Optional Practical Training workshop
Workshop agenda

- Introduction to OPT
- Application process
- Maintaining status on OPT
- Travel information
- After initial OPT
What is OPT?

- Benefit of F-1 status at each higher-level degree
- Eligible one time after bachelor’s, master’s and Ph.D. level
- Work authorization for 12 months
- Permission from U.S. government to work in the U.S. after graduation
- Employment related to field of study
- Job must be related to major, not minor
You are eligible for OPT if you...

1. Have been in F-1 status for one academic year

6. Have a passport valid six months into the future

364. Accumulated no more than 364 days of full time CPT
Thesis/dissertation students

- Post-completion OPT can start before you graduate
- Program end date will be shortened to facilitate the start of your OPT period
Application process
Application: 3 step process

**Step 1:** Gather and complete required documents

**Step 2:** Submit online request through myStatus

**Step 3:** Mail application to USCIS and wait
Step 1: Gather and complete paperwork

- I-765
- Copies of all previous I-20s (do not staple documents)
- Copies of passport, visa, I-94 and any previous EAD cards
- $75 OPT processing fee
  > credit/debit payable in myStatus
  > cash, check, money order; payable to MU International Center
Remember to mark this top box

You can use the International Center’s address here
Eligibility code: (C) (3) (B)
Print, then sign
- Provide all previously used SEVIS ID numbers
- Include all previous CPT/OPT authorizations, dates and degree level it was authorized
I-765

- If a question does not apply to you, type/print “N/A”
- If a question requires a numeric response and your answer is zero or none, type/print “None”
- Review Form I-765 Instructions
Step 2: Submit OPT request to ISSS

- Submit request in myStatus
  - Read OPT acknowledgements
  - Read OPT fee information
  - Complete OPT questionnaire
  - Complete OPT Workshop Review
  - Send adviser verification to academic adviser

- Submit documents from step 1 in person or upload to myStatus
  - Pay $75 OPT processing fee in myStatus or submit to International Center front desk
Step 2: Receive documents from ISSS

- Processing time for International Student and Scholar Services takes up to **five business days** after all required documents are submitted

- Pick up documents from International Center:
  - New I-20 with OPT recommendation
  - Pre-paid FedEx express mailing envelope
  - Any documents submitted in-person

Before mailing your application, please let your international student adviser know if you need to make any changes
OPT starts and ends after the end date on your I-20

Program end date will be adjusted to the end of the semester of your graduation
New I-20

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status
DHS NO. 1653-0034

SEVIS ID: [Redacted] NAME: [Redacted]

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS

TYPE POST-COMPLETION OPT
FULL/PART-TIME FULL TIME STATUS REQUESTED
START DATE 01 JUNE 2018
END DATE 31 MAY 2019

CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION

AUTHORIZED REDUCED COURSE LOAD

CURRENT SESSION DATES
CURRENT SESSION START DATE 16 JANUARY 2018
CURRENT SESSION END DATE 11 MAY 2018

TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT
This page, when properly endorsed, may be used for re-entry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each endorsement is valid for one year.

Designated School Official: Christine Huh
TITLE: ISSS Advisor
SIGNATURE: [Redacted]
DATE ISSUED: 2/12/18
PLACE ISSUED: Columbia, Mo
Step 3: Mail application to USCIS

- Check or money order for $410 payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”
  > For credit card payment, include form G-1450 form
- Two passport-style photographs (taken recently)
- I-765 (original, signed and dated)
- Copy of new OPT I-20
- Copies of previous I-20s
- Copies of I-94, visa, passport, any previous EADs
- G-1145 form (recommended)
What are the three steps to apply for OPT?

A. 1. Gather documents  
   2. Submit to USCIS  
   3. Start working

B. 1. Gather documents  
   2. Submit myStatus request  
   3. Mail to USCIS

C. 1. Apply to International Center  
   2. Get OPT approval from International Center  
   3. Start working

D. 1. Apply to International Center  
   2. get new I-20  
   3. start working
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D. 1. Apply to International Center
   2. get new I-20
   3. start working
OPT timeline

OPT application period
- 90 days before
  - Program end date: Dec. 18, 2020
- 60 days after
  - Sept. 19, 2020
  - Feb. 16, 2021

Employment period
- 12 months
  - Opt. Ends
  - Work authorization for maximum of 12 months from OPT start date

Grace period
- 60 days
  - Somewhere between Dec. 17, 2021 and Feb. 15, 2022 (depending on start date)
  - Time to transfer, start a new program, change status or exit the U.S.
After you apply

- You will receive a receipt in the mail two to three weeks after your application is received by USCIS.
- Check the status of your application through the USCIS website, using “YSC” number.
- International student adviser cannot contact USCIS on your behalf.
After USCIS receives your application

- After you apply, changing dates or withdrawing your application is **difficult** and not guaranteed
  > So be sure about your OPT plans
  > Talk to your international student adviser if you decide to withdraw

- You cannot cancel your OPT after your application has been approved
# USCIS decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Rejection/denial</th>
<th>Request for evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Yay! Congratulations!** | ▪ **Application**  
  > Received more than 90 days before program end date  
  > Received more than 30 days after OPT recommendation  
  > I-765 not signed/box not checked  
  ▪ **Old or previously used photos**  
  ▪ **Check**  
  > Wrong date, filled incorrectly, not signed, not in your name | ▪ RFE  
  More information needed to make a decision |
Timing tips

- Application must be received by USCIS before grace period ends (60-day)
- Mail application within a timely manner
- Apply as early as possible, even if you don’t have a job yet
- If you have a job offer, make sure you are applying at least 90 days in advance of your start date.
Timing tips

▪ On-campus work authorization ends on program end date

▪ There may be a gap in employment between program end date on I-20 and date OPT begins

▪ If driver’s license is expiring, renew before submitting your OPT documents to International Student and Scholar Services
Maintaining status on OPT
Maintaining F-1 status on OPT

- You are still in **F-1 student status** with the University of Missouri and using a benefit of that status
- F-1 status is maintained through employment (not through enrollment)
- Your I-20 is still valid — the second page shows OPT dates even though the first page program end date has passed
- You can sign up for insurance through Aetna while on OPT, but it is not automatically applied unless you are enrolled in MU courses

> Online enrollment at [aetnastudenthealth.com](http://aetnastudenthealth.com)
Maintaining F-1 status on OPT

- Employment can be paid or unpaid
- Must work **21 hours** or more each week
- Can switch employers
- Can work for multiple employers
- Can take part-time incidental courses, but cannot start another academic program
- Allowed 90 days of unemployment
Maintaining F-1 status on OPT

- Update myStatus within 10 days of:
  - Moving to a new address
  - Finding employment or switching employers
  - Ending employment

- If employment is not reported within 90 days from OPT start date, your SEVIS record will be automatically terminated.
Maintaining F-1 status on OPT

- You can only begin working on the approved start date and once your EAD card arrives
  > If your EAD card is approved after your requested start date, the start and end dates will be adjusted to give you the full benefit of your authorized period of employment

- You can stay in the U.S. while your OPT application is pending
What is your status while on OPT?

A. OPT
B. H-1B
C. F-1
D. J-1
What is your status while on OPT?

A. OPT
B. H-1B
C. F-1
D. J-1
Travel information
Travel with pending application

Before graduation:
- Passport, visa,
- I-20 w/ travel signature,
- Letter from department

After graduation:
- Passport, visa,
- I-20 w/ travel signature,
- OPT receipt notice
Travel with approved application

Approved OPT application + After graduation = Passport, visa, I-20 w/ travel signature, proof of employment, EAD card*

*EAD card is not valid for re-entry by itself. After approval, you must have a job in order to re-enter the U.S.
Who should you tell when you get a new job?

A. USCIS
B. Your best friend
C. MU International Student and Scholar Services
D. Your academic adviser
Who should you tell when you get a new job?

A. USCIS

B. Your best friend

C. MU International Student and Scholar Services

D. Your academic adviser
When should you update them?

A. Today
B. Within 10 days
C. Within one month
D. As soon as you accept the job
When should you update them?

A. Today
B. Within 10 days
C. Within one month
D. As soon as you accept the job
After initial OPT
STEM extension

- Eligibility:
  - Your degree is in **STEM-qualifying field**
  - You are working in a **paid** position related to your major
    - You can work for multiple employers, but each must be more than 20 hours/week
  - Your employer is registered with the **E-Verify** employment verification system
Application for 24-month STEM extension

- Must apply **before** initial OPT period ends
- Log in to myStatus to request OPT STEM extension
  > Some additional documents needed, so review [online checklist](#)
H-1B cap-gap extension

- Eligibility: F-1 students working on OPT who have:
  > An OPT work authorization end date between April 1 and Sept. 30 or April 1 must fall within your OPT grace period
  > An employer who has filed a timely H-1B petition for you with a start date of Oct. 1
  > Any major is eligible for H-1B; not restricted to STEM students

- Have questions? Meet with an international student adviser
Questions?

- International Student and Scholar Services website: [international.missouri.edu/isss](international.missouri.edu/isss)

- Lauren Pate: patelaur@missouri.edu

- Kristen Carranza: carranzak@missouri.edu
  > All sponsored students

- Killion Hardesty: kdhkwd@missouri.edu
  > Last names starting with A–L

- Mo Whitley: whitleymo@missouri.edu
  > Last names starting with M–Z