

## Optional Practice Training (OPT) Checklist

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Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a work authorization tied to F-1 status that allows F-1 applicants to work in a field related to their studies for one year. It is traditionally used post-graduation.

OPT is reviewed and authorized by the U.S government, but you must first work with IPO to be recommended for OPT.

Please schedule an appointment with IPO to discuss OPT and prepare for your application.

### Requirements to Apply:

- You must be an F-1 student who has been enrolled full time and in status for two semesters. You must be graduating within the next one to four months, unless you wish to apply for pre- completion OPT
- our application must be received by USCIS no earlier than ninety days before your graduation and no later than sixty days after your graduation.
- You do NOT need a job to apply for OPT!

### Requirements During OPT

- All jobs must be related to your “field of study” or major, including any unpaid internships.
- You must work more than twenty hours per week (combined if you have multiple jobs). See FAQs at the end for more information on the type of employment allowed.
- You must report all employment changes, as well as address changes to USCIS. It is recommended that you do this by reporting changes to the IPO office, where advisors have the ability to update your record.
- You are allowed 90 days of unemployment during your one year of OPT. This is cumulative, over your entire year. Failure to report employment is considered the same as unemployment and will endanger your status.

### Application Process:

Your application materials should be assembled in the following order:

- Form I-765 Filing Fee, \$410** as of 11/30/2017.
  - Personal check, money order, or cashier’s check. **made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.**
  - Check for up to date filing fee: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms>

- Information on paying USCIS fees, including how to make out the check:  
<https://www.uscis.gov/fees>
- Form G-1145** (optional): <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>
  - This form is optional.
  - The form requests USCIS to text or email you upon receipt of your application.
- Two recent passport-style photos.** (available at Walgreen's, Wal-Mart, Rite-Aid)
  - These must follow the USCIS guidelines for passport photo: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply/photos.html>.
  - Should be taken within last 30 days.
  - Enclose them in a clear plastic sandwich bag - **lightly write your name & admission # (listed on your I-94) on the back of each photo.**
- Form I-765:** (find fillable PDF & instructions at <https://www.uscis.gov/forms>).
  - Part One: Select 1.a.: Initial Permission to Accept Employment
  - Part Two: Mailing Address: Do NOT use your Linfield address. After you graduate, you will not be able to access this address. Use an off-campus address or the IPO address: 900 SE Baker St, McMinnville, OR 97128.
  - Physical Address: This should be where you are currently living.
  - If you have a social security number, answer questions 13 and 14, and then skip to question 18.
  - Question 21a: Your I-94 number can be found at the top of your I-94, when you print it out.
  - Unless you have changed immigration status in the U.S, the answers to questions 24 and 25 will be F-1 student.
  - Question 27: Your eligibility code for post-completion OPT is C-3-B.
  - Make sure you sign page four.
  - Part Six (Page Seven): If you have previous SEVIS ID numbers or have utilized OPT or CPT before, please list that information on this page.
- Current SEVIS I-20 with the OPT endorsement (You will get this after you meet with IPO) and all previous I-20s forms that show employment authorization.** Obtain this from IPO or, for Portland students, from Matt Hiller.
- Passport with F-1 visa copies.** A copy of your current, valid passport ID pages and your most recent U.S. visa (if applicable). Your passport MUST be valid at least 6 months after your graduation date.
- A copy of your current I-94** (front and back if it is the paper form). If you re-entered the USA after Apr. 1, 2013 your I-94 is electronic, you can download it at: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>.

## Before you Submit Application

- Make an appointment and meet with IPO.** (Portland Campus students meet with Matt Hiller) The IPO will review your application materials to make sure they are complete and make a copy for your own records.
- Mail your application.** Send all of the materials listed above to the appropriate USCIS address. This address will depend on if you wish to send via a courier service or regular mail. The updated addresses as of 01/11/2021 are listed below but please verify address on the [I-765 website](#) .

<p><b>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):</b></p> <p>USCIS  P.O. Box 805373  Chicago, IL. 60680</p>	<p><b>For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:</b></p> <p>USCIS  Attn: I-765 C03  131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor  Chicago, IL. 60603-5517</p>
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We strongly recommend you send your application with **delivery confirmation or tracking** through USPS Express Mail or FedEx.. Processing your materials usually takes 90 or more days.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What happens after I submit my application to USCIS?**

You will receive a receipt with a receipt number. A paper receipt should arrive 2-4 weeks after submission. If you complete the G-1145, you should receive a text or email receipt 1-2 weeks after receipt. You can then check your case status using this site: <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>. DO NOT lose your receipt! Also, please contact IPO if your check is not cashed and you do not receive a receipt within thirty days.

### **When can I start work?**

You may not begin employment until you have 1) Received your EAD card AND 2) the employment start date listed on your EAD has arrived.

**Can I travel while on OPT?** Yes, once your OPT has been approved and you have received your EAD, you can travel internationally. You must have the following to re-enter the U.S:

- Passport with valid U.S F-1 visa
- I-20 with a travel endorsement from within six months
- EAD card
- It is recommended that you carry verification of employment (job offer letter etc..)

**What type of employment is allowed while on OPT?** Employment options are quite flexible while on OPT, with the following two restrictions: all jobs must be related to your major and you must work at least twenty hours per week (combined). You can work as an intern (unpaid or paid), an independent contractor, multiple jobs or even start your own company.

While you are participating in OPT, you are still in F-1 status and required to maintain contact with Linfield University . Please keep us updated on any employment and address changes, AND provide us with an updated, non-Linfield email address. This will ensure your F-1 status is maintained during your OPT time.

If you have any questions or difficulties during the OPT application process, please let us know.