OPT Information Session
Overview

- Background
- Eligibility
- Duration
- Types of employment
- When you should apply
- Application Process
- During OPT
- Special Scenarios
- Resources
Background
Background

- Optional Practical Training (OPT) allows for practical training after graduation
- Provides valuable practical experience for use in student's home countries
- Possibility of 24 additional months of OPT for STEM majors.
Eligibility
Pre-Completion Requirements

• In extremely rare cases, students may need to apply for pre-completion OPT
• Same requirements for Post-Completion apply for Pre-Completion
• Any time used for pre-completion is subtracted from post-completion eligibility
Post-Completion Requirements

• Must be in F-1 status at time of application and throughout OPT
• Must have been enrolled full-time for two or more consecutive academic semesters
• Must apply to USCIS for employment authorization
• Job offer NOT required to apply
Duration
Duration

• For non-STEM majors – 12 months maximum
• For STEM majors – 12 months with eligibility to extend for another 24 months – 36 months maximum
• Opportunity for another OPT period after completion of another higher education level
Types of employment
Types of Employment

- Paid Employment
  - Must work 21 hours or more per week
- Unpaid Employment
  - Must work 21 hours or more per week
  - Log your time and tasks
  - NOT permissible for STEM OPT extension
- Other types of employment
  - See instruction packet
When should you apply?
When should you apply?

- Apply 90 days before you plan to start working
  - You CANNOT apply more than 90 days before your graduation date
- Select a start date 1-59 days after graduation
- Graduate students with thesis or dissertation left may apply for post-completion OPT after completion of coursework
Application Procedures
Document Checklist

- Form G-1145
  - To receive your receipt number by email or text
- Form I-765
  - Completed and signed
  - Answer to #16 – (c)(3)(B)
- Copies of
  - Passport
  - Visa
  - I-94
- Two passport photos
  - Taken within 30 days of application
- Academic Advisor Certification Form
- Check for $410
  - Payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”
- Copy of I-20 with recommendation for OPT
  - Issued after International Advisor review of the application
How to apply

• **Complete** the post-information session survey at [http://tiny.cc/7voony](http://tiny.cc/7voony)
• Once all documents are gathered, take them (except your check) to the INPR front desk in 241 ASH
• Documents are reviewed by an International Advisor
• If approved, the International Advisor will issue an I-20 recommending OPT
• If something needs to be corrected or is missing, the International Advisor will contact you
How to apply

• After approval, the INPR office will contact you when your application materials are ready for pickup and mailing to USCIS.
• After you sign your I-20, our office will copy your I-20 for you to include in your application.
  – **DO NOT SEND THE ORIGINAL I-20**
• Instructions will be provided on how to file your application with USCIS.
• You MUST file your application no later than 30 days of the I-20 issue date.
Expectations after filing

- Expect 2-3 weeks for a receipt
  - You’ll be notified by text and email, as well as a paper notice through the mail
- Expect 90 days for processing and OPT issuance
After OPT is approved

• Email a copy of your OPT EAD Card to unointladvising@unomaha.edu. Include the front and back of the card.
• DO NOT start working until the start date listed on your OPT card.
• You will need to show your OPT card to your employer.
After OPT is approved

• You will receive an email from SEVP to create your SEVP Portal account.
• The SEVP Portal is where you will update:
  – Current U.S. address
  – Current U.S. telephone number
  – Employer information
• SEVP Portal account must be set up within 30 days of receiving an email.
During OPT
During OPT

- When you find employment, update your SEVP Portal account with the employer’s information.
  - If you need a new I-20, you will need to contact UNO International Advising after you update your account.
- Any changes of employment must be reported within 10 business days.
- Unemployment during OPT is limited to 90 days.
- Make sure to keep your address current on the SEVP Portal. Also, update your address in MavLINK so that UNO has your local/current address, if needed.
During OPT

• Non-STEM majors
  – After your OPT expires, you will have 60 days to leave the country or transfer to another academic program

• STEM majors
  – For the STEM OPT extension you will need to apply **before** your standard OPT ends. Apply for STEM OPT no earlier than 90 days before your standard OPT ends.
Special Scenarios
Change of Graduation Plans

• Cancelling OPT
  – You can cancel OPT if you have not mailed your OPT application to USCIS.
  – If you have mailed your OPT application to USCIS, you will need to meet with an International Student Advisor immediately to determine whether you are able to cancel the application.
  – If you have been approved for OPT, you cannot cancel your OPT and reapply after completing your program. IS&P will ask you to work part-time only until you’ve finished your studies.
  – It is best to delay applying for OPT if you are not sure you will be finishing your program as expected.
Travel

• When OPT is pending
  – Travel is at your own risk
  – If your OPT is approved while you are abroad, you may need all the items below for re-entry.

• When OPT is approved
  – Travel if you have the following:
    • OPT Card
    • Job offer or proof of employment
    • I-20 endorsed for travel
    • Valid visa
    • Passport with at least six months validity
H-1B Cap-Gap Extension

• All F-1 students who are the beneficiary of a timely-filed H-1B petition requesting change of status and an employment start date of October 1 of the following fiscal year automatically have their work authorization extended.

• This extension of duration of status and work authorization automatically terminate if the H-1B petition is rejected, denied or revoked.

• Based on the current wording in the rule, this provision is available only to students who are beneficiaries of an H-1B petition with a start date of October 1 of the following fiscal year, or that do not request a change of status for the beneficiary.
Resources
Websites

• Study in the States
  – https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov

• UNO INPR
  – http://world.unomaha.edu/advising
In-Person

- International Advisors are available to answer questions about applying for OPT
- Walk-in hours
  - Tuesdays and Thursdays – 14:30 to 16:30
  - Wednesdays – 08:30 to 09:30, 15:00 to 17:00
- All other times – by appointment
International Advising

• 6001 Dodge St, ASH 241
  • Omaha, NE 68132
  • Phone: (402) 554-2293
  • unointladvising@unomaha.edu
• http://world.unomaha.edu
Questions?