

# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT): How to Apply



**Optional Practical Training (OPT)** is an opportunity for you as an F-1 student to work in the United States for one year in an area related to your course of study. You may apply for post-completion OPT **up to 90 days before** completing your educational program, and **no more than 60 days after** completing your educational program. Additionally, USCIS must receive your application **no later than 30 days after your advisor recommends you for OPT in SEVIS.**

## BEFORE APPLYING FOR OPT

- Read [OPT: General Information](#).
- Speak to your advisor about your plans.
- When you are ready to apply, submit an [OPT Recommendation Request](#) to your advisor.
- Pick up your new I-20 showing OPT endorsement, signed by both you and your advisor.

## COMPILE YOUR OPT APPLICATION

**(up to 90 days before program completion, and no later than 60 days after program completion)**

- [Form I-765](#)
- I-765 filing fee, in the form of a check or money order, payable to “U. S. Department of Homeland Security”
- 2 identical immigration-style photos taken within 30 days (see [here](#) for photo requirements)
- Form I-20 printed and signed, showing OPT endorsement
- Photocopies of all prior Forms I-20, especially those on which CPT or OPT was granted previously
- Photocopies of any previous EAD cards
- Photocopy of Form I-94 (both sides of cardstock I-94 or copy of electronic I-94 printout)
- Photocopy of the passport ID pages: photo page, page with passport validity dates (including renewal page if original has expired), and pages showing amendments such as name changes or corrections
- Photocopy of the F-1 visa passport page
- [Form G-1145](#), clipped to the first page of your application packet (optional; if you would like to receive an email or a text message that your application has been received by USCIS)

## SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

**(no later than 30 days after your advisor recommends you for OPT)**

- Have your advisor review your application for accuracy (if you want).
- Make a photocopy of your completed application to keep for your records.
- Mail your application packet to the correct [USCIS Lockbox Facility address](#).  
If your OPT will be in Colorado, your Lockbox Facility address is:  
USCIS  
PO Box 21281  
Phoenix, AZ 85036
- Ask for delivery confirmation from the post office.