OPT Information Session

Overview

- Background
- Eligibility
- Duration
- Types of employment
- When to 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
OPT 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 OPT 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
- An employment offer is 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
  - USCIS will not take applications sent more than 90 days before graduate date. It will be returned to you or denied.
- 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

- Academic Advisor Certification Form – find [here](#) - this form informs International Advising that you are graduating soon and eligible to apply for OPT
- Form I-765 printed from https://www.uscis.gov/i-765 to be sure you have the most recent form
    - Completed and signed – signature must be your original/wet signature in ink
    - Answer to #27 – (c)(3)(B)
- Form G-1145 printed from https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145 to be sure you have the most recent form
    - This form allows you to receive your receipt number by email and text
- Copies of
    - Passport
    - Visa
    - I-94 - https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/
- Two passport photos
    - Taken within 30 days of application to USCIS
- Check for the Filing Fee: https://www.uscis.gov/i-765 - see Filing Fee for current fee amount
    - Payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"
    - You may write your check following your OPT zoom appointment
- Copy of I-20 with recommendation for OPT
    - This will be issued and emailed to you after your OPT zoom appointment where your documentation will be reviewed

How to apply

- Prepare the required documents and save them on a zip drive to show an international student advisor during your OPT zoom appointment.

- Request a zoom appointment [here](#).

- If you are eligible for OPT, an International Advisor will issue an I-20 recommending OPT and email it to you following your OPT zoom appointment; SEVP is allowing for electronic issuing of I-20's at this time. You will need to print and sign the I-20 and send a copy with your application to USCIS.

- You must file your application by mail to the [USCIS Lockbox Facilities](#) no later than 30 days of the I-20 issue date.

Expectations after filing with USCIS

- 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 2-5 months to receive your OPT EAD card to begin working.

- USCIS Processing times: https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/

After OPT is approved

- Email a copy of your OPT EAD Card to unointladvising@unomaha.edu. Include the front and back of the card.

- When you receive the OPT EAD card, you may start working on the start date listed on your card. The date may change from the date you requested if processing is delayed.

- 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. SEVP may terminate records of students who have gone beyond 90 days without reporting employment.

- 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 contact 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

Summary of Website Links:

- Study in the States: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov
- UNO INPR: http://world.unomaha.edu/advising
  - OPT Packet with Academic Advisor's Form: https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145
- USCIS Processing times: https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/
- Form I-765: https://www.uscis.gov/i-765
- Form G-1145: https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145

International Advising

- International Advisors are available to answer questions about applying for OPT by email and zoom.

Questions?

International Advising

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