post-completion OPT must report changes on the following information to ISS within 10 days of any change:

Personal Information:

1. Legal Name
2. Email Address
3. Residential Address
4. Mailing Address
5. Email Address
6. Telephone Number

Employment Information:

1. Employer/company name
2. Employer/company address
3. Employment start date
4. Employment end date (when applicable)
5. EIN (Employer Identification Number)
6. Supervisor Name/phone number/email address
7. Explain how employment is related to field of study (1-2 sentences)

- Report changes to your personal information by updating your demographic portfolio in the DePaul [Campus Connection](#) system.
- Report changes to your employment information in Campus Connection:
 1. Login to <https://campusconnect.depaul.edu> by using your Campus Connection ID and password.
 2. Click on Menu>Self Service>Student Resources>ISS Forms Requests
 3. Select "OPT Update" to proceed
- ISS and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recommend that students also keep clear written or electronic records of all periods of employment and unemployment while on OPT. This information should include: job title; proof of employment duration (start and end dates); number of hours worked per week; location; contact information for supervisor/manager; description of work responsibilities; and, evidence that work performed is/was related to your field of study. Additional evidence may include: pay-stubs; W-2 forms; copies of contracts; offer letters; and, employment verification letters.

Unemployment Limit

- F-1 students on post-completion OPT are limited to no more than a total of 90 days of unemployment for each period of post-completion OPT at each educational/academic level
- Exceeding the unemployment limit will be considered a violation of lawful F-1 status; you will risk automatic termination of your F-1 SEVIS immigration record as a result
- Exceeding 90 days of unemployment may result in denial of future immigration benefits and can have long-term negative consequences for your immigration record and status in the United States
- Students authorized for the 24-month OPT extension currently receive an additional 60 days of unemployment time for a total of 150 days
- See your ISS Advisor to discuss your options before exceeding your unemployment limit

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- **How can I know the status of my OPT application?** As soon as you have your USCIS case receipt number, check the [USCIS website](#) and click on the “Check your Case Status” link. The main information you can get from this is whether your application has been approved yet or is still in process. The processing time indicated is a standard message that often has no connection with actual processing times.
- **When will I get my EAD?** USCIS will mail the EAD card to you at the address you provided on the I-765 form. It should arrive approximately 60-90 days from the day that your application was received and processing began at USCIS.
- **I never received a “Notice of Action.”** USCIS usually sends this (or electronic confirmation) within two to six weeks of their receipt of an OPT application, however, paper “Notice of Action” documents are slowly being eliminated. If you have not received a “Notice of Action” or electronic confirmation from USCIS after six weeks, check with your bank to see if USCIS cashed your check. If so, you can request a copy of the check from your bank that should have your USCIS tracking number printed on it. Keep in mind that it may take up to two weeks to get a copy from the bank. Again, you can check the status of your application online at the [USCIS website](#).
- **How do I contact USCIS?** The number on the Notice of Action or electronic confirmation (1-800-375-5283) is the National Customer Service line. Be sure to have your USCIS case receipt number ready before you call. Inquiries through the National Customer Service line may delay the processing of your application. Contact your ISS Advisor first.
- **Is there any way to change the information on the OPT application (address, dates, etc.) once I have mailed it to USCIS?** After you have mailed your application to USCIS, no changes can be made except for address updates. If you change your address while your application is pending, contact your ISS Advisor. You will need your USCIS case receipt number.
- **How long can I stay in the U.S. after the end date of my OPT authorization?** You have 60 days after your OPT ends to leave the U.S., request a transfer of your SEVIS record/I-20, or change your visa status, assuming you have maintained lawful immigration status during your OPT authorization. You cannot work after the expiration date on your EAD, unless you have received prior permission from ISS or USCIS.
- **Will my spouse or children get a new OPT I-20 too?** When your new OPT I-20 is printed, you should also get an I-20 for your F-2 dependent family members with the updated information on it. If you did not receive OPT I-20s for your family, contact your ISS Advisor.
- **90 days have passed since the USCIS receipt date. What can I do?** First, verify your application status at the [USCIS website](#). If your OPT application has been approved you will need to wait until the EAD card arrives (this could be between 2 to 4 weeks after approval). If the application is still pending, contact your ISS Advisor.
- **USCIS said that my EAD card was approved, but I have not received it yet – can I start working?** No. Employers are required to verify that you are eligible to work before they can put you on payroll. You must be able to show them the EAD card when you begin employment.
- **USCIS said that my application was approved over six weeks ago and I still haven’t received my EAD card. Is there a problem?** There may be. Have you moved? If so, did you update your OPT address? Contact your ISS Advisor for more information.
- **How do I get an extension of my EAD card?** Only students who have completed certain STEM majors and have an employer who is enrolled in E-Verify are eligible for 24 Month Extension OPT. Please see your ISS Advisor for more information.
- **I lost my EAD card. How can I get it replaced?** If you lose your EAD card the only way to replace it is with a replacement EAD card application. You must submit the same items as the initial application to USCIS (fee, photos, forms, etc.) and it could take another 60-90 days for processing. It is not possible to replace an EAD card if you are outside of the U.S.
- **My EAD card says “not valid for re-entry” on it. Does that mean I cannot travel abroad and re-enter on OPT?** All EAD cards are marked with this notation. It simply means that you must carry other documents to show proof of your eligibility to re-enter the U.S. such as your I-20 and valid F-1 visa stamp. The EAD card alone is not enough to re-enter the U.S. **It is recommended that you consult with your ISS Advisor before traveling during your OPT authorization.**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- **What counts as OPT employment?** DHS has provided many options to satisfy the employment requirement including paid, unpaid, and volunteer work related to your field of study. Please contact your ISS Advisor if you have questions about your employment requirements.
- **Is there a minimum number of hours I need to work?** There is no minimum for students on Pre-Completion OPT. All students on Post-Completion OPT, whether they have completed their degree or not, are required to work at least 20 hours per week. Students who do not work a minimum of 20 hours per week on Post-Completion OPT are not meeting the employment requirement.
- **I have been unemployed for 80 days. What is going to happen on the 90th day?** If you accumulate 90 days or more of unemployment, you are in violation of status which may lead to SEVIS record termination and may affect your ability to travel in and out of the U.S. in F-1 status, eligibility for future immigration benefits, and change of status applications. To avoid status violation, you may do one of the following before the 90th day:
 1. Secure paid, or eligible unpaid work related to your field of study for at least 20 hours per week;
 2. Request a 'transfer out' of your SEVIS record to a new school;
 3. Leave the US and report your departure date by completing the [ISS Departure Form](#) or emailing ISS at ISS@depaul.edu
- **Do I need a Social Security Number to work in the US?** Yes. If you plan to work in the U.S. you will need a valid Social Security Number (SSN). To apply, please obtain instructions and directions to the Social Security Office from the ISS front desk. The Social Security Administration will process your application and mail your Social Security Number to you.
- **Do I need to complete any forms with my employer to begin working?** Yes. Within the first three days of beginning work you and your employer must complete a form entitled Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9). This form will be kept on file by your employer and must be updated each time you receive a renewal of your work permission. Your employer will provide this form and assist you in its completion.
- **Can I change employers while on OPT?** Yes. OPT work authorization is not job-specific. Therefore, you may change employers, or have multiple employers at the same time, provided that each position is directly related to your major field of study and commensurate with your educational level. You will need to update the employer information with ISS within 10 days of the change through Campus Connection:
 1. Login to <https://campusconnect.depaul.edu> by using your Campus Connection ID and password.
 2. Click on Menu>Self Service>Student Resources>ISS Forms Requests
 3. Select "OPT Update" to proceed
- **Do I pay taxes while working on OPT?** Students in F-1 status are subject to all federal, state and local taxes that may apply. Check the [IRS website](#), for tax information and to see if your country is one of the few that has a tax treaty with the U.S. allowing students to exclude a limited amount of earned income from federal taxation. In general, however, F-1 students who have been present in the US for fewer than five calendar years are exempt from Social Security (FICA) and Medicare taxes. Be sure to bring this to the attention of your employer, as many employers are unfamiliar with this provision of the tax laws. See publication 519 available for download from the [IRS web site](#) for information on how to claim salary incorrectly deducted for FICA or Medicare.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- ***What if I am not able to complete my degree program by the completion date noted on the OPT I-20?*** If you applied early and your application has not been adjudicated by USCIS, you may be able to withdraw your OPT application and request a program extension of your I-20; your OPT application fee will not be refunded. Please see your ISS Advisor immediately if this applies to you.
- ***What status do I have between my degree completion date and the start of my OPT (EAD card start date)?***
If you have chosen a start date well after your degree program completion date, you will still remain in F-1 status. Even though there seems to be a gap in your status, you are still legally allowed to remain in the U.S. or re-enter the U.S. from abroad during this time assuming you have already actually applied for OPT.
- ***Can I go to school while on OPT?***
Time spent going to school should only be an incidental part of your stay in the U.S. If you decide to go back to school full-time, you must get a new I-20 from the school and forfeit the remainder of your OPT time. See your ISS Advisor if you are considering this option.
- ***Do I need to do anything with the ISS while on OPT?*** Yes. As a condition of F-1 status, all students must report any changes in address and employment information within 10 days of any changes in Campus Connection:
 1. Login to <https://campusconnect.depaul.edu> by using your Campus Connection ID and password.
 2. Click on Menu>Self Service>Student Resources>ISS Forms Requests
 3. Select “OPT Update” to proceed
- ***Can I start working without pay while waiting for my EAD?*** No. The government may view this as “employment without authorization” and is risky for both you and your employer.
- ***Does my visa need to be valid while on OPT?*** Your visa only needs to be valid to re-enter the U.S. from abroad. Thus, if it expires while you are still in the U.S., there is no problem. Your F-1 immigration status remains valid as long as you have an EAD card that has not expired and you maintain the minimum employment requirement.

OPT Reminders

- Your application for post-completion OPT must be received by USCIS no earlier than 90 days before degree completion and no later than 60 days after your date of completion. Apply for pre-completion OPT no earlier than 90 days prior to your intended employment start date.
- The average USCIS processing time to issue an OPT EAD card is 60 to 90 days. Please visit the USCIS Processing Times website for current processing times.
- **If you exceed 90 days of unemployment while on post-completion OPT, this is considered a violation of your F-1 status. This unemployment limit does not apply to pre-completion OPT.**
- You may not begin off-campus employment until you receive your EAD card in-hand and not before the start date printed on your EAD card.
- Once the OPT application is submitted to USCIS, your recommended OPT authorization dates cannot be changed without withdrawing your application completely.
- Cancelling your OPT application can be very difficult and must be discussed with an ISS Advisor.
- Post-completion OPT can be extended beyond 12 months in limited circumstances (i.e. 24-month OPT extension); see your ISS Advisor for more information.
- OPT employment must be related to the degree program listed on your most recently issued I-20.
- Update any changes to your name by contacting DePaul University's Office of Student Records.
- Update any changes to your address, phone number, or email address in Campus Connection.
- Report employment updates in Campus Connection:
 1. Login to <https://campusconnect.depaul.edu> by using your Campus Connection ID and password.
 2. Click on Menu>Self Service>Student Resources>ISS Forms Requests
 3. Select "OPT Update" to proceed

OPT Resources

- [Working in the United States](#)
- [USCIS OPT Tutorial](#)
- [SEVP F-1 Student Benefits](#)
- [SEVP Practical Training](#)
- [STEM-Designated Degree Program List](#)
- [USCIS OPT Extension and Cap-Gap Information](#)
- [ICE Travel Guidance](#) (see sections 2.L., 2.M., and 2.N. for OPT specific guidance)

Glossary of Terms

- **Authorization Dates:** Your period of authorized OPT employment noted by the start and end dates printed on your Employment Authorization Document (EAD card).
- **Curricular Practical Training (CPT):** Off-campus work authorization that may be obtained from International Student and Scholar Services (ISS). CPT requires that you receive academic credit for the work experience for which you are requesting authorization.
- **Degree Program Completion Date:** The last day of your final term of study
- **DHS:** [United States Department of Homeland Security](#). U.S. government agency responsible for enforcing U.S. immigration laws
- **Employment Authorization Document (EAD card):** Card containing your name, photograph and dates of employment authorization used as proof that you are permitted to work in the United States for a specific time period.
- **Form G-1145:** USCIS [form](#) to request an electronic notification (e-Notification) by SMS text message or email when USCIS accepts your OPT application.
- **Form I-765:** USCIS application [form](#) used to request an Employment Authorization Document (EAD card); used for OPT employment authorization.
- **Grace Period:** Common reference to the 60-day period following degree program completion as well as the 60-day period following the completion of OPT authorization.
- **ICE:** [Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#). Investigative arm of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Glossary of Terms

- **Optional Practical Training (OPT):** Temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study. Typically 12 months of work authorization earned per eligible education/degree level.
- **Pre-Completion OPT:** OPT used prior to completing your degree program
- **Post-Completion OPT:** OPT used after completion of your degree program
- **SEVIS (record):** Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. Government database that contains your student immigration record. I-20s are requested from SEVIS by ISS.
- **SEVP:** [Student and Exchange Visitor Program](#); U.S. government agency that manages F-1 student regulations and programs.
- **STEM:** Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (see 24-month OPT extension)
- **USCIS:** [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services](#); U.S. government agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States. USCIS processes immigration applications, including Form I-765.
- **24-month OPT Extension:** OPT extension available to some STEM degree holders.

Thank you!

Congratulations on successfully completing your OPT application.
Best of luck from ISS as you pursue your employment opportunities!

*Special thanks to our friends at the Berkeley International Office
at the University of California, Berkeley from whom we adapted this OPT tutorial.*