



What is Post-Completion OPT?

Optional Practical Training (OPT) - Up to 12 months of full-time employment authorization after completion of all coursework requirements or after completion of all degree requirements. OPT employment **MUST** be in the field of study and initial employment may begin only after an Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) has been received from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Who is eligible for Post-Completion OPT?

- 1.) F-1 students who have completed at least 1 academic year of study in the U.S.
- 2.) F-1 students who have completed all coursework requirements (excluding thesis or equivalent) or who have completed all degree requirements.
 - F-1 students are eligible for up to 12 months of full-time OPT for each higher degree level - a year for a Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate
 - This does **NOT** apply if going to a lower degree (i.e. Master's to Bachelor's) or to a similar degree (i.e. Master's to second Master's).
 - Post-Completion OPT years cannot be combined or split.
- 3.) F-1 students who have not used 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) during the current degree level.

When can I begin my Post-Completion OPT work?

You are no longer eligible for any type of employment (including on-campus employment) after your program completion date unless you have already received your OPT card from U.S. Citizenship and Naturalization Services (USCIS). **DO NOT BEGIN EMPLOYMENT UNTIL THE DATE LISTED ON YOUR CARD.**

When should I apply for post completion OPT?

If you wish to start OPT after you complete your degree, the earliest that you can apply for post completion OPT is 90 days prior to your graduation date. It is strongly encouraged that you apply at least 90 days prior to your requested OPT start date since OPT processing can take up to 3 months. You must file your application with USCIS **before** the end of the 60-day grace period following your program completion date.

If you wish to begin OPT before you complete your degree, you may apply only after you have completed all coursework and have only thesis or dissertation hours remaining. Your I-20 will be shortened to the requested OPT start date. **NOTE:** You must complete your academic degree within your OPT year, as the I-20 cannot be extended after the Program Completion date. You should **NOT** apply for OPT unless you are very confident that you will complete your degree within 1 year.

Can I remain unemployed during my post-completion OPT period?

During this time, your F-1 status is dependent on employment. You must not accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment during the standard 12-month period of post-completion OPT. Days of unemployment will be counted from the start date of OPT, although DHS may not count days accrued while you are waiting for your authorization. Please be sure to keep the CGE updated on any and all employment or changes in employment. You can update your employment information online at <http://cge.fsu.edu> under *International Students/F-1 Status Students/ F-1 Forms/ OPT Update Form*. Please also keep a good personal record of all periods of employment or unemployment.

Why do I get a new I-20 after I submit my post completion OPT application to the Center for Global Engagement?

The new I-20 will show the recommendation for OPT on page 3, with your requested dates. The I-20 ending date will also be shortened to reflect your appropriate Program Completion Date.

Is travel recommended during the OPT period?

Post-Completion OPT students should be very careful about travel outside the U.S.

- *Students with approved OPT requests and EAD cards* - page 3 of the I-20 must be endorsed for reentry AND evidence of a job offer or letter of employment may be required upon return.
- *Students with pending OPT requests* - page 3 of the I-20 must be endorsed for reentry AND evidence of actively seeking employment may be required upon return. You should also carry your original OPT receipt notice as proof of your pending OPT request. (Travel in this situation is not highly recommended.)
- Obtaining a new F-1 visa for re-entry can be risky. *Seek the advice of an CGE advisor if you have questions.*

Requirements, eligibility and application for the STEM extension can be found here:

http://cge.fsu.edu/cge_forms.html



Steps for Applying for OPT - Be sure to fill out all forms in *black ink* only.

- 1. Register for a required OPT Workshop.
- 2. Please submit the following materials to the Center for Global Engagement before the CGE Deadline indicated in your OPT Workshop:
 - **I-765 Form** (download online at: <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf>)
 - **Instructions for completing I-765 Form** <https://cge.fsu.edu/I765-guidelines>
 - **FSU Departmental Recommendation Form (attached)** - This is an Center for Global Engagement internal document. Do not send to USCIS.
 - **2 Passport-style Photos** - *with name and I-94 number written in pencil or felt-tip pen on the back.* Please see USCIS specifications (attached) for size and quality. **Photo must be taken within 30 days and it must not be used elsewhere (passport, visa application)**
 - **Copy of Printed I-94** (printed off www.cbp.gov/I94).
 - **Copy of passport bio pages** - pages which bear your *name/photo*
 - **Copy of F-1 visa** - sticker in passport
 - **Copy of previously issued EAD Cards** (Work Authorization Card)
 - **Instructions for Handling EAD Card Form (attached)** - This is an Center for Global Engagement internal document. Do not send to USCIS.
- 3. In approximately one to two weeks, your new I-20 (with OPT Recommendation on page 3) will be ready for pick-up at the Center for Global Engagement. Your CGE advisor will return all necessary documents and copies to you. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAILING THE APPLICATION TO USCIS. PLEASE REVIEW ALL DOCUMENTS BEFORE SENDING.** Please submit the following documents to USCIS:
 - **Form G-1145 (optional, but highly recommended)** https://www.uscis.gov/system/files_force/files/form/g-1145.pdf
 - **Original form I-765 (download online at: <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf>)**
 - **COPY** of new I-20 - Do NOT send the original!
 - **2 Passport-style Photos**
 - **Copy of your I-94**
 - **Copy of passport bio pages**
 - **Copy of F-1 Visa**
 - **Copy of previously issued EAD Cards**
 - **Copy of any previous CPT or OPT I-20s.**

Check **OR Money Order for \$410** - payable to the Department of Homeland Security. Money order is recommended.

WE RECOMMEND USING US POSTAL SERVICE EXPRESS MAIL! IF YOU USE FEDEX OR ANOTHER PRIVATE MAILING SERVICE, USE THE STREET ADDRESS BELOW RATHER THAN THE PO BOX.

<p>Your Name C/O FSU Center for Global Engagement PO Box 3064216 Tallahassee, FL 32306-4216</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(for US Postal Service Express Mail)</i> USCIS PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(for FedEx, etc.)</i> USCIS (ATTN: AOS) 2501 S. State Hwy 121 Business Ste. 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I-765 OPT (NOTE: Write I-765 OPT on the envelope.)</p>

Composition Checklist

7 Steps to Successful Photos

- ✓ Frame subject with full face, front view, eyes open
- ✓ Make sure photo presents full head from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (25 mm to 35 mm)
- ✓ Center head within frame (see Figure 2. below)
- ✓ Make sure eye level is between 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ inch to 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
- ✓ Photograph subject against a plain white or off-white background
- ✓ Position subject and lighting so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- ✓ Encourage subject to have a natural expression

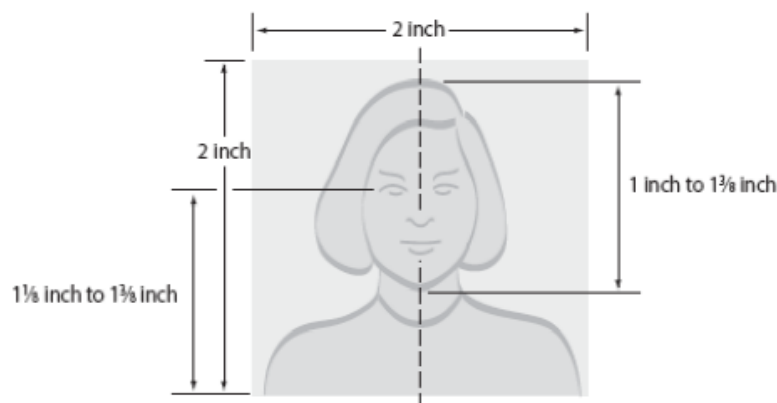


Figure 2. Head Position & Placement

Well-Composed Photos



NOTE: Photos must be in color.



Student: Please complete this section of the form. If completing online, please print and sign.

First Name: Last Name: Date of Birth:

E-mail: Phone: Degree Level:

Major: Requested OPT Start Date:

Please choose a date within 60 days after your Graduation Date. If you are requesting an OPT start date earlier than your expected graduation date, please state your reason in the box below.

- 1) I have used CPT during my current degree program. Yes No
- 2) I have had OPT before, at a different degree level. Yes No
- 3) I am currently employed on-campus at FSU. Yes No In what department?:
- (includes TA, RA, or any other employment at FSU)*

Please acknowledge the following by checking the boxes.

- I have attended or will attend an OPT workshop at the CGE on (ex. mm/dd/yyyy). If I do not attend an OPT workshop, I understand that I am responsible for my immigration status while on OPT.
- I attest that the information contained in the application is correct.
- I understand that I am solely responsible for making sure my application packet is complete and for mailing it to USCIS.
- I realize that, if eligible, I will receive a new I-20 from the CGE with a recommendation for post-completion OPT.
- I understand that I should use the OPT update form to report any changes in:
- 1.) Legal name 2.) Residential address 3.) E-mail address 4.) Employment (employer's name and address)
- I understand that I should not be unemployed for more than an aggregate of 90 days while on 12-month post-completion OPT.

Student Signature: _____ Date:

THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED BY YOUR ACADEMIC ADVISOR IN YOUR MAJOR DEPARTMENT.

ACADEMIC ADVISOR - Please complete this section. Please note that incomplete applications will NOT be accepted, and will result in a delay in the processing of this student's request.

The expected final semester of required enrollment (semester graduating) for the student is:

Fall Spring Summer Year (yyyy):

- The student has completed all coursework requirements and only has project/thesis/dissertation hours remaining. The expected defense date, if applicable: (ex. mm/dd/yyyy)

Advisor's Signature: _____ Date: (ex. mm/dd/yyyy)

E-mail: Phone:



Instructions for Handling of OPT Receipt and Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

In order to serve you more effectively, the Center for Global Engagement (CGE) automatically includes the Center's mailing address on the I-765 application for OPT:

1. If there is a problem with your OPT application, we can help resolve the problem directly with the USCIS Service Center.
2. Often, students who move to a new address have had their receipts or EADs lost in the mail. Having your receipt/EAD mailed to the CGE eliminates this problem.
3. For record management purposes, we make the appropriate copies for your file.

By signing below, you agree to give the Center for Global Engagement permission to open correspondence from USCIS to better assist you for the reasons stated above.

Signature:

Date:

Please print the following information legibly.

Name:

Family name

Given name

Telephone:

FSU E-mail:

Non-FSU E-mail:

(gmail, yahoo, etc.)

Once we receive your OPT receipt/EAD card, we will notify you through e-mail using one of the two e-mails provided above. If you are not in Tallahassee and are unable to pick up the receipt/card in person, we will request you provide us with an address to which the receipt/card can be mailed or the name of a friend whom you trust to pick up the receipt/card for you. The person will be required to show ID when picking up the document.