OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING
The OPT workshop will cover these topics:

- Understand OPT and your eligibility
- Detail the OPT application procedures
- Understand obligations during OPT and maintaining F-1 status
- Essential resources and information
OPT Overview:

What is Optional Practical Training?

- Optional Practical Training is work permission available for eligible F-1 students. It allows students to have real-world work experience related to their major field of study.

- Designated School Official (DSO) recommends OPT in SEVIS

- Student must apply for the work permit with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

- If approved, USCIS will issue an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). The student must not begin working before the start date on the EAD.
OPT Overview - Types of OPT:

- **Pre-Completion OPT**: Any portion of OPT used before the student’s Program End Date. It may be part-time or full-time.

- **Post-Completion OPT**: Any portion of OPT used after the student’s Program End Date. It must be full-time.

- **H-1B Cap Gap OPT**: For students whose prospective employers filed a qualifying H-1B-cap subject petition. (Possible for Spring graduates and Summer graduates)

- **OPT STEM-Extension (24 months)**: For students who majored in designated Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) degrees approved by DHS.
OPT Eligibility – who is Eligible for OPT?

- F-1 students who have attended an SEVP certified institution on a full-time basis, for a minimum of one academic year
- May be authorized for up to 12 months of OPT
- Each subsequent application for a new Post-Completion OPT, must be for a higher degree level – OPT may only be granted once per degree level, and only if moving upward in degree level
- F-1 students with one year or greater of Full-Time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) are no longer eligible for OPT at that current degree level
- Part-Time CPT does not affect OPT eligibility
Transitions during / after OPT

Resuming study for a new degree level:

- If resuming study at University of Houston, the new I-20 must be printed prior to the 60 day grace period ending. Your OPT work authorization ends, and the EAD card becomes invalid on the date of printing an I-20 for new degree level.

- If resuming study at another institution, the SEVIS record must be transferred to the new institution prior to the 60 day grace period ending. Your period of OPT ends upon the transfer release date in SEVIS.

- The first day of classes must be within 5 months of the OPT EAD card end date or the date of your transfer, and you may not exceed 90 days of unemployment during the OPT EAD dates.

- Your OPT period cannot continue when classes have begun - You will need an updated I-20 to reflect your new program of study - You may choose to end OPT early to resume study.
OPT Application Procedures

- **Deadline**: Your application must be received and receipted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) within **30 days of the DSO’s recommendation**, and within your 60 day grace period, whichever is earlier.

- Application filing window: F-1 students may apply for Post Completion OPT from 90 days prior to the degree program completion, and up to 60 days after the program end date.

- A timely-filed OPT application means that you may legally remain in the U.S. while the OPT application is pending with USCIS

- You should apply as early as possible for OPT, when you find out that you will meet the graduation requirements.
OPT Application Procedures

The date indicated by your academic advisor / graduate advisor will be used as the **new I-20 Program End date** on your OPT recommended I-20
OPT Application Procedures – Shorten I-20

- Because the I-20 Program Dates must match your degree program dates, it is necessary that our office shorten your I-20 program end date. The I-20 will be shortened to the date provided by your academic advisor on the OPT Academic Verification form.

- If you find that you will have a delay in completion of degree requirements, you must request an I-20 Program Extension immediately or risk violating your F-1 status.

- SEVP strongly recommends that a student who may not be able to successfully complete all program requirements on time defer applying for Post Completion OPT until after his or her program ends.

- Your I-20 can only be extended prior to the new I-20 program end date - not after.
OPT Application Procedures – **Shorten I-20**

- If there is a delay in completion of degree requirements, you must request an **I-20 Program Extension** immediately or risk violating your F-1 status. While this is critical to maintaining a student’s status, there is an **exception** for Thesis track and Dissertation track students with all coursework completed:

  - SEVP Policy Guidance issued on April 23, 2010 states:
  - Can a student in a graduate-level program who has completed all program requirements, aside from thesis or equivalent, apply for either pre-completion OPT or post-completion OPT? Yes, a student who only has the thesis or equivalent remaining may either apply for pre-completion OPT or post-completion OPT **while completing** the thesis/dissertation.
OPT Application Procedures – Shorten I-20

- For all Thesis track and Dissertation track students with all coursework completed: If you experience a delay in completing your Thesis / Dissertation, it is not necessary for you to request I-20 program extension.

- Requesting extension will cause problems with the OPT application.
- If EAD is granted, begin working 20 hours / week while completing the Thesis / Dissertation.

- Be careful about switching to Non-Thesis track – this would require I-20 extension.

- For all students: After your I-20 program end date is shortened, do NOT work on-campus or on CPT after the new I-20 program end date.

- You must wait until the EAD card is approved and the EAD start date.
OPT Application Procedures – **Start Date**

- You will need to choose an OPT Start Date and fill it in on the OPT Application Checklist form.

- Your requested OPT Start Date can be any day during your 60 day grace period, which begins with the completion of your program of study (I-20 Program End date).

- Note that the requested OPT Start Date may not be changed after your application is submitted to USCIS.

- Keep in mind the average 90 days processing time – allow adequate time for USCIS to grant your requested start date.

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**My requested OPT start date is (mm/dd/yyyy): ______________**

Post-completion OPT may begin on any day between the date of completing your degree and up to 60 days later.
OPT Application Procedures – Start Date

Choose your requested OPT Start Date within this range of dates

I-20 Program End Date (from signed Academic Verification form)

60th calendar day after I-20 Program End Date
OPT – Employment Regulations

- All work during Post-Completion OPT must be in a job that is directly related to the student’s degree program, for which the OPT was granted
- Minimum of 20 hours per week
- During Post-Completion OPT, employment may be paid or unpaid
- You may work for multiple employers
- You may change jobs as needed
- You must report all employment changes within 10 days using the SEVP Portal (we will discuss in detail later)
- You may not exceed 90 days of unemployment during the entire period of OPT
- Any employment not related to your field of study is a violation of F-1 status
OPT – Employment Regulations

- Also fill the “F-1 Student Responsibility” page under “OPT Self Report” – by signing, you agree to follow all OPT reporting rules
- This is the same page as the OPT requested Start Date
- We will describe the reporting process in the next few slides

Acknowledgement of Responsibility

I, ____________________________, am responsible for reporting the above information to International Student and Scholar Services while on optional practical training (OPT) and will immediately inform ISSS of any changes to this information.

“By signing, I understand and will follow the above rules.”

Student Signature: ___________________________________________ Student ID: _______________ Date: ____________________
OPT – Reporting Requirements

- You will gain access to the SEVP Portal when two things happen:
  - First, the OPT request status in SEVIS changes to “Approved”
  - Typically this OPT request status comes directly from USCIS when they approve an OPT application
- Second, the OPT period must be “Active”
OPT – Reporting Requirements

- Register and maintain your SEVP Portal Account
- Report all employment and personal information updates during Post-Completion OPT in the SEVP Portal
- Make sure to log in once every 60 days to make sure everything is accurate
OPT – Reporting Requirements

- On the start date of your EAD card (approximately), you will receive an automated email from: do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov

- Do not delete this email – you must click on the link in this email to setup your SEVP Portal account. The email used to send this information is your “destination email” in your UH account.

- The SEVP portal login page is: https://sevp.ice.gov/opt/

- The SEVP Portal account is the only method for reporting employment information during Post Completion OPT
OPT – Reporting Requirements

▪ You must follow the link to create your Portal account – initially you must provide your SEVIS ID number to create the account

▪ Once you gain access to the Portal, you can:
  ▪ Edit your profile (e.g., SEVIS address)
  ▪ Edit employment information
  ▪ View history
  ▪ Change password

▪ If you change jobs, never delete the previous employer information or edit the start date due to a promotion – this causes unemployment time to be calculated.
OPT – Reporting Requirements

- The SEVP Portal will send you email in these situations:
  - When you create a portal account
  - When confirming your recently created account
  - When your portal password was changed
  - When your account is locked
  - When your email address changes in SEVIS
  - When your STEM OPT evaluation reporting dates require you to take action
  - When your OPT authorization ends, and you are notified that your account will be closed
Navigation in the SEVP Portal is user-friendly and self-explanatory:

- You will have 4 main navigation choices, plus “Help” and “Logout”
  - Profile (personal information, personal SEVIS address)
  - Employment
  - History
  - Account Management (for password changes)
During your OPT, you will always be able to view your employment information in the Portal – verify it for accuracy.

You must report all changes of employment information within 10 calendar days of the change.

Failure to timely report may mean missed days count as unemployment.
OPT – Recent DHS Guidance

- U.S. Department of Homeland Security recently published guidance on “Practical Training - Determining a Direct Relationship Between Employment and a Student’s Major Area of Study”

- It requires the F-1 student to provide an explanation of how the job relates the student’s major area of study

- You will use the student access to your SEVP Portal account, and provide an explanation in the text box: “Relation to Field of Study: Explain How this job relates to the degree that qualified you for this OPT”

- You must keep historical records of your employment: **DO NOT** delete your previous information submitted in the SEVP Portal - always “Add” new information
OPT – Recent DHS Guidance

- Students must provide an explanation in the text box: “Relation to Field of Study: Explain How this job relates to the degree that qualified you for this OPT”

- Below is a sample explanation:

  Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering: I work full time as an Electrical Engineer at ABC Corp., a government contractor. In my job, I analyze client requirements for electrical systems and provide them with cost estimates of such systems. My work requires understanding of electrical circuit theory, which I studied in-depth at the University of ABC.
OPT – Recent DHS Guidance

- Below are other sample explanations:

- **Bachelor's degree in Business**: I work full time as a Loan Officer at a mortgage company, Happy Homes, where I meet with clients and evaluate, authorize and recommend approval of loan applications. On a daily basis, I use the knowledge I gained in my credit analysis, sales and marketing classes that I took as part of my major program of study.

- **Master’s degree in Music**: I am working at a hospital playing the harp in patient rooms. I also conduct hands-on harp beginner workshops for long-term patients. On average, I work at the hospital 35 hours a week. My duties directly utilize the skills and knowledge I acquired from my coursework and degree in music therapy.
OPT – Recent DHS Guidance

- Below are other sample explanations:

- **PhD in Computer Science:** I am employed as a Computer and Information Research Scientist at ABC Research Institute. I work as part of a team of scientists and engineers that designs experiments to test the operation of various software systems. My work builds on research in complex algorithms and machine learning, which I studied as part of my dissertation.

- **Master’s degree in Kinesiology:** I am working 25 hours a week in a health food store as a consultant for Self-Made Inc., designing and teaching exercise classes that are incorporated into a customer’s overall nutrition and exercise plan. My designs and customer instruction draw upon my studies and classwork in exercise therapy and physical reconditioning.
To view the SEVP Portal Help videos and detailed guides, visit the Study in the States webpage: studyinthestates.dhs.gov
OPT – Reporting Requirements

- Provide a copy of your EAD card – front and back – email to SEVIS@Central.UH.edu – with your student ID number

Save the front and back as a high resolution PDF file – Do this within 10 days of receiving the EAD card
OPT – Unemployment:

- During Post-Completion OPT, unemployment is counted only from the EAD card start date, not from the time of application or graduation.

- Approved business travel or approved vacation travel from a U.S. employer does not count as “unemployment”.

- The maximum allowable unemployment period during Post-Completion OPT is 90 calendar days, accumulative.

- There is NO additional grace period beyond the 90 days – Any student who reaches 90 days of unemployment during Post-Completion OPT will be in violation of their F-1 status.

- Working less than 20 hours per week counts as unemployment on OPT unless you have multiple jobs that equal 20 hours or more.

<table>
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<th>Errors</th>
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<td>Finmec...</td>
<td>7/1/2017 - 6/14/2018</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPT – Unemployment:

- Student on H-1B Cap Gap extension do not receive additional days of unemployment
- Plan carefully so that you do not use all of your allowable unemployment period
- Any SEVIS record on Post-Completion OPT with 90 consecutive days of unemployment may be automatically terminated by the SEVIS system
- Report all employment changes within 10 days to avoid consequences
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<th>Action Block</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remarks</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

To be completed by an attorney or Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA)-accredited representative (if any):

Select this box if Form G-28 is attached.

Attorney or Accredited Representative USCIS Online Account Number (if any):
Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):

1.a. ☑ 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.)

Page 1: Check the box 1.a for Post Completion OPT
**Page 1**: Fill your name, matching your passport

Leave “Middle Name” blank unless your name is very long
## 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.**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.a.</td>
<td>Family Name (Last Name)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.b.</td>
<td>Given Name (First Name)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.c.</td>
<td>Middle Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Page 1:** Do NOT fill 2.a – 4.c, unless you have legally used another name in a government issued ID, such as a passport
Page 2: Do NOT fill in your name in 5.a. – only fill a name if using your friend’s or relative’s address.

Check your address VERY carefully – Don’t change the address after filing with USCIS unless you have to. USCIS does not accept forwarding mail addresses filed with USPS.

Question 6: check “YES”, unless you are using a Post Office Box address.
**Page 2:** Do **NOT** fill the “U.S. Physical Address”, unless you are using a Post Office Box address for the “Mailing Address.”
Page 2: Fill the details; most students will NOT fill question 8 or question 9. If you previously had OPT, then fill “A-Number” for question 8
**13.a.** Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?

[ ] Yes  [ ] No

**NOTE:** If you answered “No” to Item Number 13.a., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 13.a., provide the information requested in Item Number 13.b.

**13.b.** Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known).

Page 2: question 13.a, answer “Yes” if you have the SSN. Do not fill in the SSN in 13.b until after you receive the application back from our office and before sending it to USCIS.

If you answer “Yes”, to 13.a, then Do NOT answer questions 14, 15, 16.a, 16.b, 17.a, 17.b – skip to 18.a.

If you answer question 13.a “No”, then answer questions 14, 15, 16.a, 16.b, 17.a, 17.b.
Page 2: Only answer these questions, 14 – 17.b, if you do NOT have the SSN.

If you do NOT have the SSN, we recommend you answer “Yes” to 14 and 15 – then you must also answer 16.a - 17.b.
Page 2: all students must answer question 18.a

If you have dual-citizenship, answer question 18.b
Page 3: fill 19.a – 20 as it matches your passport information. If your country does not have state / province, then leave 19.b blank.
### Page 3: fill as follows:

21.a – most recent I-94 - from [cbp.gov/I-94](http://cbp.gov/I-94)

21.b – passport number

21.c – leave BLANK

21.d – your country

21.e – passport expiration

22 – approximate date of most recent U.S. arrival

23 – city / airport where you cleared U.S. customs

24 – most students: F-1 student

25 – All students: F-1 student

26 – SEVIS ID number – on your I-20, page 1
Page 3: question 27: fill (c)(3)(B)

This eligibility code is for Post-Completion OPT
Page 3: After you have answered question 27, then skip to page 4 – Do NOT answer question 28, 29, 30, 31.a, or 31.b
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 understand 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 5,

[ ] prepared this application for me based only upon information I provided or authorized.

Page 4: Check the box: 1.a. – then skip to questions 3, 4, 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Applicant's Daytime Telephone Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Applicant's Mobile Telephone Number (if any)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Applicant's Email Address (if any)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Select this box if you are a Salvadoran or Guatemalan national eligible for benefits under the ABC settlement agreement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Page 4:** Answer questions 3, 4, 5, then read the “Applicant’s Declaration and Certification” in the right column of page 4.
Page 4: Question 7.a – Sign by hand with black ink – Do NOT skip signing – Do NOT submit the form to the counselor without signing
7.b: fill the date of signing, MM/DD/YYYY format
Page 4, Part 4: fill “N/A” for Not Applicable, then skip this section
**Part 5. Contact Information, Declaration, and Signature of the Person Preparing this Application, If Other Than the Applicant**

Provide the following information about the preparer.

### Preparer's Full Name

1.a. Preparer's Family Name (Last Name) 

   N/A

1.b. Preparer's Given Name (First Name)

2. Preparer's Business or Organization Name (if any)

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**Page 5, Part 5:** fill “N/A” for Not Applicable, (unless you retain a lawyer to fill the form) - Skip this section – however, you MUST print page 5
Part 5. Contact Information, Declaration, and Signature of the Person Preparing this Application, If Other Than the Applicant (continued)

Preparer's Statement
7.a. □ I am not an attorney or accredited representative but have prepared this application on behalf of the applicant and with the applicant's consent.

7.b. □ I am an attorney or accredited representative and my representation of the applicant in this case [ ] extends [ ] does not extend beyond the preparation of this application.

NOTE: If you are an attorney or accredited representative, you need to submit a completed Form G-28, Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Accredited Representative, with this application.

Preparer's Certification
By my signature, I certify, under penalty of perjury, that I prepared this application at the request of the applicant. The applicant then reviewed this completed application and informed me that he or she understands all of the information contained in, and submitted with, his or her application, including the Applicant's Declaration and Certification, and that all of this information is complete, true, and correct. I completed this application based only on information that the applicant provided to me or authorized me to obtain or use.

Preparer's Signature
8.a. Preparer's Signature

8.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)
If you did **NOT** have any CPT, fill “N/A” for question 3.d.

If you did have any CPT, then fill:
Page Number 3
Part Number 2
Item Number 27
…Then fill “See attached CPT screenshot” for question 3.d.
Encountering Fraud While Participating in OPT:

- International students participating in OPT must understand and abide by OPT regulations to maintain their nonimmigrant status.

- International students who rely on recruitment agencies to obtain OPT placements should ensure those agencies are trustworthy and reputable. Reputable recruiters will not modify a student’s resume or academic background to secure OPT placement.

- If you witness fraudulent activity by an OPT recruiter or company, you should contact the ICE’s Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) tip line at 1-866-DHS-2ICE or www.ICE.gov/tips.
H-1B Cap Gap

Current regulations allow certain students with pending or approved H-1B petitions to remain in F-1 status during the Cap-Gap period. This is referred to as filling the "Cap-Gap," meaning the regulations provide a way of filling the "gap" between the end of F-1 status and the beginning of H-1B status that might otherwise occur if F-1 status is not extended for qualifying students. The “Cap-Gap” period starts when an F-1 student’s status and work authorization expires and ends on the start date of their approved H-1B employment.

H-1B petitions that are timely filed on behalf of an eligible F-1 student that request a change of status to H-1B on October 1 qualify for a Cap-Gap extension.

Timely filed means that the H-1B petition (indicating change of status rather than consular processing) was filed during the H-1B acceptance period which begins April 1st while the student's authorized F-1 duration of status (D/S) admission was still in effect (including any period of time during the academic course of study, any authorized periods of post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT), and the 60-day departure preparation period, commonly known as the "grace period").
H-1B Cap Gap

- The Cap Gap I-20, requested from our office, will show evidence to your employer that you are authorized to work during the Cap Gap dates listed on the I-20

- Please view the link, “How to request an H-1B Cap-Gap I-20” on our website, if you qualify for Cap Gap, and follow the instructions to make the request

- Please keep in mind that your OPT employment data must be updated electronically, prior to requesting the H-1B Cap Gap I-20
OPT STEM Extension

- The new 24 month OPT STEM Extension rule became effective on May 10, 2016, with requirements in addition to those under the old, 17 month rule.

- Who is eligible for the 24 month OPT STEM Extension?

- Applicant must hold a STEM eligible degree, from a U.S. institution, listed on the STEM list (The full list is available at [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov)).

- Employer must maintain participation with E-verify.

- Employer and employee must agree to, complete, and sign the Training Plan (form I-983).
OPT STEM Extension – when to apply:

- The application must be properly filed not more than 90 days prior to Post-Completion OPT EAD card end date, but not after the end date (Late applications are not accepted by USCIS)

- Application must be received and receipted, properly filed with USCIS, on or before the current OPT EAD card end date

- You must be currently on an approved Post-Completion OPT in order to apply for OPT STEM extension

- You may submit your OPT STEM request to our office 90 days prior to the OPT EAD card end date – please hold onto your request to our office until 90 days prior to the OPT EAD end date
Locate the 6 digit “CIP code” on your I-20 to determine eligibility, then compare with the STEM list at [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov)
CIP code list example from [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov) – Check for your particular CIP code to determine eligibility

<table>
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<td>Agronomy and Crop Science</td>
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OPT STEM Extension for a previous degree

- New rule (2016) now allows 2 in lifetime, maximum, OPT STEM Extensions

- OPT STEM Extension may be granted based on a previously earned U.S. institution STEM degree, only if you have not already had a STEM extension based on the qualifying STEM degree

- Example: student graduates with a bachelor’s degree in Engineering, does NOT apply for OPT STEM Extension, then graduates with a master’s degree in Accounting, applies for Post-Completion OPT, then applies for OPT STEM Extension based on the student’s bachelor’s degree

- If extension is granted for a previous STEM degree, all employment during Post-Completion OPT must be related to the degree for which this OPT was granted

- All employment during OPT STEM extension must be directly related to the degree for which OPT STEM extension was granted

- Previous degree must have been earned within 10 years of the date of DSO recommendation for extension
When you are ready to apply for OPT STEM extension, please carefully read the slideshow (powerpoint) on our website for full detailed instructions.
International Travel during OPT

- If your OPT has been approved and you have received your OPT EAD, carefully prepare your documents for travel before leaving the United States, as detailed below.

- Documents you will need for travel internationally:
  - [1] Passport that is valid for at least 6 months into the future
  - [2] Visa which is still valid at the time of reentry to the U.S.
  - [3] I-20 with recent signature by a Designated School Official. During OPT, each travel endorsement on page 2 is valid for 6 months
  - Your current employer info is recommended to be printed on page 2 of the I-20 (You may request a reprint after you have completed OPT reporting)
    - For I-20 reprint, email SEVIS@Central.UH.edu – This email is listed on the OPT Self Report
  - [5] A current job offer letter from your employer. A written statement from your employer that you are returning from a period of approved vacation time may also be helpful, but is not required if the job offer letter is recent
International Travel during OPT

- Check your F-1 visa – if expired, you must renew with the U.S. consulate / embassy – usually in your home country
  - Certain travel under 30 days on expired VISA could be granted to Canada, Mexico, and the adjacent islands except Cuba
- If you are planning to travel while pending OPT, please contact an advisor regarding the risks involved. Our office does not officially recommend international travel while the OPT application is pending with USCIS.

- Travel during Cap-Gap Extension Period
  - An F-1 student may generally travel abroad and seek readmission to the United States in F-1 status during a Cap-Gap period if:
    - The student’s H-1B petition and request for change of status has been approved;
    - The student seeks readmission before his or her H-1B employment begins (normally at the beginning of the fiscal year, i.e., October 1); and
    - The student is otherwise admissible
What happens after the OPT session?

- Please keep your passport photos and payment for $410 – our office does not collect this
- You will need to prepare 2 color, recent passport photos, in the U.S. format
- 2 x 2 inches (5 cm x 5 cm), square
What are the fees for OPT?

- You will need to prepare a personal check, for $410, a money order, or a credit card authorization form (G-1450).
- For personal checks, the name and address of the bank account owner must appear on the check (upper left corner).
- Our office does NOT collect this payment.
What are the fees for OPT?

- **Fee increase**: Note that the USCIS fee for application I-765 will increase from $410 to $550. Applications that are properly filed with receipt notice date before October 2nd, 2020, must pay the $410 filing fee. Applications that are properly filed with receipt notice date on or after October 2nd, 2020, must pay the $550 filing fee.
Paying with a credit card – G-1450

The lower half of form G-1450 looks like this –

Be sure to check all fields carefully before sending.
OPT Alumni Fee:

- In order to process your Post Completion OPT request, an alumni fee of $100 is required to be submitted to our office.
- Mail a personal check or a money order, payable to “University of Houston”
- Enclose a note that includes:
  [1] Your name
  [2] UH student ID number (Peoplesoft number)
  [3] Name of your OPT advisor (Designated School Official)
  [4] Mention that the fee is for your Post Completion OPT
OPT Alumni Fee:

Kindly mail your check to:
University of Houston – Attention: Juanette Davis
International Student and Scholar Services
4465 University Drive, Room N203
Houston, TX 77204

![Check Image]
Paying with a credit card – G-1450

- USCIS accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover

- Complete and sign Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions (PDF) – download the form from USCIS.GOV

- Place the form G-1450 on top of your I-765 application when you file it

- USCIS will charge your credit card for the proper amount, and will then destroy (shred) your form G-1450 to protect your credit card information

- You will see a charge from USCIS on your credit card statement
Check your case status – Receipt notice

In response to G-1145, USCIS will send you an email or text message with a receipt number.

The same receipt number will be on your paper receipt notice – I-797C, mailed to the address you provided on your I-765.

Receipt number starts with a 3-letter code followed by numbers.
Check your case status – [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
OPT

- We appreciate your attention to OPT procedures
- At this time, please submit your complete OPT documents to the counselor
- We will do our best to complete your OPT request in 5 business days
- If you have questions, the counselor will be available at the end of the session
- Thank you

- [www.uh.edu/OISSS](http://www.uh.edu/OISSS)
- 713-743-5065

- To track the status of your OPT application: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) – with receipt number
- USCIS contact telephone: (800) 375-5283
Please arrange your documents in the order below prior to submission to the counselor – please remove any staples

- I-765, Fully completed – must be signed by hand
- Passport copy
- Visa copy (most recent visa)
- I-94 printout - [CBP.gov/I-94](http://CBP.gov/I-94)
- F-1 approval notice, form I-797A (if you changed visa status in the U.S. – not applicable to most students)
- Previous EAD copy, if you previously had OPT (not applicable to most students)
- G-1145
- Academic Verification form, signed by your college
- F-1 Student Responsibility, fully signed by you, with OPT Start Date, mm/dd/yyyy