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.