



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA



OPT Information Session



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

INTERNATIONAL ADVISING



Overview

- What is OPT?
- Requirements to apply for OPT
- Application Process
- What happens after my OPT is approved?
- Travel on OPT
- Resources



What is OPT?

- 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.



Post-Completion OPT Requirements

- Must complete program (exception: thesis/dissertation)
- 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

- For non-STEM majors – 12 months maximum
- For STEM majors – 12 months with eligibility to extend for another 24 months for 36 months maximum
- Opportunity for another OPT period after completion of another higher education level
 - Bachelor's – OPT
 - Master's – OPT
 - Doctorate – OPT



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?

- 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



How to Apply

- Step 1 – Complete the OPT Request E-form under F-1 Practical Training in iGlobal - submit the following information to receive your I-20 recommending OPT from International Student Advising. You will need the following:
 - Your academic advisor's name and email
 - Your expected graduation date
 - The date you would like to start your OPT
 - Copy of your passport, visa, and I-94
- Step 2 – Go to <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> and click on the “file online” button. Create your account, prepare your I-765, and upload the documentation requested. Be prepared to upload the following:
 - Copy of I-20 recommending OPT from International Advising – signed by the advisor and you
 - Copy of passport, visa, and I-94
 - One passport photo taken within the past 30 days
 - If you had OPT in the past, you will need to upload a copy of the previous OPT EAD card and an I-20 that shows the previous OPT approved or recommended.
- Step 3 – If needed, make an appointment with an international student advisor before submitting your application on the USCIS website.
- Step 4 – Submit your OPT application on the USCIS website. This will include paying the filing fee. You can find the current filing fee here: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

Note: You must apply with USCIS within 30 days of the recommendation for OPT being entered in SEVIS.



Expectations after filing with USCIS

- You will receive a receipt immediately upon submission when filing online with USCIS.
- Generally, expect 2-3 months to receive your OPT EAD card to begin working. However, processing time can be outside of this range – both faster or longer. We've seen a few weeks to five months.
- USCIS processing times: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>
- Check case status/update address here: [Tools | USCIS](#)



After OPT is approved

- Log into iGlobal here <https://iglobal.nebraska.edu>. Submit the e-form “Upload OPT/STEM OPT Card – Work Authorization EAD under F-1 Practical Training. 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 – complete name and address, start date, full-time or part-time, explanation of how the work is related to your degree, supervisor's name and contact information, etc...
- SEVP Portal account must be set up within 30 days of receiving an email.



During OPT

- When you find employment, update your SEVP Portal account with the employer's information.
 - If you need a new I-20, email unointladvising@unomaha.edu
- 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.



Pre-Completion OPT Requirements

- In rare cases, students may need to apply for pre-completion OPT. This is most common when CPT is not an option.
- Same requirements for post-completion apply for pre-completion
- Any time used for pre-completion is subtracted from post-completion eligibility



Change of Graduation Plans

- Cancelling OPT
 - You can cancel/withdraw your OPT application if you have submitted or mailed your OPT application to USCIS and it is still “pending”.
 - Contact an International Student Advisor to discuss your options and learn how to cancel or withdraw your pending OPT application.
 - If you have been approved for OPT, you cannot cancel or withdraw your OPT and reapply after completing your program. International Student Advising will ask you to work part-time only until you’ve finished your studies. You must be enrolled and making academic progress with completing your degree to use your OPT EAD part-time. Your SEVIS record may be terminated if you do not graduate and are not enrolled and making academic progress to complete your program.
 - Take-Away: 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 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

- The **H-1B Work Visa** is an employer sponsored petition submitted by the employer on the student's behalf.
- The **H-1B Cap** is a congressionally-mandated limit on the number of individuals who may be granted initial H-1B status during each fiscal year which runs from October 1 to September 30. Some employers are exempt.
- The **Cap Gap Extension of OPT** through September 30th of the current year is granted if an H-1B petition has been filed by a cap-subject employer before the current period of OPT expires. The first day to file for H-1B's is April 1.
- Work authorization on cap gap is valid until September 30th unless the H-1B petition is denied, withdrawn, or revoked.



H-1B Cap-Gap Extension



OPT must be valid April 1 or beyond to be eligible for the cap-gap extension.



Summary of Website Links:

- International Programs Student Portal: iGlobal: <https://iglobal.nebraska.edu>
- USCIS Form I-765: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
- USCIS Processing Times: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>
- USCIS Tools (check case status, change address): [Tools | USCIS](#)
- Study in the States: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov>



International Advising

International Advisors are available to answer questions about applying for STEM OPT by email or by appointment in person or on zoom.



International Advising

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