

## CIU Optional Practical Training (OPT) Fact Sheet

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an employment option available to F-1 students who have been lawfully enrolled on a full time basis for one full academic year. The employment must be directly related to the major area of study. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the application is submitted at least one month in advance of the program completion date.

### Eligibility:

- Must be an F-1 student who has been enrolled full-time for at least one academic year.
- Proposed employment must be directly related to the student's area of study.
- Must not have been granted full time CPT for more than one year, or already done more than 12 months full time OPT at the same program level.

### Application Process:

- Schedule appointment with the International Student Advisor at least one month in advance of the program completion date. **Note:** it may take the government three months to process your application. Please keep this in mind as you determine when to apply. You may apply for post-completion OPT no earlier than 90 days before the Program End Date on your I-20 and up to 45 days after the Program End Date on your I-20.
- Submit completed I-765 form along with the following documents at your appointment with the International Student Advisor:
  - Completed [CIU OPT Application Form](#) (available in ISA office) (**Do not mail this form with your OPT application; this form is for CIU office use only**)
  - Completed I-765 (available in ISA office or online at website listed below). At item #20 on the I-765 form you will enter (c)(3)(B) for post-completion OPT.
  - 2 Additional (passport) style photographs (put them in a small clear zip lock bag)
  - Copy of I-94: available at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html>
  - Copy of all previous Employment Authorization Documents (EAD cards)
  - Copy of Passport ID page(s) (Picture identification page and expiration date page)
  - Copy of your current Visa
  - Copy of most recent I-20
  - Copy of the new I-20 with the OPT recommendation on page 3.
  - Check for \$410 made payable to: **U.S. Department of Homeland Security** (as of 04/01/2020), this can be a personal check (from a U.S. bank account) or a money order. As of 2/14/2018 this fee may also be paid by credit card. You will need to complete form G-1450 available at <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450>
  - The International Student Advisor will review paperwork and issue you a new I-20 with a recommendation for employment written on page 3.
- You are responsible for mailing your OPT request to the USCIS (address is located at the end of this document).

- Do not begin employment until you receive the EAD for approved OPT authorization. Employment is not permitted before the approved start date or after the approved end date.
- Once your OPT is approved, you will receive two e-mails from [do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov) giving you instructions how to set up an account on the SEVP Portal (Student and Exchange Visitor Program). This is very important and is necessary for your reporting requirements while on OPT. You can find out more information at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help>
- **Note:** it may take as much as 3-4 months (possibly longer) for the USCIS to process your OPT application. If it has been 3-4 months, please notify the International Student Advisor.

### **OPT Hours and Limitations:**

- Employment on OPT must be directly related to your major area of study.
- Total OPT time per degree level is 12 months; the 12-month allotment per degree level may be divided into various segments.
- Part-time OPT is authorized for up to 20 hours per week; Part time OPT is deducted from the 12-month limit at 50%, but the maximum post-completion OPT work period is still 12 months.
- OPT after program completion is granted for full time use only
- OPT start date must fall within 60 days of program completion; this is not necessarily the same date as graduation day.
- Do not begin a new degree program while on OPT, it will cancel your OPT.

### **Travel & OPT**

- After program completion, you should NOT depart the US before you receive the EAD. If you travel with the EAD, you must present the following at the US Port of Entry: I-20, valid EAD, valid visa, valid passport, and proof of employment/offer (a letter from your employer stating that you have a job).

**Forms are available at the USCIS website.** <http://www.uscis.gov>

**Mail to:** USCIS  
PO Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

### **IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

If you will be moving from your current residence after graduation, or as a result of your OPT, you must notify the Student Life Office or the International Student Advisor within 10 of the move. This is a requirement of your F-1 visa and failure to notify us within 10 days may result in sanctions from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.