

F-1 EMPLOYMENT: Optional Practical Training (OPT) Workshop



UT Health

San Antonio

International Services

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Overview

What is OPT?

- It is a work authorization benefit to allow for practical work experience in your field of study.
- You may apply for OPT once for each degree level.

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Overview

Three types of OPT

- **Pre-completion OPT:** before graduation
 - Part-time employment during school year and full-time during school breaks.
 - Employment must be in the area of academic major and may be paid or unpaid.
- **Post-completion OPT:** after graduation
 - Must be employed at least 20 hours per week in the area of academic major
 - Employment must be in the area of academic major and may be paid or unpaid.
- **24-month STEM extension:** after initial OPT for STEM majors (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).
 - Different job requirements as compared to post-completion OPT
 - Employer must be part of the E-Verify program
 - Student must submit I-983 training plan signed by both student and employer

Types of Employment Allowed

All OPT employment must be in a job that is related to your academic major.

You must be employed for at least 20 hours per week.

- Paid Employment
 - Multiple employers
 - Work for hire
 - Self-employed business owner
 - Employment through an agency
- Unpaid Employment (volunteers, unpaid interns)
 - Must not violate labor laws

When should you apply for OPT?

The earlier, the better!

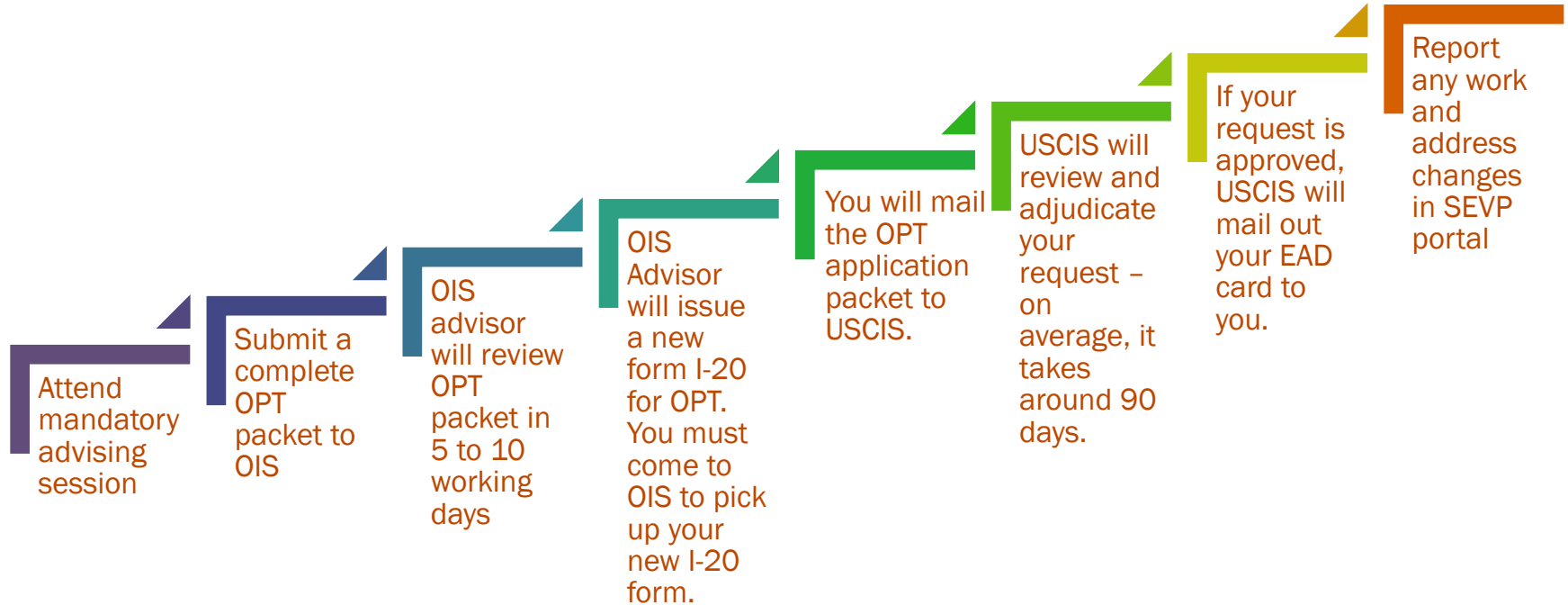
- No more than 90 days before your program end date and up to 60 days after your program end date.
- STEM OPT extension: no earlier than 90 days and no later than 60 days from the date the DSO recommended the STEM OPT in SEVIS.

When is your program end date for the purposes of OPT?

Three Options:

- Thesis/Dissertation Defense date
- End date of last semester of academic studies/research to complete degree/certificate

OPT Application Process Overview



Optional Practical Training Guide

F-1 Students wishing to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) should read this guide and follow the instructions carefully. This guide will explain eligibility for OPT and what procedures need to be followed to apply for and obtain OPT.

If you have questions or concerns after reviewing this packet, please call the Office of International Services (OIS) at 210-567-6241 to schedule an appointment with an International Services Representative. An appointment is not necessary if you do not have questions but would like to submit your application.

WHAT IS OPT?

Optional Practical Training is defined as “temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major area of study.” It allows for work authorization granted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for up to 12 months per degree level, for the purpose of gaining practical experience directly related to their program of study. An F-1 student who has maintained lawful F-1 visa status for at least one academic year is eligible to apply for OPT. OPT may be granted before or after completion of a program of study; however, limitations apply.

HOW LONG IS OPT WORK AUTHORIZATION?

The maximum amount of time for which OPT may be granted is 12 months full-time per degree level. This means if you have previously completed a Bachelor’s degree and used 12 months of OPT and subsequently complete a Master’s degree, you may apply for another 12 months of OPT. If you completed two Master’s degrees you will only receive one 12-month period of OPT. Part-time pre-completion OPT is deducted from the total OPT period at half rate. For example, if you work part-time using pre-completion OPT for 6 months, you will have used 3 months of your total available OPT work authorization.

WHEN SHOULD AN F-1 STUDENT APPLY FOR POST-COMPLETION OPT?

Students applying for post-completion OPT may apply for and submit their OPT applications to USCIS as early as 90 days before the program end date indicated on the I-20 form and NO LATER THAN 60 days after the program end date. OPT applications must be received by USCIS no later than 60 days from this I-20 end date. Late applications will be rejected by USCIS. Also, USCIS must receive your application for post-completion OPT within 30 days of the post-completion OPT recommendation issued by your OIS International Services Representative on your I-20 form. The USCIS may grant a later start date for OPT than you originally requested depending upon the timing of the processing of the application.

WHEN IS MY PROGRAM END DATE?

Your program end date can be:

- Thesis/dissertation defense date
- Official end date of the semester in which you will complete your degree requirements (whether it be course requirements or thesis/dissertation)

There is some flexibility in determining your program end date depending on the type of program in which you are completing. If you have additional questions about this, please contact your International Services Representative.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR MY OPT REQUEST TO BE APPROVED?

OIS requires 5-7 business days to process your I-20 form recommending OPT. USCIS takes approximately 90-100 days to approve your OPT and mail you an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card. If your Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, has been pending more than 75 days, you may contact the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) at 1-800-375-5283 and ask that they create a service request. The NCSC will route the service request to the appropriate office for review. Please have your receipt number ready when contacting the NCSC.

<http://uthscsa.edu/ois>

F-1 students:

- **OPT Training Guide**
- **OPT Reporting form**
- **OPT STEM packet**

A) OPT RECOMMENDATION FORM: (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT)

Name: _____ Personal E-mail: _____
Requested OPT Start Date _____ End Date: _____ Full-time _____ Part-time _____

Please be aware it can take USCIS up to 90-100 days to issue the OPT EAD and you will not be able to work until you receive the EAD card

I am requesting the following:

Pre-completion OPT - OPT will take place prior to completion of all my degree requirements. Please indicate

(c)(3)(A) in question #16 of Form I-765

Post-completion OPT - OPT will take place after I have completed all of my degree requirements. Please indicate

(c)(3)(B) in question #16 of Form I-765

Signature: _____ Date: _____

B) THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY STUDENT'S ACADEMIC ADVISOR OR EQUIVALENT (UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS), CHAIR OF COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES (GRADUATE STUDENTS) OR PROGRAM DIRECTOR (PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS/DENTAL RESIDENTS/INTERNS)

The student referenced above is applying for permission to apply for OPT an employment authorization from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). OPT is for employment in a job related to the student's major field of study and is intended to provide practical experience. Authorization for OPT is first officially recommended by a Designated School Official, (i.e. an International Services Representative) and then approved by the USCIS.

Before this authorization can be granted, OIS must have a statement from the student's Academic Unit indicating the date of completion of the student's degree requirements. Please note that the date of completion is not necessarily the end of the term or the graduation date, but is the date on which all requirements for the degree have been fulfilled. For students enrolled in a program that requires a thesis or a dissertation, they can choose either the thesis or dissertation defense date or the end date of the semester in which they graduate. Keep in mind that the student cannot continue any on-campus employment after this updated I-20 program end date. Previous versions of the I-20 will no longer be valid for I-9 work authorization purposes.

Please complete this form and return it to the student. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact an International Services Representative at 210-567-6241 or international@uthscsa.edu.

Type of degree or certificate expected: BS MS PhD Major

Other:

Date the student will complete academic requirements to obtain degree/certificate (MM/DD/YYYY):

This date represents: Masters/PhD Dissertation/Thesis Defense Date

(please check one) End date of Last Semester of Academic Studies/Research to Complete Degree/Certificate

Signature: _____ Title: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

OPT Recommendation Form

Top section is completed by the student.

REQUEST DATES: Be sure to consult with your advisor if you have any questions.

For post-completion OPT, your start date should be after you have completed all program requirements

-Not earlier than one day after program end date.

-Not more than 60 days after program end date.

Bottom section is completed by the academic program.

We cannot process an OPT request without the student's signature and the appropriate signature from the academic program.





Application For Employment Authorization

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS
Form I-765
OMB No. 1615-0040
Expires 05/31/2020

For USCIS Use Only	<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid From	Fee Stamp	Action Block
	<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid Through		
	Alien Registration Number A- <input type="text"/>		
	Remarks		

To be completed by an attorney or Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA)-accredited representative (if any).	<input type="checkbox"/> Select this box if Form G-28 is attached.	Attorney or Accredited Representative USCIS Online Account Number (if any)
		<input type="text"/>

▶ **START HERE** - Type or print in black ink.

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.)

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

- 1.a. Family Name (Last Name)
- 1.b. Given Name (First Name)
- 1.c. Middle Name

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.

- 2.a. Family Name (Last Name)
- 2.b. Given Name (First Name)
- 2.c. Middle Name

- 3.a. Family Name (Last Name)
- 3.b. Given Name (First Name)
- 3.c. Middle Name

- 4.a. Family Name (Last Name)
- 4.b. Given Name (First Name)
- 4.c. Middle Name

Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization

<http://uscis.gov>

27. Use the right code for the type of OPT you are requesting.

The form must have a recent signature. USCIS will not accept applications that have a signature dated more than 30 days before the petition is received.





e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS
Form G-1145

What Is the Purpose of This Form?

Use this form to request an electronic notification (e-Notification) when U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services accepts your immigration application. This service is available for applications filed at a USCIS Lockbox facility.

General Information

Complete the information below and clip this form to the first page of your application package. You will receive one e-mail and/or text message for each form you are filing.

We will send the e-Notification within 24 hours after we accept your application. Domestic customers will receive an e-mail and/or text message; overseas customers will only receive an e-mail. Undeliverable e-Notifications cannot be resent.

The e-mail or text message will display your receipt number and tell you how to get updated case status information. It will not include any personal information. The e-Notification does not grant any type of status or benefit; rather it is provided as a convenience to customers.

USCIS will also mail you a receipt notice (I-797C), which you will receive within 10 days after your application has been accepted; use this notice as proof of your pending application or petition.

USCIS Privacy Act Statement

AUTHORITIES: The information requested on this form is collected pursuant to section 103(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended INA section 101, et seq.

PURPOSE: The primary purpose for providing the information on this form is to request an electronic notification when USCIS accepts immigration form. The information you provide will be used to send you a text and/or email message.

DISCLOSURE: The information you provide is voluntary. However, failure to provide the requested information may prevent USCIS from providing you a text and/or email message receiving your immigration form.

ROUTINE USES: The information provided on this form will be used by and disclosed to DHS personnel and contractors in accordance with approved routine uses, as described in the associated published system of records notices [[DHS/USCIS-007 - Benefits Information System and DHS/USCIS-001 - Alien File \(A-File\) and Central Index System \(CIS\)](#), which can be found at www.dhs.gov/privacy]. The information may also be made available, as appropriate for law enforcement purposes or in the interest of national security.

Complete this form and clip it on top of the first page of your immigration form(s).

Applicant/Petitioner Full Last Name	Applicant/Petitioner Full First Name	Applicant/Petitioner Full Middle Name
Email Address		Mobile Phone Number (Text Message)

Form G-1145 e-Notification of Application

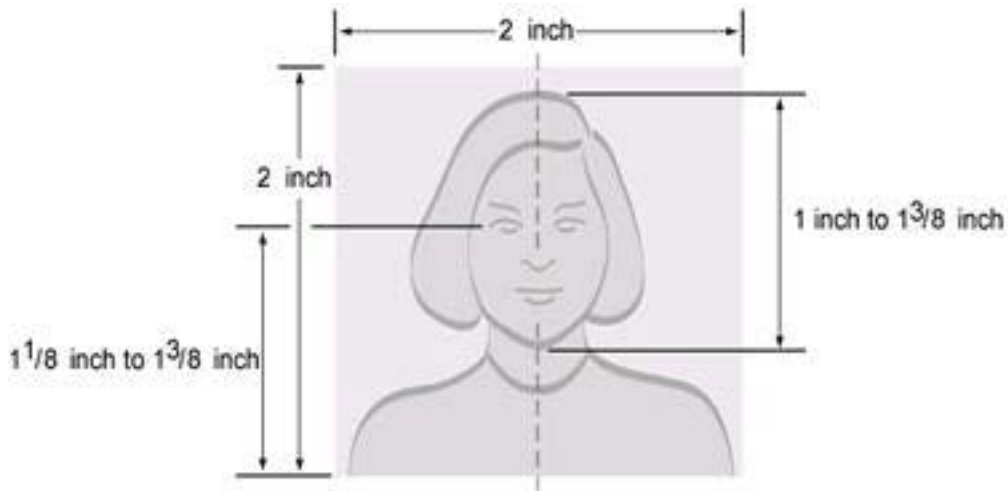
USCIS will notify you via text message and/or e-mail when they have accepted your petition.

This notification does not grant employment authorization.

You will receive a number to check the status of your application via the USCIS website: <http://uscis.gov>



Two identical passport style photos



The picture must be taken within the last 30 days from the date your application is submitted to USCIS.

Lightly print in pencil or felt pen your name & I-94 number on the back of each picture.

SEVIS ID: N0004705512

SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME Doe Smith	GIVEN NAME John	CLASS F-1 ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE
PREFERRED NAME John Doe-Smith	PASSPORT NAME	
COUNTRY OF BIRTH UNITED KINGDOM	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP UNITED KINGDOM	
DATE OF BIRTH 01 JANUARY 1980	ADMISSION NUMBER	
FORM ISSUE REASON INITIAL ATTENDANCE	LEGACY NAME John Doe-Smith	

SCHOOL INFORMATION	
SCHOOL NAME SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies	SCHOOL ADDRESS 9002 Nancy Lane, Ft. Washington, MD 20744
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Helene Robertson PDSO	SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE BAL214F4444000 03 APRIL 2015

PROGRAM OF STUDY		
EDUCATION LEVEL DOCTORATE	MAJOR 1 Economics, General 45.0601	MAJOR 2 None 00.0000
NORMAL PROGRAM LENGTH 72 Months	PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient
PROGRAM START DATE 01 SEPTEMBER 2015	PROGRAM END DATE 31 MAY 2021	

FINANCIALS	
ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR: 9 MONTHS	STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR: 9 MONTHS
Tuition and Fees \$ 23,000	Personal Funds \$ 3,000
Living Expenses \$ 6,000	Scholarship and Teaching Assistantship \$ 29,000
Expenses of Dependents (1) \$ 3,000	Funds From Another Source \$
Other \$	On-Campus Employment \$
TOTAL \$ 32,000	TOTAL \$ 32,000

REMARKS
Orientation begins 8/25/2015. Please report to ISSS upon arrival.

SCHOOL ATTESTATION		
I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DATE ISSUED	PLACE ISSUED
SIGNATURE OF: Helene Robertson, PDSO	21 April 2015	Ft. Washington, MD

STUDENT ATTESTATION			
I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE OF: John Doe Smith	DATE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS (city/state or province/country) DATE

Copies of all previously issued Form I-20

Submit copies of all I-20 forms you were ever issued. If you are a transfer student, or if you ever held F-1 status in the past, you must submit copies of those Form I-20 as well.

Do not submit double sided copies with **no staples.**

Older I-20 forms: Page 2 is not necessary, you may submit copies of Pages 1 and 3 only.

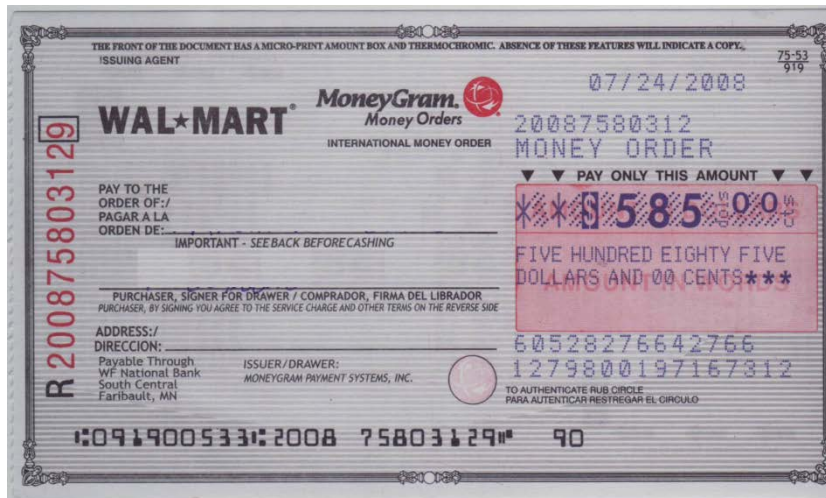
Check or money order



Payable to: U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Amount: \$410*

**Amount is subject to change. Always check the USCIS website for the latest information.*



Money orders: make sure all the information is filled out including your own information (name, address, etc.)

Check/money order must be recent.

Overview of OPT Application Process

Student gathers & submits a complete OPT request packet to the Office of International Services (OIS). *(Forms can be found at www.uthscsa.edu/ois)*

OIS reviews packet. If documents are missing or additional information is needed OIS will contact the student.
OIS Processing Time: 5 to 10 business days

Once there is a complete OPT request packet, OIS will issue a new I-20 form with the OPT recommendation on Page 2. OIS will notify student by e-mail when the OPT application packet and new I-20 form are ready to be picked up at OIS.

Student will collect OPT application including new I-20 form from OIS and mail copy of new, signed I-20 and all supporting documents listed on checklist (Page 6 of OPT Training Guide), to USCIS for review. *OPT applications must be submitted to USCIS within 30 days of the date new I-20 form issued by OIS.*

USCIS may take 90 days to process OPT applications. When OPT EAD (work permit) is approved, student will receive EAD. Students are required to submit copies of EAD approval notice and EAD to OIS

Mailing your OPT Application Packet to USCIS

- Students must submit the complete OPT Application Packet to the correct USCIS Lockbox Facility for processing and adjudication.
- OIS will not submit the packet for you.
- Please refer to USCIS website to determine correct USCIS Lockbox (based on state of residence): <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses>

After USCIS receives your case

- Receive notification via text message or e-mail
- You will receive the I-797C Notice of Action. The receipt number in this form is the same receipt number you will receive via text message or e-mail.
- You can check the status of your application via www.uscis.gov

The screenshot shows the USCIS website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links for Home, Español, and Site Map. Below the search bar is a green navigation bar with tabs for FORMS, NEWS, RESOURCES, LAWS, OUTREACH, and ABOUT US. The main content area is titled 'My Case Status' and includes a sub-section 'Your Current Case Status'. This section features a progress bar with 10 steps: Acceptance, Initial Review, Request for Evidence, Request for Evidence Response, Testing and Interview, Decision, Post Decision Activity, Oath Ceremony, and Card/Document Production. Below the progress bar, there is a text input field for 'Enter your receipt number' and a 'Check Status' button. The page also contains instructions on how to enter the receipt number and a 'Processing Times' section with a dropdown menu for selecting a form type and 'Next' and 'Reset' buttons.

When your petition is approved



- EAD card will be sent to the address on the I-765 form.
- You must send a copy of both your approval notice and EAD card to our office as soon as you receive them: international@uthscsa.edu
- You must have the EAD card **in hand** before working.

My OPT is approved, now what?

You are still considered in F-1 student visa status.

- Report each employer name and address immediately through the SEVP portal upon accepting a job offer so that your employment record can be updated. *OPT STEM Extension students must submit the OPT reporting form every six months regardless of if there are changes (Form available on OIS website).*
- Report within the SEVP portal if you stop working for one employer or add a new part-time employer.
- Report changes of address in the SEVP portal and to OIS within 10 days of the move.
- Report any changes to your name or visa status to OIS within 10 days of the change taking place.
- **Cannot accrue more than 90 days of unemployment** from OPT EAD start date. *If you accrue more than 90 days of unemployment, you are violating your F-1 visa status and departure from the U.S. would be required.*
- **F-1 SEVIS records will now auto-terminate in SEVIS after 90 days of unemployment.** This means that if there is no employment information in your record for 90 days, your SEVIS record will be terminated and you must depart the U.S. immediately.

Documenting employment that is related to your academic major

We recommend that you keep the following for your records in case of a future audit:

- A detailed listing of employment sites.
- A list of activities and projects, specifically the number of weekly hours of work for each work site.
- A letter from your supervisor confirming the job is related to your academic major if it is not clear in the job description or title.
- In addition, for volunteer positions: detailed records of attendance for the duration of volunteer work.

Travel During OPT (Initial OPT or STEM OPT)

While Application is Pending

Traveling before program completion:

Must re-enter the U.S. before the end date of your Form I-20 and you must present a valid visa stamp and passport. See F-1 Travel Information document on OIS website for detailed instructions.

Traveling after program completion: NOT RECOMMENDED. Could result in denial of OPT application and/or inability to re-enter the U.S.

After Application is Approved

You may travel abroad once your OPT is approved as long as you already have a job. Re-entry to the U.S. while on OPT requires:

- Documents listed on F-1 Travel Information document on OIS website
- Valid F-1 visa stamp
- Valid Form I-20 with OPT recommendation on Page 3 and with a travel validation signature within **past 6 months**.
- EAD card
- Employment documentation: letter from employer, copies of pay stubs, etc.

60-day grace period after OPT

You have a 60-day grace period from the end date of your OPT EAD card.

- Work is not allowed during your grace period, but you can travel within the U.S. and make preparations to go back home.
- If you travel abroad during your grace period you cannot re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status.

24-month STEM OPT Extension Eligibility Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math

Employer must be registered in E-Verify system

- Contact your employer to find out if your workplace participates in E-Verify
- You can find information online via the USCIS E-Verify Employer Search Tool:
<http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify/about-program/e-verify-employers-search-tool>

Degree must be in a STEM field

- See CIP code on Page 1 of your I-20 form and compare it to this list:
<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf>

Must process the extension request through OIS

- OPT STEM application packet on OIS website <http://uthscsa.edu/ois>
- Application must be submitted to OIS no earlier than 90 days before your current OPT expires

The Form I-983 training plan must be submitted with any OPT STEM Extension applications to OIS. The training plan must demonstrate that employment has training element, more akin to an internship than independent employment.

Employment during STEM OPT extension

- If STEM OPT EAD card is filed and pending with USCIS but not approved by expiration date of initial OPT EAD card, you may continue working for 180 days.
- Must work for at least 20 hours for an E-Verify employer. Types of employment allowed:
 - Paid Employment
- Types of employment **NOT** allowed:
 - Unpaid Employment (volunteers, unpaid interns)
 - Work for hire
 - Self-Employed business owners

F-1 students on Post-Completion OPT are eligible for a 24-month OPT extension if they have completed a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in certain Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) fields or who have completed a previous degree in a STEM field from a U.S. institution within the past 10 years and have completed a new degree at the UT Health Science Center San Antonio. Please check the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#) to determine if the CIP code for your major (listed on page 1 of your I-20 under Program of Study) is on the list. If your major is not on this list, you may not be eligible for the STEM OPT Extension.

STEM OPT EXTENSION ELIGIBILITY:

The F-1 student must:

1. Be on a period of standard Post-Completion OPT.
2. Hold a degree in a field of study (indicated on the I-20) which qualifies as STEM eligible according to the official STEM Designated Degree Program List (see above link.)
3. Have a job offer that meets these requirements:
 - Employer must be enrolled in [E-Verify](#). Not all employers are registered with E-Verify and OIS does not have a list of E-Verify employers.
 - Job must be a paid job, for at least 20 hours per week.
4. Demonstrate that the job is directly related to the degree that qualifies for the STEM OPT extension.
5. Prepare and sign the Form I-983 Training Plan and present the completed plan to OIS. For more details regarding the I-983 Form, please visit [I-983 Overview](#), [I-983 Instructions](#), [I-983-Information for Students](#), and [I-983-Information for Employers](#).
6. Apply before your current Post-Completion period of OPT expires. You may apply up to 90 days before current OPT expires. USCIS must receive your STEM extension application before your current OPT period expires, and it must be sent within 60 days of the date the I-20 was issued and signed by your OIS Advisor. It takes 90 days for USCIS to issue your EAD, but you may continue to work for up to 180 days while your STEM extension application is pending with USCIS.

In the final rule for the 24-month STEM Extension, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) indicates that "employment through 'temp' agencies, consulting firms that provide labor hire and other relationships that do not constitute a bona fide employer-employee relationship" do not qualify for the 24-month STEM OPT extension. The STEM regulations do not allow for self-employment.

ELIGIBILITY FOR A SECOND PERIOD OF STEM OPT AFTER HIGHER DEGREE

If you enroll in a new academic program in the U.S. in the future and earn another qualifying STEM degree at a higher educational level, you may be eligible for a second and final period of 24-month STEM OPT (i.e., two 24-month STEM OPT extensions may be permitted).

ELIGIBILITY BASED ON A PREVIOUSLY OBTAINED STEM DEGREE

If you are currently in a degree field (or on Post-Completion OPT using that degree) that is not identified as STEM eligible but have previously earned a STEM eligible degree from an accredited U.S. higher education institution, you may be eligible to apply for a STEM OPT Extension under certain conditions. For more details, please contact our office.

24 MONTH STEM EXTENSION OPT REQUEST FORM (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT)

Last Name: First Name:
 Current OPT EAD Expiration Date: SEVIS ID:
 Current U.S. Address:
 Cell Phone: Personal E-mail Address:
 Please list any upcoming international travel plans dates:

OPT STEM EXTENSION ATTESTATION/STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

Please initial to the left of each statement to verify your understanding, and sign at the bottom.

I understand that while on STEM OPT, I am still considered to be an F-1 student and as a result, it is my responsibility to update the SEVP portal of any changes in the information listed below:

- Change of residential address
- Change of phone number and/or e-mail address

I understand that it is my responsibility to update OIS with any changes to information regarding my employer, including:

- End date to your previous employer
- Final Evaluation from I-983 page 5 for previous employer
- A new I-983 form for the new employer

I understand that I and my employer must report material changes to, or deviations from, my formal training plan, even when your employer has not changed. This requires submission of a new I-983. Material changes include, but are not limited to:

- Any change of the employer's EIN number, resulting from a change in the employer's ownership or structure.
- Any reduction in student compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked.
- Any significant decrease in hours per week that a student engages in a STEM training opportunity.
- Changes to the employer's commitments or student's learning objectives as documented on the Form I-983.

I understand that I must mail my OPT STEM Extension application to the USCIS Service Center (address provided in my packet) based on my state of residence and that I am fully responsible for timely mailing my application:

- No earlier than 90 days before my current Post-Completion OPT period ends; AND
- Before my current Post-Completion OPT period ends: AND
- Within 60 days of issuance of my I-20 form with STEM Extension OPT recommendation

I understand that I must submit a copy of my STEM EAD to OIS as soon as it received.

I understand that I must report to OIS my STEM OPT employment every 6 months, regardless of whether there are any changes. I must confirm that the information I previously reported regarding my legal name, residential or mailing address, my employer's name, my employer's address continues to be correct.

I understand that OIS must endorse my I-20 form for travel prior to my departure and that travel signatures are valid for only 6 months while on OPT.

I understand that while on the 24-month STEM OPT Extension, I cannot accrue more than a total of 150 days of unemployment throughout my entire 36 months on OPT. Exceeding the limitation on unemployment results in violation of my F-1 status.

I understand that once the STEM OPT Extension is granted, I cannot cancel it and use it later.

DOCUMENTS THAT STUDENT NEEDS TO SUBMIT TO OIS. (TO REQUEST I-20 FORM WITH OPT RECOMMENDATION)

- OIS Form: Completed 24 Month Extension OPT Request Form
- [Form I-765](#): completed and signed by the student. Please indicate the code (c)(3)(C) at item 20.
- [Form I-983](#): completed and signed by the student and employer. Pages 6 and 7 of the I-983 do not need to be completed at this time: Page 6 must be completed and sent to OIS at the 12-month anniversary of the STEM OPT start date and page 7 must be completed and sent to OIS on the 24-month anniversary of the STEM OPT start date.
- Photos: Two passport-style photographs that meet [USCIS specifications](#). You must write your I-94 in [pencil](#) on the back of your photos.
- Immigration documents: Please submit copies of the following documents:
 - Copy of the newest passport biographical page;
 - Copy of [E-1](#) visa stamp or *I-797C notice of action. (*Only for students who did change of status in the U.S.)
 - Copy of the most recent I-94 Form. If you have an electronic [I-94 record](#), please print it out and provide it to us.
 - Copy of all I-20 forms that have been issued to you, including previous schools attended.
 - Copy of your current unexpired EAD card. (front and back)
 - Copy of any previous EADs you may have ever been issued by USCIS.
- Application Fee: Check or money order in the amount of \$410 made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- A copy of your degree: Submit transcripts or copy of diploma that indicate the educational level and field of study.
- [Form G-1145](#): To receive Enotification of Application/Petition Acceptance.

DOCUMENTS THAT STUDENT NEEDS TO SUBMIT TO USCIS. (FOR OPT STEM EXTENSION EAD)

- [Form I-765](#): completed and signed by the student. Please indicate the code (c)(3)(C) at item 20.
- Photos: Two passport-style photographs that meet [USCIS specifications](#). You must write your I-94 in [pencil](#) on the back of your photos.
- Immigration documents: Please submit copies of the following documents:
 - Copy of the newest passport biographical page;
 - Copy of [E-1](#) visa stamp or *I-797C notice of action. (*Only for students who did change of status in the U.S.)
 - Copy of the most recent I-94 Form. If you have an electronic [I-94 record](#), please print it out and provide it to us.
 - Copy of all I-20 forms that have been issued to you, including previous schools attended.
 - Copy of your current unexpired EAD card. (front and back)
 - Copy of any previous EADs you may have ever been issued by USCIS.
- Application Fee: Check or money order in the amount of \$410 made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- A copy of your degree: Submit transcripts or copy of diploma that indicate the educational level and field of study.
- Updated I-20 Form: Copy of I-20 Form issued with the DSO's 24-month STEM OPT recommendation, properly signed by both the DSO (OIS International Services Representative) and the student.
- [Form G-1145](#): To receive Enotification of Application/Petition Acceptance.

OPT STEM EXTENSION MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

Students must submit the complete STEM Extension OPT application packet to the correct USCIS Lockbox Facility for processing and adjudication. OIS will not submit the STEM Extension OPT application packet to USCIS for you. Where to mail the application to depends on the mailing address you indicate in Item 3 of the Form I-765. If your address on the I-765 is in the state of [Texas](#), mail the application to one of the addresses below. Please review the USCIS [mailing instructions](#) to find the correct lockbox location.

USCIS Phoenix and Dallas Lockbox facilities		
If you live in:	Mail your application to:	
Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands.	USCIS Phoenix Lockbox: For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries: USCIS PO Box 21281 Phoenix, AZ 85036	For Express mail and courier deliveries: USCIS Attn: AOS 1820 E. Sky Harbor Circle S Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034
Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia	USCIS Dallas Lockbox For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries: USCIS PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266	For Express mail and courier deliveries: USCIS Attn: AOS 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067

Employment during STEM OPT extension

- An additional 60 days of unemployment is given for STEM OPT. You are not permitted to have more than 150 days of unemployment for the entire 36 months of OPT.
- Same reporting requirements apply: change of employer, name, new address, change of status, etc.
- If you change employers after STEM OPT is approved, you are still required to work for an E-Verify employer and you must submit a new I-983 training plan! Make sure you confirm this before accepting a new job.

Summary of DHS Final Rule for STEM published in March 2016

- OPT STEM Extension extended from 17 to 24 months
- Form I-983 training plan must be submitted with STEM Extension applications to OIS Advisor (not submitted to USCIS)
- Employment must be paid and other restrictions on types of employment that may be accepted
- Unemployment period extended from 30 days to 60 days on STEM OPT
- Allowance for previous STEM degrees obtained to be used for purposes of applying for STEM Extension as long as student is currently on period of authorized OPT and has earned degree within past 10 years from SEVP certified and accredited U.S. institution

H-1B Visa and the Cap-Gap

- OPT students that have timely filed H-1B application for change of status can receive an automatic extension of their work authorization to gap the time between the end of the OPT EAD card and the start date of the H-1B visa status. Please send us a copy of your H-1B receipt notice. **TRAVEL DURING THE CAP-GAP PERIOD SHOULD BE AVOIDED.** Providing intent to pursue F-1 activities can be difficult while an H-1B is pending or approved.
- If your employer is a higher education institution or another cap exempt employer such as certain non-profit organizations, they will not be subject to the H-1B “cap” and they could petition for your H-1B visa status to start immediately after your OPT EAD card expires.
- Notify OIS immediately upon receipt of H-1B approval so that your record is updated accordingly. You will be required to send a copy of the Form I-797 Approval Notice.



Questions?

Office of International Services

International@uthscsa.edu

www.uthscsa.edu/ois

210-567-6241



UT Health

San Antonio

International Services