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
2. Have a passport valid six months into the future
3. 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:** File USCIS application online and wait

- **OR** -

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

- I-765
- Copies of previous I-20s with CPT/OPT authorization
- Copies of passport, visa, I-94 and any previous EAD cards
- $75 OPT processing fee

> Credit/debit payable in myStatus
I-765 Online

Sign In

Email

Password

Forgot your Password?

Show Password

Log in to a USCIS Service

myUSCIS
Apply for immigration benefits, find tools and resources to assist in preparation for naturalization, and search for doctors in your local community.

FIRSt
Submit, manage and receive Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

myE-Verify
Confirm your records for employment eligibility, track E-Verify or Self-Check case status, and protect your identity by locking your Social Security Number (SSN).

Not sure what service you need? Start at UScis.gov

File a form online
Start a new form, upload evidence, and pay and submit online

One account for all of your USCIS needs.
Create an account.

Legal
• Department of Homeland Security Consent
• DHS Privacy Notice
• Paper Reduction Act Burden Disclosure Notice
• Terms of Use
I-765 Online

Eligibility code: (C) (3) (B)
After completing the questions, **DO NOT** submit to USCIS. Download the draft snapshot & submit to ISSS for review.
Filing the I-765 electronically

> Complete form at uscis.gov/i-765
> Select ‘view draft snapshot’
> Upload draft I-765 to myStatus for international student adviser review
Step 2: Submit OPT request to ISSS

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

- Submit documents from step 1 in person or upload to myStatus
  - Pay $75 OPT processing fee in myStatus
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.

- Documents provided by ISSS:
  - New I-20 with OPT recommendation (sent via email, unless applying by mail)
  - Pre-paid FedEx express mailing envelope (if submitting application to USCIS by mail)
  - Any documents submitted in-person

Before submitting your application to USCIS, please let your international student adviser know if you need to make any changes.
New I-20

- 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
DOSB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: [REDACTED] NAME: [REDACTED]

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>FULL/PART-TIME</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>START DATE</th>
<th>END DATE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POST-COMPLETION OPT</td>
<td>FULL TIME</td>
<td>REQUESTED</td>
<td>01 JUNE 2018</td>
<td>31 MAY 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 by 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: Submit application to USCIS electronically

- Payment for $410
- Two passport-style photographs (taken recently)
- I-765 questionnaire
- Copy of new OPT I-20
- Copies of previous I-20s with CPT/OPT authorization
- Copies of I-94, visa, passport, any previous EADs
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 with CPT/OPT authorization
- Copies of I-94, visa, passport, any previous EADs
- G-1145 form (recommended)
I-765 Online

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) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 90 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

Pay for and submit your application

$410 application fee paid through Pay.gov

$410 application fee paid through Pay.gov

Pay for and submit your application

The final step to submit your Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, is to pay the required fee. Your application fee is $410.

Refund Policy: By continuing this transaction, you agree that you are paying for a government service and that the filing fee, biometric services fee and all related financial transactions are final and not refundable, regardless of any action USCIS takes on an application, petition or request, or how long USCIS takes to reach a decision. You must submit all fees in the exact amounts.

We will send you to Pay.gov, our secure and encrypted payment website, to pay your fee and submit your form online.

Here are the steps in the payment and submission process:
1. Provide your billing information on Pay.gov
2. Provide your credit card or U.S. bank account information
3. Submit your payment

When you have paid your fee, your form will be submitted.

Pay.gov will redirect you to a secure confirmation screen, which will include your receipt number. Please keep a copy of your receipt number for your records. You can track the status of your application through your USCIS online account.

Pay and submit
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/submit electronically 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
What are the three steps to apply for OPT?

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

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

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

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

Application period

I-20 program end date

90 days

Choose OPT employment start date

60 days

Employment period

12 months

Work authorization for maximum of 12 months from OPT start date

Grace period

60 days

Time to transfer, start a new program, change status or exit the U.S.
Important dates

Program end date:
- Dec. 15, 2023
- May 10, 2024
- July 26, 2024

Earliest application date
- Sept. 16, 2023
- Feb. 10, 2024
- April 27, 2024

Application deadline
- Feb. 13, 2024
- July 9, 2024
- Sept. 24, 2024

Choose OPT employment start date
- Dec. 16, 2023-Feb. 13, 2024
- May 11, 2024-July 9, 2024
- July 27, 2024-Sept. 24, 2024

Employment period
- 12 months

Grace period
- 60 days

OPT end date between:
- Dec. 15, 2024 and Feb. 12, 2024
- May 10, 2025 and July 8, 2025
- July 26, 2025 and Sept. 23, 2025
  (depending on start date)

Dates for fall 2023 graduates
Dates for spring 2024 graduates
Dates for summer 2024 graduates
Application window

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I-20 program end date</th>
<th>Earliest application date</th>
<th>Application deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 15, 2023</td>
<td>Sept. 16, 2023</td>
<td>Feb. 13, 2024</td>
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<td>May 10, 2024</td>
<td>Feb. 10, 2024</td>
<td>July 9, 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 26, 2024</td>
<td>April 27, 2024</td>
<td>Sept. 24, 2024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OPT employment start date range

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I-20 program end date</th>
<th>Earliest start date</th>
<th>Latest start date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 10, 2024</td>
<td>May 11, 2024</td>
<td>July 9, 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 26, 2024</td>
<td>July 27, 2024</td>
<td>Sept. 24, 2024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After you apply

- If applying by mail: You will receive a receipt in the mail two to three weeks after your application is received by USCIS
- If applying online: Receipt number issued immediately
- Check the status of your application through the USCIS website
- 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
  
  > 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  
  > Filing online without the OPT I-20  
  ▪ **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/submit 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
Premium processing

$1,500 fee guarantees processing time within 30 days

Beginning April 3

- I-907 can be filed together with I-765
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 Anthem while on OPT, but it is not automatically applied unless you are enrolled in MU courses

  > Online enrollment at [https://student.anthem.com/student/schools/mizzou](https://student.anthem.com/student/schools/mizzou)
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

- SEVP Portal updates:
  > You may update the SEVP Portal with employment information
    - You must still let us know so we can issue new I-20
  > You may update myStatus with employment
    - We will update SEVP information to issue new I-20
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 with pending application

Pending OPT app + Before graduation = Passport, visa, I-20 w/ travel signature, letter from department

Pending OPT app + 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
- Jillian Collins: collinsjk@missouri.edu
- Kristen Carranza: carranzak@missouri.edu  
  > All sponsored students
- Kim Adams: kimberlyadams@missouri.edu  
  > Last names starting with A–G
- Katie Humphrey: khumphrey@missouri.edu  
  > Last names starting with H–O
- Mo Whitley: whitleymo@missouri.edu  
  > Last names starting with P–Z