



Optional Practical Training (OPT) is temporary employment authorization for eligible F-1 students. OPT employment must be directly related to the student's major field of study. Eligible students may receive up to twelve (12) months of post-completion OPT for each higher degree level completed.

Eligibility requirements

To be eligible for Post-Completion OPT, students must:

1. Maintain valid F-1 status.
2. Have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one academic year.
3. Be completing all degree requirements during the current term.
4. Intend to work in a position directly related to the major field of study.
5. Be physically present in the United States at the time USCIS receives the OPT application.

When to apply

Students may apply for Post-Completion OPT:

- Up to 90 days before the program completion date; and
- No later than 60 days after the program completion date.

IMPORTANT:

USCIS must receive Form I-765 within 30 days of the date the DSO issues the OPT-recommended Form I-20. Pacific States University strongly recommends that students begin the OPT application process during their final academic term.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR OPT APPLICATION

Students are responsible for preparing and submitting all required documents to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The following documents are generally required for an OPT application:

1. Completed Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization.
2. Form I-20 with OPT recommendation issued by the Designated School Official (DSO).
3. Copy of the passport biographical page.
4. Copy of the most recent F-1 visa stamp (if applicable).
5. Copy of the most recent Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record.
6. Copies of all previously issued Employment Authorization Documents (EADs), if applicable.
7. Passport-style photographs that meet USCIS requirements (for paper filings) or a digital passport-style photo (for online filings).
8. Payment of the required USCIS filing fee.

Students should carefully review the USCIS instructions for Form I-765 and ensure that all required documentation is included before submitting the application.

The University is not responsible for reviewing or submitting the OPT application packet to USCIS. Students are solely responsible for ensuring that their OPT application is complete, accurate, and submitted in a timely manner.

Application procedure

1. Submit an OPT request to the DSO to obtain an OPT-recommended Form I-20.
2. After receiving the OPT-recommended Form I-20, carefully review, sign, and retain a copy for your records.
3. Prepare and submit Form I-765 and all supporting documents to USCIS. USCIS must receive the application within 30 days of the date the DSO issued the OPT-recommended Form I-20.
4. Keep copies of all documents submitted to USCIS for your personal records.

Monitor your USCIS account and case status regularly after submitting your application.

USCIS filing fee

USCIS filing fees are subject to change. Students should verify the current filing fee on the USCIS website before submitting the application.

Choosing an opt start date

Students may request an OPT start date that falls within the 60-day grace period following program completion.

When selecting a start date, students should consider:

- Employment opportunities;
- Anticipated processing times; and
- Personal circumstances.

The requested OPT start date must be within the allowable period established by USCIS regulations.

After filing the opt application

After USCIS receives the application, students should expect to receive:

1. Form I-797 Receipt Notice.
2. USCIS online account updates and case status notifications.
3. Employment Authorization Document (EAD), if approved.

Students may track their case status online using the receipt number provided by USCIS.

Important information regarding OPT

1. A job offer is not required before applying for OPT.
2. Students may not begin employment until:
 - The EAD card has been received; and
 - The authorized start date listed on the EAD has arrived.
3. Employment must be directly related to the student's major field of study.
4. Students may not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment during the standard 12-month OPT period.
5. Students are required to report any changes in address, employer information, employment interruption, or loss of employment within 10 days.
6. Students should keep copies of all employment records for future immigration benefits.

Reporting requirements during OPT

Students must report the following information within 10 days of any change:

- Residential address;
- Employer name and address;
- Employment start date;
- Employment end date;
- Changes in employment status.

Students should report changes through the SEVP Portal and/or directly to the DSO, according to university procedures.

Travel during OPT

Students traveling outside the United States while on OPT should carry:

1. Valid passport (valid for at least six months into the future).
2. Valid F-1 visa.
3. OPT I-20 with a travel signature issued within the previous six months.
4. Valid EAD card.
5. Proof of current employment or a job offer letter.

Travel without the appropriate documentation may result in difficulty re-entering the United States.

USEFUL RESOURCES

USCIS Forms: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms>
 Form I-765 Information: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
 USCIS Online Account: <https://myaccount.uscis.gov>
 I-94 Record: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>
 SEVP Portal Information: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov>

STUDENT INFORMATION (All required to identify your record – please print clearly)		
PSU Student ID (if available)	Degree/Program	Major
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Telephone	E-mail Address	OPT Start Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
I wish my OPT to start on the date mentioned above and I agree that it is my responsibility to review my OPT applications before sending to USCIS. Student Certification: I understand that it is my responsibility to review all application materials before submitting them to USCIS. I also understand that approval of OPT is solely determined by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).		
Student's Signature Required (<i>Digital or electronic signature is not accepted</i>) X		Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy)