

Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 Visa-Holders

For 12 months of work experience directly related to your major field of study after graduation, you may apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT). The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) authorizes OPT. You can apply for OPT authorization after each degree level (B.A./B.S. or M.A./M.S. or Ph.D.) you complete in the U.S.

OPT application requirements:

- Maintained your F-1 status for 9 consecutive months
- Have been under the same degree level for 9 consecutive months
- You can apply between 90 days before your program end date and up to 60 days after your program end date

Note: Students in the Transition English Language Program (TELP) are not eligible for OPT.

Applying for OPT:

- OPT requires an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS, and it can take months to receive your EAD. You must receive your EAD card from USCIS before you can work either on or off campus once you graduate.
- The start date for OPT **must** be within 60 days of your program end date. Discuss your options with an International Student Advisor. (Make an appointment by calling (818) 252-5265).

Maintaining status during OPT:

- Keep your address updated by (a) informing an International Student Advisor each time you move (Students subject to Special Registration requirements must also submit address updates as instructed by USCIS) Form AR-11 is available from the USCIS website
- Have an International Student Advisor sign your I-20 for travel if you plan to leave the U.S. and return while on OPT.
- Inform an International Student Advisor if you
 - a) stop or change employment,
 - b) leave the U.S. permanently, or
 - c) decide to return to school.

We must notify USCIS of such changes for you to remain in status.

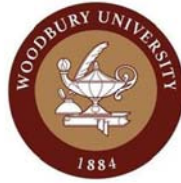
- Find employment within 90 days of employment start date shown on EAD card.

OPT is automatically terminated if you do either of the following:

- Transfer to another college or university, or
- Begin a new degree program
- Leave the U.S. permanently

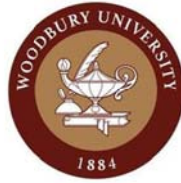
OPT application photos:

Be sure the photos meet the following USCIS specifications. More information can be obtained at http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotoreq/pptphotoreq_5333.ht



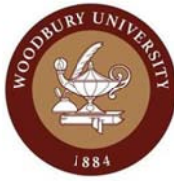
To Apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT)

1. Have your academic/faculty advisor complete the OPT Endorsement Form (attached). Your academic advisor must complete this form before an International Student Advisor can request OPT.
 - Obtain a copy of graduation check letter from the Registrar's office. (Graduation check must be submitted 3 semesters prior to expected graduation date.)
2. Complete [Form I-765](#) and Form [G1145](#).
 - Code for question 16 is (c)(3)(b)
 - Code for OPT STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics) Extension for question 16 is (c)(3)(c)
3. Meet with an International Student Advisor to request an OPT recommendation. Bring the following completed forms to the meeting:
 - OPT Academic/Faculty Advisor Endorsement Form
 - I-765
 - G1145
 - Check made out to "Department of Homeland Security" for \$380.00
 - Color Photos (passport-size)
 - Photocopy of the following:
 - Identity pages from your passport (picture, number, and expiration date)
 - U.S. visa page from your passport
 - I-94
4. The International Student Advisor will re-print the I-20 form with OPT recommendation on page 3. At this time, make sure that all personal information on file is correct.
5. Complete section 11 on page 1 of the I-20. Your I-20 is not valid until you sign it.
6. Send the following documents to USCIS immediately after you pick up the I-20:
 - Copy of Form I-20 with OPT recommendation on page 3.
 - OPT application form I-765, completely filled out and signed.
 - Code for question number 16 is (c)(3)(b)
 - Receipt Request Form - G1145 form filled out and signed.
 - A personal check for \$380.00 payable to "Department of Homeland Security"
 - Two color photos (passport-size), following the directions in this information packet. Lightly print your name on the back of each photo with pencil
 - Photocopy of the following:
 - Identity pages from your passport (picture, number, and expiration date)
 - U.S. visa page from your passport
 - I-94
 - Any previously-issued EAD cards
 - Job offer letter, if you have one. *You do not need a job offer to receive OPT.*
7. Send everything listed in step 6 by certified mail (request a return receipt and keep the receipt) to the address for California residents listed on the [USCIS website](#).
8. Visit [Career Services](#) for assistance with finding a job.



If OPT is authorized, the USCIS will notify you by:

- A Notice of Action letter with the LIN tracking number. You may check the status of your application at the [USCIS case website](#).
- Mailing your EAD card, which they will send to the address you write on the I-765. The Postal Service will not forward your EAD card to a new address if you move while your application is in process.



Optional Practical Training (OPT) Endorsement Form

To: Faculty/Academic Advisor

Student Name: _____

This endorsement is needed for the Office of Student Development's International Student Advisor to recommend Optional Practical Training (OPT) to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). OPT is temporary employment granted to international students to gain work experience related to their field of study up to 12 months after completion of the student's academic program. Some students may be eligible for a 24-month OPT extension if their major falls within a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics) category. Currently, only our Animation and Media Technology majors are considered to be STEM.

If you have questions about practical training, please contact an International Student Advisor at (818) 252-5265.

To be completed by Faculty/Academic Advisor:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Student's coursework completion date: _____

Date of graduation: _____

Today's date: _____