Optional Practical Training (OPT) Tutorial

Fall 2020

International Students and Scholars (ISS) Office
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Riverside, CA 92521
(951) 827-4113
internationalstudents@ucr.edu

This does not constitute as legal advice.
Table of Contents

- COVID-19 Updates
- General OPT Information
- OPT Timeline
  - When to Apply
- OPT Application Process
  - Internal & External
- International Travel and OPT
- USCIS Decision
- OPT Reporting Responsibilities
- OPT FAQs
- Things to Remember
- Resources
COVID-19 - USCIS Updates

New USCIS Ruling

- Per the Sept 29, 2020 court order, new fee increase and updated form requirement are now on hold until further notice.
- For more information on updates, please check the USCIS website

USCIS Office Changes

- USCIS offices remain open and are still accepting OPT applications
- Delay in EAD card delivery - I-9 Flexibility Rule

Mailing OPT

- OPT applications must be physically mailed - no electronic method
- Students still required to apply for OPT while inside the U.S.
USCIS Updates

OPT Application and Fee Changes

Update (Sept 29, 2020): Per the Sept 29, 2020 court order, new fee increase and updated form requirement are now on hold until further notice.

Using the chart below, please make sure that you are using the correct version of Form I-765 and the I-765 Fee amount before mailing your OPT documents to USCIS. For more info, please visit I-765 page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Postmark Date</th>
<th>Form I-765 Version used</th>
<th>I-765 Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before August 25, 2020</td>
<td>Must use 12/26/19 edition</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On or after August 25, 2020 but before October 2, 2020</td>
<td>Must use 08/25/20 edition</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On or after October 2, 2020</td>
<td>Check the I-765 site and use the most current form</td>
<td>*$410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Link: SEVP Frequently Asked Questions - COVID-19
COVID-19 - OPT Updates

Remote Working

- OPT students may work remotely if your employer can properly assess your performance

OPT Hours

- USCIS has **NOT** released exceptions for OPT unemployment time

Link: [SEVP Frequently Asked Questions - COVID-19](#)
General OPT Information
What is Optional Practical Training?

A benefit of F-1 visa allowing students to get some practical experience in their field of studies.

Basics of OPT
- Gain practical experience in your field of study
- Employment Benefit of F-1 student status
- Authorized by USCIS
- Standard OPT: authorized up to 12 months total
  - Pre-Completion OPT (During Program of Study)
  - Post-Completion OPT (After Program of Study) - Most Common
- STEM OPT Extension: additional 24 months of OPT (only for eligible STEM majors)
What is Optional Practical Training?

12-Month Post-Completion OPT

F-1 Status (I-20 status)

By applying for OPT, you are extending your F-1 status (I-20 record). Note: This is not your visa stamp.
Am I eligible to apply for OPT?

- Strongly recommended to attend the OPT workshop
- Must be enrolled as full-time student for one full academic year (3 quarters)
- Must be completed with course requirements for degree (excluding thesis or equivalent)
- Must have approval from the academic department or Academic Advisor/Graduate Advisor
- Only one OPT may be used at each degree level
- 1 year of full-time CPT will cancel your OPT opportunity
- Do not need job offer at the time of OPT application
- Job offer must be directly related to student’s field of study
- Must be submitted to USCIS within 30 days from the date that OPT was recommended by ISS
Post-Completion OPT Timeline
**OPT Application Timeline**

- **Earliest Date**: Earliest date student may apply
- **Completion Date**: USCIS must receive your OPT application by this date
- **Latest Date**: USCIS can accept Post-Completion OPT application

- **Recommended OPT Application time**: 30-90 days before program end date
  - Date calculating tool - [Time & Date Calculator](#)
- **USCIS Processing Time**: At least 90 days to adjudicate
- **As long as USCIS received OPT application within application window, you may continue to stay in the U.S. while waiting for approval.**
- **IMPORTANT NOTE**: USCIS will deny applications that are sent outside of this application period

**DO NOT APPLY earlier than 90 days**

**DO NOT APPLY later than your 60-day grace period**
OPT Application Process
How to Apply for OPT

1) Internal Process
   - Before sending your application to USCIS

2) External Process
   - After you send your application to USCIS

Final: USCIS Decision
   - USCIS final decision on OPT application
Before sending your application to USCIS

**Step One:** Attend an OPT Workshop
For upcoming OPT workshops, check out the ISS Events Calendar.

**Step Two:** Complete OPT Request form
Ask Advisor or Graduate Advisor to sign your OPT Request Form.

**Step Three:** Submit OPT Docs to ISS
Email documents to internationalstudents@ucr.edu

**Step Four:** ISS Advisor issues OPT I-20
ISS Advisor will review OPT documents and issue OPT I-20. (3-5 Business Days)

**Step Five:** Assemble OPT packet to mail to USCIS
OPT application packet should be mailed within 30 days of the OPT I-20 issue date.
OPT Application Checklist

To access checklist, click here
Documents to Submit to ISS (Internal Process)

- **OPT Request Form**
- **Form I-765** (Typed)
- **Form G-1145** (Typed)
- Document Copies (passport, visa, I-94)

Email documents to internationalstudents@ucr.edu

**ISS Processing Time:** 3-5 business days
To access OPT Request Form, click here

OPT REQUEST FORM

Other Required Forms – Please submit this completed OPT request form and required documents below:
- Completed OPT Request form
- I-765
- I-20
- O-1 visa
- Copy of passport in black and white
- Copy of I-94

Student Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Given Name</th>
<th>Cell #</th>
<th>Student ID #</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Are you on filing fee?  Yes  No
2. Are you currently employed on-campus?  Yes  No
3. Have you applied for OPT before?  Yes  No

OPT Information

4. Request OPT Dates:
   - OPT Start date must be within 60 days grace period after your completion date.
   - OPT End date is 365 days after your OPT Start date.
   - OPT Start date: 
   - OPT End date: 

5. Date you completed an OPT workshop?

6. If yes, list your previous authorized employment (Also, provide copies of the I-94 Arrival/Departure)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPT or OPTC</th>
<th>Part Time or Full Time</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Academic/Graduate Advisor to Complete

The student named above is expected to complete their degree requirements by ________________.

Advisor Printed Name: __________________________
Advisor's Title: __________________________
Department Name: __________________________

Advisor Signature: __________________________
Date: __________________________
Comments: __________________________

To be completed by:

- Student
- Academic Advisor (UG)
- Graduate Advisor (Grad)
OPT Request Form

To be completed by:
Student

Section 1.
Basic Student Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Name:</th>
<th>Given Name:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell #:</th>
<th>Student ID #:</th>
<th>Major:</th>
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<tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Are you on filing fee?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
2. Are you currently employed on-campus?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
3. Have you applied for OPT before?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

Section 2.
OPT Information

4. Request OPT Dates:
   - OPT Start date must be within 90 days grace period after your completion date
   - OPT End date is 364 days after your OPT Start date

   **OPT Start date:** ____________________  **OPT End date:** ____________________

5. Date you completed an OPT workshop?  ____________________

6. If any, list your previous authorized employment (Also, provide copies of the listed I-20s below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPT or OPT</th>
<th>Part time or Full time</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>End date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OPT Request Dates

- Dates that you are requesting to start your OPT
- Depending on timing of application, USCIS may or may not grant your OPT request dates.
- Cannot issue OPT I-20 without these dates
OPT Request Form

To be completed by:
Academic Advisor (Bachelor)
Graduate Advisor (Masters and Doctorate)

Note: If you are unsure who your advisor is, check your Banner Student profile.

Section 3.
Academic Advisor/Graduate Advisor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic/Graduate Advisor to Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student named above is expected to complete their degree requirements by: [ ] (Month/day/year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor Printed Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor Signature:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Completion Date
- Advisor will indicate program completion date
- Date you will be completed with your program requirements
  - May be different for thesis/dissertation students
- I-20 end date will be adjusted to this date

Advisor Signature
- During COVID-19, we accept eSignatures, wet signatures, or email confirmation from advisor with information above.
Selecting OPT Dates

Selecting an OPT Start Date

**Completion Date**

**Earliest OPT Start Date**
The day after completion date

60 days

**Latest OPT Start Date**
60 days after completion date

**OPT start date must be within your 60-day grace period.**

**Tips on choosing an OPT start date:**
- Estimate when you want to start working but, also consider OPT processing time
  - USCIS may take 3-5 months to process application
- Do NOT wait until you get a job offer to apply for OPT
  - You do NOT need a job offer to apply for OPT
- Useful resource to calculate OPT dates:
  [https://www.timeanddate.com/date/datediff.html](https://www.timeanddate.com/date/datediff.html)
Selecting OPT Dates

Selecting an OPT End Date

- Once you choose your OPT start date, your OPT end date will be one year later and one day before.
  - For example: OPT start date: June 15, 2019 and OPT end date: June 14, 2020

14-Month OPT Rule

- All standard post-completion OPT must be completed within the 14-month period following the completion of study.
- If you submit OPT application later, you will lose some OPT time due to 14-month rule.
- Recommended to apply as early as possible to maximize on OPT Time
Important Update (09/29/20):

On Sept 29, 2020, a nationwide court order was issued to put the new fee increase and the new form version on hold until further notice.

Please make sure to get the most updated form directly from the USCIS website.

○ Form I-765

- Typed or printed legibly in black ink
- Handwritten Signature
- Get the most updated form USCIS website
  ○ Form I-765
- To access an I-765 Template, please visit the ISS page.
Part 1. Reason for Applying
I am applying for (select only one box):
1.a. X Initial permission to accept employment.
1.b. [ ] Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.
   NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to Replacement for Card Error in the What is the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.
1.c. [ ] Renewal of my permission to accept employment. (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)

Part 2. Information About You
Your Full Legal Name
1.a. Family Name (Last Name)
1.b. Given Name (First Name)
1.c. Middle Name

Other Names Used
Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in Part 6. Additional Information.
2.a. Family Name (Last Name)
2.b. Given Name (First Name)
2.c. Middle Name
3.a. Family Name (Last Name)
3.b. Given Name (First Name)
3.c. Middle Name
4.a. Family Name (Last Name)
4.b. Given Name (First Name)
4.c. Middle Name

Part 1. Items #1a~1c
Select one of the following:
- #1a. If this is your first time applying for STEM OPT
- #1b. If you are replacing your lost, stolen, or damaged EAD card
- #1c. If this is not your first time applying for OPT

Part 2. Items #1a~4c
Enter your full legal name and other names you use

Start Here
Make sure "Initial permission to accept employment" is checked.
Mailing Address:
- EAD card will be delivered here
- Must be U.S. address

If no mailing address available, you can use a P.O. Box (Postal Office Box).
- USPS
- UPS
Form I-765

Information About Your Eligibility Category

27. Eligibility Category. Refer to the Who May File Form I-765 section of the Form I-765 Instructions to determine the appropriate eligibility category for this application. Enter the appropriate letter and number for your eligibility category below (for example, (c)(3)(B)).

Enter Post-Completion OPT Eligibility Code (c) (3) (B)

Skip the rest of the page

Enter the full city name (ex: Los Angeles, not LAX)

Enter F-1 Student
Form I-765

Part 3. Applicant's Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature

NOTE: Read the Penalties section of the Form I-765 Instructions before completing this section. You must file Form I-765 while in the United States.

Applicant's Statement

NOTE: Select the box for either Item Number 1.a. or 1.b. If applicable, select the box for Item Number 2.

1.a. ☒ I can read and understand English, and I have read and understood every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question.

1.b. ☐ The interpreter named in Part 4, read to me every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question in a language in which I am fluent, and I understood everything.

2. ☐ At my request, the preparer named in Part 6, prepared this application for me based only upon information I provided or authorized.

Applicant's Contact Information

3. Applicant's Daytime Telephone Number

4. Applicant's Mobile Telephone Number (if any)

5. Applicant's Email Address (if any)

6. ☐ Select this box if you are a Salvadoran or Guatemalan national eligible for benefits under the ASC settlement agreement.

Enter contact information

MUST BE HANDWRITTEN SIGNATURE

Applicant's Signature

7.a. Applicant's Signature

ENTER DATE HERE

7.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

NOTE TO ALL APPLICANTS: If you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents listed in the Instructions, USCIS may deny your application.

Skip pages 5 & 6 (if you check #1a)

Be sure to include all 7 pages when submitting to USCIS.

Extremely important to use a permanent email address

08/25/20 Edition
Complete Part 6. (Additional Information) if these items apply:

- You do not have enough space to answer in Parts 1~5
  - Ex. Name
- CPT Authorizations
- Previous OPT Authorizations
- OPT Denials
- Previous SEVIS IDs
Part 6. (Additional Information)

**CPT Authorization**

Items a~c: Reference Page

Item d: Use below format

- CPT Authorization
- Employer; Start date - End Date; PT or FT; Degree level
- Add text “Please refer to copy of CPT I-20”
Form I-765 (pg 7 of 7)

Part 6. Additional Information

**OPT Authorization**

Items a~c: Reference Page

Item d: Use below format

- OPT Authorization
- Start date - End Date; Degree level
- Add text “Please refer to copy of EAD card”
Form I-765 (pg 7 of 7)

Part 6. (Additional Information)

Different SEVIS IDs

Items a~c: Reference Page

Item d: Use below format

- Different SEVIS IDs
- Previous SEVIS number; Program start-end date; Degree level
- Add text “Please refer to copy of I-20 from (school name) for SEVIS Number N00________”
To access the form, **Form G-1145**

**Strongly Recommended**

- To receive eNotifications on your application from USCIS
  - Text message
  - Email Alerts
I-94 Record

To access your most recent digital copy of I-94, click here
Passport and Visa

Provide a copy of your passport and most recent visa. The photocopies should not be too large or too small.

**Passport**
- Copy should not be enlarged or minimized

**Visa**
- Copy of most recent visa
- Does NOT have to be valid
- Copy should not be enlarged or minimized
After review of OPT documents, ISS will issue:

- OPT I-20
- OPT Materials
- Checklists
- Instructions After I-20

COVID-19 Update: As of March 26, SEVP released guidance saying digital I-20s can be emailed during COVID-19.
When you receive your OPT I-20,

- OPT I-20 will include:
  - OPT Recommendation by ISS
  - Travel Signature

- Double-check information before signing
- Make photo copy

**Keep in mind the 30-Day Ruling!**

- OPT recommendation must be less than 30 days old by the time USCIS receives your application
  - Confirm with ISS Advisor for recommendation date

- USCIS has become strict about this rule
  - Automatic OPT Denial
  - Keep this in mind for USCIS RFEs


**OPT I-20 Issued by ISS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEVIS ID:</th>
<th>(F-1)</th>
<th>NAME:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Employment Authorizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>FULL/PART-TIME</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>START DATE</th>
<th>END DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POST-COMPLETION OPT</td>
<td>FULL TIME</td>
<td>REQUESTED</td>
<td>10 AUGUST 2020</td>
<td>09 AUGUST 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change of Status/Cap-Gap Extension**

**Authorized Reduced Course Load**

**Current Session Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT SESSION START DATE</th>
<th>CURRENT SESSION END DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 MARCH 2020</td>
<td>12 JUNE 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Travel Endorsement**

This page, when properly endorsed, may be used for re-entry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each endorsement is valid for one year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designated School Official</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date Issued</th>
<th>Place Issued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Advisor/DSO</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>July 10, 2020</td>
<td>Riverside, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Documents to mail to USCIS
(External process)

- $410 made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” - A personal check, cashier’s check, or money order (Update Sept 29, 2020: Fee increase has been put on hold. Fee is still $410 until further notice.)

- Two 2x2 passport photos

- Form G-1145 (Typed)

- Form I-765 (Typed and Signed)

- Copy of OPT I-20 (Signed)

- Copies of the valid passport, most recent visa, recent I-94

- (If needed) Previous copies of CPT I-20, OPT I-20, EAD cards, previous I-20 if SEVIS ID is different, or any other documents needed
USCIS Application Filing Fee

$410 USCIS Application Filing Fee
*Update (9/28/20): Fee increase to $550 has been put on hold until further notice.

Payable to:
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Acceptable payment methods:
● Personal Check
● Money Order
● Cashier’s Check
● Credit Card (Form G-1450)

Recommended

Money Order

For updated USCIS Fee information, please check
● I-765 Website
● USCIS Fee Calculator

Personal Check - Must be from a U.S. Bank

Money Orders can be purchased at:
● Banks
● Post-offices
● Local markets (i.e. Albertsons)
● Local pharmacies (i.e. CVS)
U.S. Passport-Style Photos

- Prepare 2 passport-style photos
- Must meet specifications on U.S. Department of State website
- Must be a recent photo (taken within 30 days)
- Clip the photo and application fee to top of application packet

(On the back of photos)
Gently write your name and I-94 number

Where can you take passport photos?
- Costco (affordable option)
- U.S. Postal Service
- Local drugstores (i.e. Walgreens, CVS, Rite Aid)

Correct Passport Size and Position:
- 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm)
- The head centered and sized between 1” and 1.4” (25 and 35 mm)

Background:
- Plain and white or off-white
- No shadows

Shadows and Lighting:
- Clear and in color
- No shadows
- Not digitally altered

Accessories:
- No glasses
- No hats or head coverings (unless for religious or medical purposes)
After sending your application to USCIS

**Step One:**
USCIS receives OPT packet
USCIS reviews your application, cashes your check, and assigns a case number.

**Step Two:**
USCIS will send I-797 Receipt
USCIS will mail a paper I-797 Receipt Notice with case number. (within 14-30 Days)

**Step Three:**
USCIS will deliver EAD card
USCIS will mail EAD card and approval notice. (within 3-5 months)

**Step Four:**
SSN Card will be mailed
If SSN card was requested, SSA office will mail SSN card. (14-30 days)

**Step Five:**
Set up OPT Portal & start working
OPT Portal link will be emailed to UCR email. Students can start working on EAD card start date.
Mailing your OPT Application

- Do not staple your documents
- Recommended to receive tracking number
- Go to USCIS website for most updated [Direct Filing Address](#)

**USCIS Phoenix Lockbox (If mailing from CA)**

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS  
P.O. Box 21281  
Phoenix, AZ 85036

For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:

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

**Note:**

If you are mailing from CA, you will be mailing to the USCIS Phoenix Lockbox in Arizona. Your documents will be transferred to the USCIS Potomac Service Center in Arizona.
Track your Application

**USCIS Case Status Online**
- Track your application by entering the receipt number
- Link for [USCIS Case Status Online](#)

**USCIS Email Updates**
- USCIS will send you email notifications through the email on Form G-1145

**USCIS Processing Time**
- Check the latest processing time for your type of application
- Link for [Case Processing Time](#)
  - If you will be mailing to the Phoenix Lockbox, your case is being handled by ‘Potomac Service Center.

**Change of address**
- You must update your address by filing [Form AR-11](#) directly with USCIS
While OPT Application is Pending...

Keep in mind

● USCIS Processing Time: 90-150 days
  ○ Expedited processing is very difficult to get approved
  ○ Check latest USCIS Processing time
    ■ If you mailed to Phoenix Lockbox, your case is being handled by the “Potomac Service Center”

● Do not work/volunteer (on or off-campus) while you are waiting for EAD card if your program has ended
  ○ Once your I-20 program end date has passed, your on-campus or off-campus authorization ends.

● International Travel is not recommended
Driver’s License Renewal

If your CA Driver’s License expired, your I-20 program end date has passed, and your OPT is pending,
● Must receive OPT EAD card to renew your DL
● DMV will only renew according to OPT dates

If you live in a different state,
● Check the state’s DMV website or local office for renewal requirements
International Travel and OPT
International Travel and OPT

While OPT is pending
- Not Recommended during OPT application process
  - RFEs must be responded on time
- Higher Risk - dependent on the CBP officers

After OPT is approved
- Recommended to travel after OPT is approved

Important Travel Documents to carry upon return to the U.S.
- Valid Passport (within 6 months)
- Valid F-1 Visa stamp
- Form I-20 w/ Travel Signature
- EAD card
- Supporting Documents:
  - Job offer letter, Employment Verification Letter, or Proof of Job Interview
  - Financial Support Documents
USCIS Decision
Request for Evidence (RFEs)

If USCIS needs more information/evidence, they will send an RFE.

- Contact ISS office and work with an International Student Advisor
- Remember! RFEs must be answered by deadline date on letter
- Check OPT I-20 recommendation date before mailing RFE
  - If outside 30 day window, request for a new OPT recommendation I-20.

Please contact ISS office to review required RFE documents
OPT Denials

Common Reasons for Denials:

- USCIS receives OPT application too early or too late
- Payment problems
- RFE was not received by deadline date
- RFE was answered but, OPT I-20 was already past 30 days of recommended date
- Application was received on time but, OPT I-20 was past 30 day recommended date
- I-765 was not signed or had incorrect information

Please contact ISS office immediately to discuss F-1 options
OPT Approvals - EAD Card

  - Actual OPT start date
    - Can start work from EAD start date
  - Make sure information is accurate!
  - 90-day Unemployment Days

- Email copy to internationalstudents@ucr.edu

- Required for re-entry to the U.S.

- Access to set up SEVP OPT Portal
OPT Reporting Requirements
Once OPT is approved,

- SEVIS will email you link to set up SEVP OPT Portal
  - Email will be sent to UCR email around EAD start date
  - If link expires, contact ISS

- Easy & convenient way to update:
  - Employer information
  - Personal information

- Important for OPT Reporting Requirements
  - Update any changes within 10 days
  - Do not need to update through ISS
SEVP OPT Portal

Set up OPT Portal Account
- Close to EAD card start date, SEVP will send you OPT Portal link.
- Check your UCR email address
- Check junk mail
- [SEVP Portal Account guideline](#)

If link expired, contact ISS.
- If the portal link expired, contact ISS (internationalstudents@ucr.edu)
- DSO will reset your OPT Portal link
- For other technical issues, contact SEVIS Help Desk (1-800-892-4829)

Report OPT information
- Maintain OPT reporting responsibilities through OPT Portal
- Update personal information
- Update employment information
- Cannot exceed more than 90 days of unemployment
- **Must be updated within 10 days of change**
Reporting OPT Employment

F-1 OPT students must provide a description on how the employment position has a **direct relation to their major of study**.

Tip: Obtain your employment offer letter

**Examples**

Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering:

I work **full time** *(Type of Position)* as an **Electrical Engineer** *(Position title)* at ABC Corp. *(Company Name)*, a government contractor. In my job, I **analyze client requirements for electrical systems and provide them with cost estimates of such systems** *(Job Duties)*. My work requires understanding of electrical circuit theory, which I studied in-depth at the University of ABC. dissertation *(explaining relation to major of study)*.
Master's degree in Kinesiology:

I am **working 25 hours a week (Position Type)** in a health food store as a **consultant (Position Title)** for Self-Made Inc. (Company Name), designing and teaching exercise classes that are incorporated into a customer's overall nutrition and exercise plan (Job Duties). My designs and customer instruction draw upon my studies and classwork in exercise therapy and physical reconditioning (Relation to Study).

PhD in Computer Science:

I am employed as a **full-time (Position Type) Computer and Information Research Scientist (Position Title)** at ABC Research Institute (Company Name). I work as part of a team of scientists and engineers that **designs experiments to test the operation of various software systems (Job Duties). My work builds on research in complex algorithms and machine learning, which I studied as part of my dissertation (Relation to Study).**
90 Unemployment Days

- May have up to 90 days of unemployment
- Unemployment days start from EAD card start date
- Do not accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment
  - Jobs that are less than 20 hrs per week will count towards unemployment days
- Remember to update OPT Portal

EAD Card (Proof of Work Authorization)
Allowable Employment Positions During OPT

- Position must be related to field of study
- Part-Time or Full-Time
  - At least 20 hrs per week
- Employment Types:
  - Paid or Unpaid/Volunteer
  - Self-Employed Business Owner
  - Multiple
  - Short-Term
  - Through a Third-Party Agency

Remember to update employment information through OPT Portal!
After your OPT Ends

When your 12-Month OPT ends, F-1 students will have a 60-day grace period to decide on their steps. During the 60-day grace period, students may decide on the following options:

- Start a new program at UC Riverside
- Transfer to another university
- Apply for 24-Month STEM OPT Extension
  - Only for eligible STEM graduates
- Apply for a change of visa status
- Return to home country
60-Day Grace Period

During 60-day grace period, decide on the following:

- Start a new program at UC Riverside
- Transfer to another university
- Apply for 24-Month STEM OPT Extension
- Apply for a change of visa status
- Return to home country
OPT Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
OPT FAQs

● **Do I have to have a job offer to apply for OPT?**
No, you do not have to have a job offer in order to apply for OPT.

● **How is unemployment counted?**
Unemployment days are counted from the start of the EAD card start date.

● **What if I can’t find a job?**
Fortunately, there are 90 days of unemployment days. Allowable employment during OPT include paid and unpaid positions that are directly related to your field of study at UCR.

● **What will happen if I accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment during OPT?**
We recommend keeping an eye on how many days of unemployment time you accrue. Once you obtain a position, please be sure to report your employment to the OPT Portal to stop the unemployment clock. Exceeding more than 90 days of unemployment will put you out of F-1 status.
OPT FAQs

● Can I work on-campus after my completion date while I wait for my OPT approval?
No, please do not work on or off-campus after your I-20 completion date until you receive your OPT EAD card.

● When can I start working?
You may start working once you receive your EAD card and from the start date indicated on your EAD card.

● Can I cancel my OPT after I have applied?
This may depend on where you are in your OPT application process. If you decide to cancel your OPT application, please make an appointment with an ISS Advisor.

● Can I track the progress of my application?
Yes, you can track your OPT application through USCIS Case Status Online by entering in your USCIS case number from your I-797 Receipt Notice.
Things to Remember
Beware of Employment Scams

Check out UCR Career Center’s page on how to Avoid Employment Scams and Fraud

Common Scams Themes:

● Sending you a check before you begin your job
● Asking you for payment for equipment, certification, training materials, etc.
● Overpayment scams
● Pyramid Schemes

Be Careful:

● If posting does not indicate company information or it is difficult to find information on company
  ○ Do your research on companies before committing
● If company sends you an unexpected check and asks you to cash it in
● If company asks you to transfer money from one account to another
● Offers you an offer without interacting/interview with you
How to Report Scams

● Make an appointment with an ISS Advisor at internationalstudents@ucr.edu

● If you suspect a position is fraudulent, please contact the Employer Relations team – careerrecruiting@ucr.edu or 951.827.3631.

● If you believe you are the victim of fraud resulting from a job listing, please contact the local police as well http://police.ucr.edu/.

Learn More

● How to Avoid Scams and Fraud (UCR Career Center)
Things to Remember

Application Details
- USCIS will deny any applications outside of application window
- OPT application must be received within 30 days of OPT I-20 issue date
- OPT application should be mailed within the U.S.
- **IMPORTANT:** Double-check information/documents/timing before mailing
  - It is ultimately the student’s responsibility!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Postmark Date</th>
<th>Form I-765 Version used</th>
<th>I-765 Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before August 25, 2020</td>
<td>Must use 12/26/19 edition</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On or after August 25, 2020 but before October 2, 2020</td>
<td>Must use 08/25/20 edition</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On or after October 2, 2020</td>
<td>Check the I-765 site and use the most current form</td>
<td>*$410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Waiting for EAD Card
- Do not work or volunteer
- Not recommended to travel internationally
- If you receive an RFE or Denial, contact ISS immediately
Resources
Helpful UCR Resources

UCR ISS - Employment & Taxes Webpage

Forms/Handouts from ISS Office
- OPT Request Form
- OPT Application Checklist

Government Forms
- Form I-765
- Form G-1145

Government Resources
- USCIS - OPT
- Study in the States - Training Opportunities
- SEVP OPT Portal Help
- USCIS Processing Time
- USCIS Case Status Online

COVID-19 Resources
- UCR COVID-19 Updates
- SEVP Frequently Asked Questions
- Study in the States - COVID-19
UCR Career Center

For Alumni

- Free access to career fairs and workshops
- Lifetime membership for Handshake platform
- 1 year of free counseling services
  - Resume
  - Mock Job Interviews

COVID-19 Update

- Virtual appointments available (M-F)
  - Schedule via Handshake
- Meet with Vanessa Lee, the Career Specialist for International Students (Graduate students)
COVID-19 Job Tips/Resources

Job Searching Tips for Int’l Student during COVID-19
- Informational Interviews & Virtual Interviews
- Help Small Businesses
- Don’t stop the search
- Consider all Scenarios

LinkedIn Learning Classes
- Finding a Job during Challenging Economic Times
- New to Working Remotely?

Job Search Sites
- UCR Handshake
- Indeed, COVID-19

UCR Career Center
- Career Center Homepage
  - Virtual & Phone Appointments available
  - Email - career counseling@ucr.edu
- UCR Handshake
  - Job search & make virtual appointments
Who can help you?

UCR International Students and Scholars (ISS) office

Email: internationalstudents@ucr.edu
Office Phone: 951-827-4113
Emergency Phone: 951-206-8810
Office Hours: 10:00AM - 12:00PM, 1:00PM - 4:00PM

COVID-19 Update: Campus is currently closed
We are available through:
- Email
- Phone
- Zoom