



Optional Practical Training (OPT) Information Packet

Before you apply for Optional Practical Training, you must read this form in its entirety and sign in the box at the bottom of OPT Statement of Responsibility.

Basic Description:

As an F-1 student, you may apply to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for authorization for 12 months (up to 36) of temporary employment for Optional Practical Training (OPT). The employment should be directly related to your major area of study. To be eligible for OPT, you must be in legal F-1 status at the time of application and have completed one academic year as a full-time student (not necessarily in F-1 status).

OPT can be authorized for the following:

- **Post-Completion:** After completion of your studies (most students choose this option)
IMPORTANT! If choosing this option, your OPT application must be received by the DHS service center **no later than 60 days** after your program completion date. However, it is *strongly* recommended to apply before you complete your studies.
OR
- **Pre-Completion:** Before completion of your studies in one of the following three situations: Part-time (20 hours a week or less) during the fall or spring semesters, full or part-time during summer vacation if you are currently enrolled and intend to register for the following semester, full-time during fall or spring if you have completed all coursework and are in the thesis, dissertation or comprehensive exams only phase of your degree

Preconditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis at a DHS-approved school for one full academic year while maintaining F-1 status before being eligible for OPT.
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students may engage in OPT for any employer for the duration of OPT authorization, as long as the employment qualifies under OPT standards.
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standard OPT is available for a cumulative maximum of 12 months per educational level. A one-time extension of 24 months (for a total of 36 months) is available to certain STEM degree recipients who are employed by an employer registered with E-Verify. ● 20 hours/week limit for pre-completion OPT done while school is in session and student still has coursework to complete.
Hours per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full-time employment can be requested for pre-completion OPT done during official school breaks, and for students who have completed all requirements for their degree except for thesis or dissertation.
Field of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For post-completion OPT, according to SEVP guidance a student must be adequately employed (21+ hours/week in a position directly related to your academic program) to avoid limits on unemployment. ● Must be directly related to the student's course of study.
Offer of employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No offer of employment is required to apply for standard OPT, but the student is expected to work during the OPT EAD validity period. Students on post-completion OPT are limited to a maximum of 90 days of unemployment. ● To apply for a 24-month STEM extension, student must have an offer of employment from an employer registered with E-Verify.
Effect on other work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prior use of full-time Curricular Practical Training for one year or more eliminates eligibility for Optional Practical Training ● DSO recommends OPT in SEVIS.
Approval process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student files I-765 application for EAD online with USCIS portal. ● Work can begin only after receiving EAD issued by USCIS, and on or after the start date on the EAD. ● Special rules govern applications for the 24-month STEM OPT extension.
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If doing pre-completion OPT, must maintain a full course of study during the period of employment (unless done during school breaks). ● Degree candidates that have completed all coursework must continue to make normal progress towards completing the thesis or dissertation required for their degree.



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OPT Application Procedure & Checklist

Instructions: Follow the directions below. Only check off the items when you have followed the directions fully. When all items are complete, schedule an appointment with a DSO via Campus Connect for a document review. We cannot issue the OPT DSO endorsed I-20 until after reviewing your documents. Please bring your laptop to this appointment or schedule a virtual appointment so you may share your screen.

Step 1: SHSU International Programs Forms

Thoroughly read this OPT Information Packet and sign the Statement of Responsibility

Complete your personal information on Completion of Degree Form

Send Completion of Degree Form to your academic/department advisor, ask them to complete Section

Pay OPT SEVIS Continuance fee of \$75 [here](#)

Step 2: USCIS Application Portal- Form I-765

Create an account on myaccount.uscis.gov

Follow steps to file an employment authorization application, choose Form I-765

Fill out all relevant information (if unsure about something, leave it blank and ask a DSO)

- Eligibility category: Pre-completion OPT (c)(3)(A) Post-completion OPT (c)(3)(B)

Gather and upload all necessary documents

- Most recent I-94 (can be populated [here](#))
- 2x2 passport style photo (digital copy or clear scanned copy) Find photo requirements [here](#)
- Passport Copy
- Any previous issued EAD cards

Click "view draft snapshot" on Review & Submit page- **DO NOT SUBMIT YET**

Create an appointment on Campus Connect with a DSO to complete document review

Step 3: Document Review with OIP DSO

You should have all above steps completed before coming to document review appointment

Please bring a laptop or schedule a virtual appointment so that you may share your screen

Have **all** documents ready to review together, including Statement of Responsibility, Completion of Degree form, and receipt of payment for OIP SEVIS Continuance \$75 fee

After reviewing documents, you will be issued a new OPT recommendation I-20 that you will upload into the application portal

Use credit/debit card or bank account/routing information to pay \$410 fee

Submit application!

NOTE: We strongly recommend you use GEC's mailing address. Students are often moving around after graduation and having EAD cards sent to our office avoids mailing complications. Put the following in "mailing address" on the I-765:

In Care Of: **Your Name**
1908 Avenue J
Box 2150
Huntsville, TX, 77341



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OPT Statement of Responsibility

Instructions: Please read this form carefully. It is ultimately your responsibility to ensure your application is complete and that you remain in status without violations at all times. You are still an F-1 student while on OPT.

- While on OPT under your SHSU I-20 **you are required to continue to report any changes on your official name, address, and status of employment including any changes of employer name or address** to the SHSU Global Engagement Center. You should notify GEC within 10 days of the change by emailing gec@shsu.edu
- **I give permission to GEC to view, copy, and file mail from USCIS pertaining to OPT** for students who choose to use GEC's mailing address. USCIS will mail updates including receipts, notice of actions, approvals, and EAD cards. GEC will review the mail to assist students throughout the process within a timely manner.
- **Your employment cannot begin until** you have received your I-766 Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) and the start date on the card has been reached.
- **During post-completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment.** During any initial 12-month period of post-completion OPT, no student may be unemployed for an aggregate of more than 90 days. Employment during this period may be traditional paid employment, volunteer work, or an internship. You must be working over 20 hours/week.
- **If you transfer** to another school or begin study at another educational level, your authorization to engage in OPT employment is automatically terminated upon the transfer date.
- **If you travel outside the United States during your OPT period**, upon reentry you must present a valid passport, valid F-1 visa, your EAD card, and your Form I-20 properly endorsed for travel by your DSO within the previous six months. In addition, we recommend you take a letter from your employer or prospective employer indicating that you are returning to resume/begin employment after travel. Students who do not meet these requirements may not be allowed to reenter the United States.
- **Travel following graduation and before receiving the EAD card is not recommended.**
- **Students are allowed one year of OPT per degree level** during your time as an F-1 student. You become eligible for another 12 months of OPT if you complete a higher educational level.
- **STEM Extension:** Students can check if their major is eligible to apply for the 24-month extension by finding the major CIP code on their I-20 and referencing the most recent Approved STEM CIP code list published by USCIS. To apply for the STEM OPT extension, you must be employed by an employer who is registered for E-verify and apply before your current OPT expires.
- **If you do not complete all coursework** by your expected completion date, you may not work more than 20 hours/week until all coursework has been completed.
- **OPT is authorized for a specific time period (maximum of 12 months per educational level). Please choose the day you would ideally like your work authorization to begin. This start date must be within 60 days of your program end date, and the end date will be exactly one year in the future. (ex: June 2, 2022 - June 1, 2023).**

Ideal Start Date:

End Date:

I have read the content of the OPT Information Packet and this Statement of Responsibility form. I understand and agree to all regulations associated with OPT.

Name:

Phone:

Signature:

Date:

Personal and SHSU email:

