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: 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

Eligibility code: (C) (3) (B)
Optional:
You can use the International Center’s mailing address.

N52 Memorial Union
Columbia, MO 65211
After completing the questions, **DO NOT** submit to USCIS. Download the draft snapshot and 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

After completing the questions, **DO NOT** submit to USCIS. Download the draft snapshot and submit to ISSS for 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.
- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEVIS ID:</th>
<th>NAME:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Employment Authorizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>Full/Part-Time</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POST-COMPLETION OPT</td>
<td>FULL TIME</td>
<td>REQUESTED</td>
<td>01 JUNE 2010</td>
<td>31 MAY 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change of Status/CAP-Gap Extension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHORIZED REDUCED COURSE LOAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Current Session Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT SESSION DATES</th>
<th>CURRENT SESSION START DATE</th>
<th>CURRENT SESSION END DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 JANUARY 2010</td>
<td>11 MAY 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Travel Endorsement**

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

Designated School Official: Christine Hu
Title: ISSS Advisor
Signature: [Signature]
Date Issued: 2/12/18
Place Issued: Columbia, MD
Step 3: Submit application to USCIS electronically

- Payment for $410 ($470 starting April 1, 2024)
- Passport-style photograph (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: If applying by mail …

- Instructions are slightly different when filing a paper application by mail. If you choose this option, contact our office for instructions.
I-765 Online

Upload OPT Recommendation I-20

$410 application fee paid through Pay.gov (or $470 starting April 1, 2024)
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

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
OPT timeline

Application period
- I-20 program end date
- Choose OPT employment start date
- 90 days
- 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

Earliest application date
- Feb. 10, 2024
- April 27, 2024
- Sept. 14, 2024

Application deadline
- July 9, 2024
- Sept. 24, 2024
- Feb. 11, 2025

Employment period
- 12 months

Grace period
- 60 days

Program end date:
- May 10, 2024
- July 26, 2024
- Dec. 13, 2024

OPT end date between:
- May 10, 2025 and July 8, 2025
- July 26, 2025 and Sept. 23, 2025
- Dec. 13, 2025 and Feb. 10, 2026 (depending on start date)

Grace period
- 60 days

Choose OPT employment start date between:
- May 11, 2024 and July 9, 2024
- July 27, 2024 and Sept. 24, 2024
- Dec. 14, 2024 and Feb. 11, 2025

Key:
- Dates for spring 2024 graduates
- Dates for summer 2024 graduates
- Dates for fall 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>May 10, 2024</td>
<td>Feb. 10, 2024</td>
<td>July 9, 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 26, 2024</td>
<td>April 27, 2024</td>
<td>Sept. 24, 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 13, 2024</td>
<td>Sept. 14, 2024</td>
<td>Feb. 11, 2025</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>
<tr>
<td>December 13, 2024</td>
<td>December 14, 2024</td>
<td>Feb. 11, 2025</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>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yay! Congratulations!</strong></td>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td><strong>RFE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Received more than 90 days before program end date</td>
<td>More information needed to make a decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Received more than 30 days after OPT recommendation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ I-765 not signed/box not checked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Filing online without the OPT I-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ <strong>Old or previously used photos</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ <strong>Check</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Wrong date, filled incorrectly, not signed, not in your name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 (from April 1, 2024, will be 30 **business** days)

- I-907 can be filed together with I-765 or after 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 [student.anthem.com/student/schools/mizzou](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 information
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
GoinGlobal (at career.missouri.edu)
Questions?

- International Student and Scholar Services website: [international.missouri.edu/isss](https://international.missouri.edu/isss)
- Jillian Collins: collinsjk@missouri.edu
- Kim Adams: [kimberlyadams@missouri.edu](mailto:kimberlyadams@missouri.edu)
  > All sponsored students
- Kristen Carranza: [carranzak@missouri.edu](mailto:carranzak@missouri.edu)
  > Last names starting with A–B
- Katie Humphrey: [khumphrey@missouri.edu](mailto:khumphrey@missouri.edu)
  > Last names starting with E–O
- Mo Whitley: [whitleymo@missouri.edu](mailto:whitleymo@missouri.edu)
  > Last names starting with C–D, P–Z