Optional Practical Training (OPT) Instructions Packet

Students applying for pre- or post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) may use this packet to understand the application procedure and length of time needed to maximize your working benefit. The following items are included in this packet:

1) Overview of OPT Application Process

2) Academic Advisor's Recommendation Form
   (Only for Post-completion OPT)

3) Student Declaration Form

4) How to Submit Form I-765 Online

5) Information about Application Items

6) Tips for Completing Form I-765

7) Important Information After You Apply

These are general guidelines and not legal advice. For specific questions about the application, please consult an immigration lawyer.

Government guidelines are subject to change at any time. It is the student's responsibility to check the USCIS website for the most updated information.

Overview of OPT Application Process

Step One

- **Read through the entire application.** Understand the application procedure and length of time needed to maximize your working benefit.

Step Two

- **Choose an OPT start date.** The earliest date can be the day after your I-20 end date (last day of finals). The latest date you can choose is 60 days from your I-20 program end date. For example, if the last day of your I-20 is December 18, you can choose any start date from December 19- February 17.

Step Three

- **Submit 2 Forms to OIP:** Academic Advisor's Form and Declaration of OPT Reporting Requirements Form to OIP

Step Four

- **OIP will Create an OPT I-20.** It will take **5 business days** for the new I-20 to be processed.

Step Five

- **Create your online USCIS account –** see instructions [here](#).

- **File Form I-765 online** – see instructions below under "How to Submit Form I-765 Online"

USCIS must receive your OPT application within 30 days of the date your OPT I-20 was created

ACADEMIC ADVISOR'S RECOMMENDATION FORM

An F-1 student studying at a college, university, conservatory, or seminary may qualify for optional practical training, commonly called OPT, which allows the student to engage in temporary employment to gain practical experience in his or her field of study.

THIS SECTION TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE STUDENT

ID Number: _____

Student First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Primary/Secondary Major _____

Requested OPT Start Date _____ (choose a date between the day after last day of finals for the semester + 60 days)

Release of Responsibility for Optional Practical Training - Please note that Seton Hall University is not responsible for the approval of this OPT application with USCIS, nor is the Office of International Programs. The Office of International Programs will help with the process, advise you of related F-1 regulations, and provide you with an I-20. The student is responsible for submitting the completed application within the required timeline.

_____   _____
(Student's signature)   (Date)

THIS SECTION TO BE FILLED OUT BY ACADEMIC ADVISOR

As part of the application for OPT, advisors need to confirm the student's expected date of graduation in writing.

When do you anticipate this student completing his/her studies at Seton Hall University? _____

Academic Advisor for <u>Primary Major</u> Information (required)		
Semester and year student will graduate: ☐ Fall ☐ Spring ☐ Summer 20__ For summer session only: indicate the final day of classes for the student's program: _____/____/_____		
Printed name:	Ext.:	Name of Department:
Signature:		Date:

Academic Advisor for <u>Secondary Major</u> Information (if applicable)		
Semester and year student will graduate: ☐ Fall ☐ Spring ☐ Summer 20_____ For summer session only: indicate the final day of classes for the student's program: _____/____/_____		
Printed name:	Ext.:	Name of Department:
Signature:		Date:

Student Declaration Form

Please sign (Electronic is sufficient) below to acknowledge that you have the following responsibilities during the application and employment authorization period for OPT:

1. It is my responsibility to check the USCIS website for the most updated information regarding the application process (fee, mailing address, I-765 form version, etc.)

2. I understand that guidance from OIP does not constitute as legal advice.

3. I am aware that it is my obligation to report changes in employment information (including periods of unemployment) and changes in my address via the SEVP student portal account.

4. I understand that I will receive an email to my personal email address from SEVP with instructions for registering for the SEVP student portal account. If I do not receive this email after my OPT is approved, I will contact the Office of International Programs.

5. I will complete the F-1 Post Completion/STEM extension Update Form to update information such as: approval of your Post-completion OPT by USCIS, receiving EAD card, starting a new employment, ending employment, change in physical address, phone number, personal email, etc.

My personal email address is:_____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date (Month/Day/Year): _____

How to Submit Form I-765 Online

F-1 Students seeking to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) can now file the I-765 Application for Employment Authorization online. To start the application, students must create a USCIS account (See "How to Create a USCIS Account" instructions).

Once you are signed in to your myUSCIS account please follow these instructions:

1. Click on "File a Form Online"
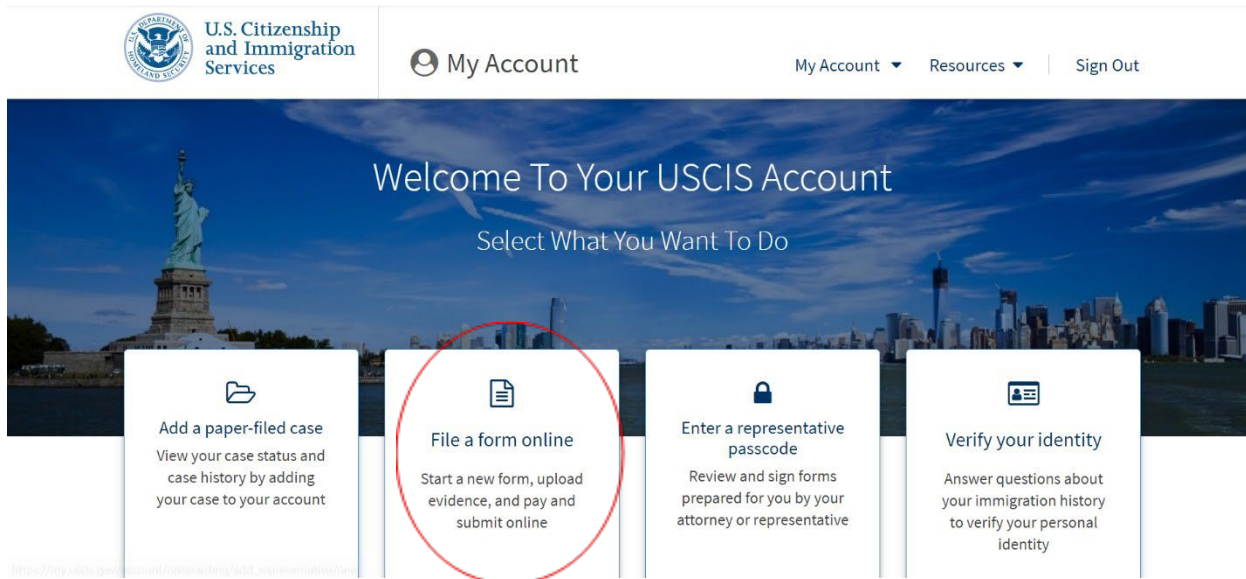
2. Select "Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)" and then "Start Form"

3. Please gather the "Evidence" outlined below before starting your application. **REMINDER: Once you start your application, the USCIS portal will save it for 30 days, therefore you must submit the form within 30 days of starting the application. After that, it will delete your data and progress to protect your personal information.**

4. Once you click on "Start" you will be directed to the online application. The application has 5 sections, and you must complete all the necessary fields.

5. On the "Evidence" section, you will be asked to upload your **2x2 photo, I-94 record, passport, any previous CPT or OPT I-20s, and your current OPT I-20 from OIP**. To upload your documents, click on "Choose or drop files"
    a. For more details on each required item, please see below.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ⌄

About You ⌄

Evidence ⌃

   2 x 2 photo of you

   Form I-94

   Employment Authorization Document

   Post-Completion CPT or OPT

   Form I-20

Additional Information ⌄

Review and Submit ⌄

I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status

Upload a copy of the Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status endorsed by the Designated School Official (DSO). For the (c)(3)(B) eligibility category, your DSO must have entered the recommendation for OPT into your SEVIS record within 30 days of you submitting Form I-765. If you fail to do so, we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) elgibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

> **Choose** or drop files here to upload

Information about Application Items

APPLICATION ITEM	DESCRIPTION	HOW TO COMPLETE
2. I-765 Form	This is the actual USCIS form to apply for work benefits. Be sure to read any updates at the top of the page, often about changes in fee, etc. At www.uscis.gov/I-765	This form will be filled out when you answer all questions via the online form and by submitting any documents under Evidence. Do not forget to agree to the applicant statement and provide your digital signature before you hit submit.
3. I-94 Admission Record	The official record of your entry into the United States.	Please go to https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov , click "Get I-94" and enter your passport information and print out the most recent I-94. Students that changed to F1 status in the U.S. should attach a copy of the I-797 Approval Notice with I-94 section at bottom of notice.
5. Payment of fee	Please always check the latest fee amount on the USCIS page for the I-765 form.	*For Credit/Debit or a U.S bank account (ACH):* The Credit card must be issued by a U.S bank. Please have sufficient funds on your credit card as USCIS will reject your application for lack of payment if your credit card is declined. USCIS will not attempt to process your credit card payment a second time.
6. Photo	This photo will be used to create your EAD card.	-The picture must be 2inches by 2 inches (600X600 pixels) -Face visible, directly facing camera -Background should be white/off-white -To verify if your photo is suitable for the application, click on photo composition tools -Photo tool - If accepted will turn green -Go back to your USCIS application and upload that same photo

Tips for Completing Form I-765

To best aid you in completing the Form I-765 for Employment Authorization we have suggested tips below. You will need your I-20's, Passport, Visa and I-94 to complete the form. This document is for guidance ONLY. It is your responsibility to understand the complete instructions and where to file your I-765: https://www.uscis.gov/i-765

The Office of International Programs is not responsible for any missing or incomplete information.

Part 1	Eligibility Category
(C) (3) (A)	**Pre-Completion OPT –** before your I-20 ends
(C) (3) (B)	**Post Completion OPT** – after your I-20 ends
Part 2	**What is your reason for applying**
	Initial Permission to accept employment
	Have you previously filed Form I-765: Answer No
Part 3	**Preparer and Interpreter Information**
	Is someone assisting you with completing this application? No
Part 4	**About you**
	Your current US (United States) Mailing address? What is your nationality? If you are citizens of more than one country, please choose those countries. What is your I-94 Arrival-departure Record Number? This number located at the top of your I-94 under the Most recent I-94. When did you last arrive in the United States? Provide the latest date you enter the United States. Place of arrival? Ex. Newark Liberty Intl Status at last arrival? type F1- student, academic or Language Program What is your current immigration status or category? F1- Student, Academic or Language Program. Your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number started with N-00
Part 5 **Other Information**	**If you are Requesting a Social Security Number** (SSN) complete the required fields
	Enter your alien number if you have one or choose, I do not have or known my A-number
Part 6	**Evidence**
	2X2 Photo Most recent I-94 Passport Copy Previously Authorized CPT (Curricular Practical Training) or OPT I-20s (If applicable) Your OPT I-20 that was created by OIP Proof of enrollment (pre-completion OPT only)

Part 7	Review your application and submit
	• Review your application • Your application summary • Your statement • Your signature • Pay and submit
Part 8	Pay and submit
	Payment Amount: Please check the Filing Fee as they are subject to periodic changes.
	Payment options: **Bank Account (ACH)** **Debit or Credit Card**
	If using bank account, you will need: Account Holder Name, Account Type, Routing number, Account number,
	Using a credit/debit card, you will need: Card holder name, cardholder billing address, city, country, state, zip code, card number expiration date and security code (CVC)
Note	**Once you pay your fee, your form will be submitted. Pay.gov will redirect you to a uscis.gov screen, which will include your receipt number. Please keep a copy of your receipt for your records**.

Important Information After You Submit Your OPT Application

Receipt Number
- Pay.gov will redirect you to a uscis.gov screen, which will include your receipt number. Please keep a copy of your receipt for your records, which you can use to check the status of your application on www.uscis.gov .

Create your SEVIS Portal Account and Continue to Update OIP
- Once you are approved by USCIS and your OPT start date occurs, you will receive an email requesting you to create an account through the SEVP Portal. **It is <u>mandatory</u> that you create your SEVIS Portal account and use this to update your employment information and address changes within *10 days* of any change**. If you cannot find this email, we can resend it to your email, please contact the OIP.
- You can continue to notify our office of any changes within *10 days* that are not updated through the portal, for example:
    1. Phone Number
    2. Personal Email Address
    3. Name change
    4. Visa status
    5. Leaving U.S. before the end of OPT

Unemployment and Travel Considerations
- Whether or not you are working, the *1-year* work benefit of OPT continues.
- According to F1 regulations, you may only be unemployed for *90 days* throughout your OPT. These 90 days are continuous, and do not reset if you change jobs or lose employment.
- Please keep in mind that any travel is a risk. If your visa is no longer valid, then you will have to renew your visa before traveling back to the United States. There is a chance you could still be denied this visa, so please keep that in mind when travelling.
- If you decide to travel after applying for OPT and *it is after your I-20's program end date*, carry the following:
    1. EAD Card
    2. Job offer letter
    3. OPT I-20, signed in the "travel authorization" section within 6 months of the date of departure.
    4. Valid Passport
    5. Valid visa
- If you decide to leave the country and end your OPT early, please email oip@shu.edu to inform us.