OPT: Optional Practical Training - Application Process

OPT – Overview:
- F-1 Students are eligible to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) as a benefit of their visa.
- You do not need to have a job offer before submitting an application.
- OPT allows you to work in the U.S. for up to 12 months in a position related to your major.

Eligibility:
Must have completed one academic year (2 semesters) in F-1 status and will graduate before the OPT start date.

Immigration Requirements While on OPT:
During OPT, the participant remains a student on an F-1 visa and must abide by all of the relevant regulations, including address and employment reporting and travel signatures.

Types of OPT:

Pre-Completion OPT:
Students granted Pre-Completion OPT authorization may work up to 20 hours a week during the school term and full-time (more than 20 hours) during summer and semester breaks.

Important! Pre-Completion time will be deducted from the regular 12 months of OPT eligibility.

Post-Completion OPT:
This is the option for graduating students (bachelor’s and master’s). Students granted Post-Completion OPT authorization must work at least 20 hours per week in a qualifying position.

- Undergraduate Students - May begin work immediately after the end of the semester of graduation.
- Graduate students - May begin employment if the only remaining work is a thesis, project, etc. However, grad students must complete all degree requirements before the end of OPT.

STEM OPT Extension:
Students with a bachelor’s or master’s degree in a STEM field (science, technology, engineering or mathematics) may be eligible to apply for a 24 month extension of their OPT work authorization. To qualify for STEM OPT Extension, students must have a job offer from an E-Verified employer.

Unemployment While on OPT:
You will be allowed a total of 90 days of unemployment during your initial Standard OPT. Note that USCIS considers at least 20 hours per week as full-time employment during OPT.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OPT – Post Application Processes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>F-1 Status</strong> You will continue to be an F-1 student until the end your authorized OPT period.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>USCIS Form 1-797 Notice of Action</strong> Within 2-3 weeks, USCIS will acknowledge receipt of your application. Also they will send you a text message or email, if you filed Form G-1145 with your OPT application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Application Status:</strong> <strong>Receipt number</strong> Form I-797 will list your case number which will begin with <strong>WAC</strong> or <strong>YSC</strong>. You can use this number to check the status of your application at: <a href="https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do">https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>EA (Employment Authorization)</strong> If OPT is approved, the EA card will be sent to the address you put on the I-765 application.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Change of Address During 90 day Processing Period</strong> USCIS mail cannot be forwarded by the US Postal Service. Form 1-797 will list a phone number to report your new address if you move during this time period.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Employment</strong> You may not start working until you have the EAD in hand. <strong>Even if you receive your EAD before your start date, you cannot work until the start date listed on the card.</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Unemployment</strong> During the 12 months of OPT, you may not be unemployed for more than 90 days. You must report days of unemployment to an International Student Advisor.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Volunteering (not being paid)</strong> USCIS allows students on OPT to volunteer their services (unpaid internship). You may volunteer for at least 21 hours a week but you must have documentation proving that what you are doing is related to your major.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Required Reporting during OPT</strong> <strong>Within 10 days</strong> of any change: Your residence (US) address; Telephone #; email address <strong>Name of the Employer and Address</strong> <strong>Name of Supervisor, telephone number, email address</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>F-1 VISA</strong> You may remain in the U. S. with an expired visa as long as you maintain your visa status. If the visa stamp in your passport has expired and you leave the United States with the intent of returning, you must go the US Embassy or Consulate to apply for a renewal. Your passport must always be valid for at least six months into the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Graduate students ADJUNCT STATUS</strong> If you have not completed all the requirements for your master’s degree, you must to register as an adjunct student each semester at RCE in order to maintain your place in the Graduate program.</td>
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<td>Graduate Students Graduation</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Grace Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>STEM Extension</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>CAP-GAP Extension</td>
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OPT: Optional Practical Training - Application Checklist

Post-Completion OPT applications will be accepted by USCIS between 90 days prior to the student’s degree program completion date and 60 days (grace period) after completion of the degree. The 12 months of OPT must be completed within 14 months from the degree completion date.

Step 1: Student responsibilities

- Take care of all university ‘holds’ you might have.
- Select an address to which USCIS may send communication including your EAD, if approved. Important Note: The US Post Office will not forward USCIS letters.
- Adjunct status: Graduate students completing a thesis or project, etc., each semester must register with RCE in order to maintain status in the Graduate School.

Step 2: Department Recommendation

- Complete and sign Part 1 the OPT Recommendation form. Then request recommendation from your Department Chair, Faculty Advisor or Graduate Coordinator (Part 2). Processing will not proceed without the Department Recommendation.

Step 3: Submit All Documents to an International Student Advisor

- Completed and signed OPT Recommendation Form
- Completed and signed form I-765 (Google “I-765” to find the most recent version)
- Completed form G-1145: e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
- I-94 – most recent (You will find this at: www.cbp.gov)
- Photocopy of passport and F-1 visa
- Proof of current health insurance coverage
- Two, (2 inches X 2 inches) passport size photos of yourself
- $410 application fee (A personal check, Money Order, Cashier’s Check payable to: Department of Homeland Security, or Form G-1450 for credit card payment)

Step 4: ISA Recommendation and Process

- The International Student Advisor (ISA) will recommend you for OPT and issue a new I-20 with the requested OPT dates.
- After you sign the I-20, the ISA will make a copy and you will retain the original.
- The ISA will submit your application packet to USCIS, or you may submit the application packet to USCIS yourself.
Step 5: USCIS Process

✔ USCIS will contact you in approximately 3 weeks to inform you of receipt of the application. They will send you a form I-797C, Notice of Action, with the appropriate instructions.
✔ You will, if approved, receive the EAD in approximately 90 - 120 days.

Step 6: Maintain F-1 Visa Status While on OPT

☐ Upon receipt of EAD and job offer, promptly submit the following to the ISA:
  • A copy of your EAD (front and back)
  • A copy of your job offer letter
  • OPT reporting form (obtain from an ISA)
  • Your new address (if applicable)

☐ ISA will issue you a new I-20 which lists your employment information.
☐ While on OPT, immediately report all changes of employment and address to your ISA.
☐ An OPT STEM Extension of 24 months is available for qualifying majors. You must apply before the last day of your OPT work authorization, as listed on your EAD. Contact your ISA for instructions on applying for OPT STEM Extension.
Optional Practical Training (OPT) Recommendation Form

Upon the completion of their academic programs, international students with F-1 visas are eligible to apply for 12 months of work authorization in United States. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) regulations refer to this as Optional Practical Training (OPT). Typically, this is done immediately following completion of studies, post-completion. **Having a job is not required in order to apply for OPT.**

Part I: To be completed by the student

1. **Surname/Last Name**
   - Chico ID:
   - Given names
   - Email
   - Phone number

2. **Major**
   - Undergraduate (Bachelor)
   - Graduate (Masters)
   - Semester when you will graduate:

3. **OPT Dates Request**
   - **START:**
   - **END:**

   This period is limited to a total of 12 months.

   I understand that during OPT I will remain an F-1 student and must notify the International Student Advisors within 10 days of: 1) any change of my residential address, 2) the name and address of any company that employs me, 3) ending any employment, 4) changing to another immigration status. I understand that travel outside the US requires the ISA signature.

   **Student Signature:**
   - **Date:**

Part II: Completed & Signed by Dept. Chair, Faculty Advisor, or Grad Coordinator

Because USCIS requires an academic recommendation, your assistance in completing this form will be most appreciated. If you have questions or need for clarification, please contact the International Student Advisors **Tasha Alexander at 898-5721** or **Cindy McKay at 898-5408**.

1. **Name:**
   - **Campus Extension:**

2. **Title:**
   - **Department:**

3. Is the student expected to complete all of his/her coursework (excluding thesis, project, or culminating activity) **by the end of the current academic term** at CSU, Chico?
   - **YES**
   - **NO**

4. I recommend engagement in OPT in order to gain field experience in the major.

   **Signature:**
   - **Date:**
# OPT First Period Reporting Form

During OPT, you are subject to all F-1 student regulations.  

**With this form, please also submit a copy of: EAD (front/back) and job offer letter.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname/ Last Name</th>
<th>Chico ID:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Given Name(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone number</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>State</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## OPT EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Start Date</th>
<th>EA Card End Date</th>
<th>Company’s EIN number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Zip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## OPT SUPERVISION (Employer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Supervisor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor’s email</td>
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<td>Supervisor’s phone</td>
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## JOB RELEVANCY TO MAJOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Job Title</th>
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</table>

**Explain how your job is related to your major:**

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**Certification:** I must notify International Student Advisors within 10 days of changes of residential address, name, employer, employment, or status.

Signature and date: