

Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) Application Form and Instructions

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is employment authorization before or after completion of study in the student's major area of study. **This document provides instructions for applying for OPT after completion of all degree requirements.** Students interested in OPT before the completion of the coursework or with just the thesis or dissertation remaining should consult an International Student Advisor. **Please read the instructions and continue to the form on page 7.**

Eligibility

To apply for post-completion OPT, you must:

1. Have been a full-time student for at least one academic year;
2. Currently be in valid F-1 status;
3. Not have completed a higher degree level in the U.S.;
4. Not have previously been approved for 12 months of OPT at the current degree level or higher degree level;
5. Not have completed more than a year of full-time CPT at the current degree level or higher degree level; and
6. Complete ALL degree requirements in the academic program and be eligible to receive degree prior to requested OPT start date.
If you have finished your course requirements but NOT your dissertation/thesis and are interested in applying for OPT, please consult an International Student Advisor to discuss how this situation differs from post-completion OPT with all degree requirements completed.
7. Not work on-campus or on CPT after the final day of the term in which you complete all degree requirements even if the program end date on your I-20 is later.

The OPT application must be received by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) no more than 90 days before or 60 days after the completion of your degree program. Please note that the completion date refers to the date that degree requirements are completed (as verified by your academic advisor) and you are cleared by your department to graduate, not necessarily the graduation ceremony date or current end date on your I-20 as students may complete their degrees earlier than anticipated. **ISSS recommends that you apply for OPT at least 90 days before your requested employment start date to ensure there is ample time for USCIS to process your application.**

Request Procedure

Step 1: Gather OPT Application Documents Indicated on the “Documents Require to Request an OPT I-20” Section of this Handout

- Complete the application forms indicated on the next page of this handout.
 - It is strongly recommended that you type the information into the forms and print them to ensure the legibility of your application. Errors due to misreading your handwriting could delay processing of your application.
 - Be sure to sign any documents requiring your signature. Black ink is recommended.
- Make photocopies of required application materials.
 - Please ensure that photocopies are clear and easily legible as it could delay the processing of your application.
 - Color photocopies are recommended

Step 2: You Submit your OPT Request Documents at the International House Front Desk

- Submit your complete OPT request packet, including all required forms and supplemental documentation, to the Front Desk at the International House.
- ISSS will send an email to your DU email account if any items are missing or need to be updated.

Step 3: ISSS Issues an I-20 Recommending OPT

- If you will complete your degree program prior to the end date on your current I-20, ISSS will shorten your program end date based on the information provided on the Advisor Recommendation form at the same time as issuing the I-20 recommending OPT.
- If you appear to meet all of the application requirements, an ISSS advisor will issue a new I-20 that indicates on page 3 that OPT after completion of studies is **recommended** and includes the beginning and ending dates you requested for your OPT authorization.
- Please note that ISSS only RECOMMENDS that the application be approved; the final decision is made by USCIS.

Step 4: You Pick up Your OPT Application Materials and Mail your Completed Application to USCIS

- ISSS will send you an email to let you know that the I-20 recommending OPT has been issued.
- Bring a photo ID to the I-House front desk in order to collect the I-20 and OPT application materials.
- Sign and date the I-20 that recommends OPT and include a copy of the document in your OPT application.
- ISSS will provide a handout that details instructions for mailing your OPT application to USCIS
 - The OPT mailing address is based on the "live in" state indicated in item 3 of the I-765 and the lockbox address is dependent upon whether you are using U.S. Postal Service or another express courier
 - It is recommended that you mail your application via a service that provides a delivery confirmation.
 - Applications must be received by USCIS within 30 days of issuance of the OPT Recommendation I-20 and no later than 60 days after the program completion date indicated on the OPT Recommendation I-20.

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT USCIS PROCESSING MAY TAKE 3 MONTHS

Documents Required to Request an OPT I-20

To Request an I-20 recommending OPT, submit the following documents at the International House front desk:

OPT Request Form

- Sections A & B: You, the student, must complete sections A&B.
 - Requested OPT start date: Must be within 60 days of the day you will complete your degree requirements.
 - You cannot begin employment until you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) authorizing OPT and it is at least the start date indicated on the EAD card.
- Section C: Have your Academic Advisor complete Section C.
 - Your advisor must indicate the term of completion and check the box indicating what this date represents.

Form I-765 Type information into form, print, and sign in black ink

- To download the form go to: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> (Click the first link)
- Mark “Permission to accept employment” as the reason for completing the form
- **Item 1:** Type your last/family name in CAPITAL LETTERS. Your first and middle name can be typed in standard name form with the first letter capitalized and the remaining letters lowercase
- **Item 3:** Use your personal mailing address.
 - If your address changes at any time after you submit Form I-765, you should immediately notify USCIS of the change. Report your change of address to USCIS on-line at <https://egov.uscis.gov/coa/displayCOAForm.do> or by calling the National Customer Service Center at 800-375-5283. The U.S. Postal Service does not forward government mail.
 - You must also notify ISSS of the change within 10 days of moving by updating your address in PioneerWeb, <https://pioneerweb.du.edu>
 - Scan and email your receipt notice and EAD card to iss@du.edu when you receive them.
- **Item 10:** Paper I-94--Enter the complete number found on the upper left corner of your paper I-94 card Electronic I-94—Enter the Admission (I-94) Record Number from your electronic I-94 downloaded from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html>.
- **Item 11:** Mark “Yes” only if you have previously been issued an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS. Otherwise, mark “No” and continue to item 12
- **Item 12:** Enter the date of your last entry to the U.S. This will most likely be the date indicated on your I-94 unless you traveled to Canada, Mexico, or the adjacent islands for less than 30 days and did not obtain a new I-94.
- **Item 13:** Enter the city and state where you last passed through U.S. Customs.
- **Item 16:** Please enter the appropriate eligibility category based on the information below:
 - (c) (3) (A)— Pre-completion OPT (employment occurring prior to degree completion)
 - (c) (3) (B)— Employment occurring after degree completion or all of course requirements with thesis/dissertation remaining
 - (c) (3) (C)— Applying for a 24-month STEM extension of initial OPT authorization
- **Item 17:** Leave this section blank unless you are applying for a 24-month STEM extension of your initial OPT employment authorization.



- Form G-1145 (Optional)** <http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf>
 - Complete this form to receive electronic notification by USCIS when your OPT application has been received.

- Copies of two color passport-style photographs taken within the last 30 days.** – Must be 2” x 2” on white background in accordance with Department of State requirements:
<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photos.html>
 - Do not reuse old photos. If you re-use old passport or visa photos, you will receive a USCIS request for new photos that will delay the processing of your OPT application.
 - Gently write your name and your I-94 number on the back of the photos.
 - Do not cut, trim, or otherwise alter the photographs
 - You will submit the original photos to USCIS.

- Copy of a personal check or money order for \$410 made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.**
 - Personal check is strongly recommended.
 - On the memo line, write “OPT” then your I-94 number
 - You will submit the original to USCIS.

- Clear photocopy of your valid passport ID page and any renewal or extension pages**
 - Must show your full legal name, your date of birth, your photograph, and the expiration date of your passport
 - Color photocopy is recommended

- Current I-94 record of admission**
 - Paper I-94 Card (issued prior to 5/21/2013): Include photocopies of the front and back of your I-94 card
 - Electronic I-94 (issued after 5/21/2013): Download copy from:
<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/request.html>

- Clear photocopy of your most recent U.S. entry visa or change of status approval notice**
 - Color photocopy is recommended

- Clear photocopy of pages 1 and 2 of your current I-20**

- Clear photocopies of any past I-20’s with Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorizations or Optional Practical Training (OPT) recommendations**
 - Include copies of I-20’s issued by University of Denver and/or any previous schools you attend while in F-1 status.

- Clear photocopies of any previously issued Employment Authorization Documents (EADs)**

What Happens After your Mail Your Application to USCIS

Status of Your OPT Application

If you completed the optional Form G-1145, you will receive a text message and/or email from USCIS when they have received your application.

Typically, within two to four weeks after your OPT application has been received by USCIS, a receipt notice will be sent to the address you used on the I-765 application. Please scan and email a copy of your receipt notice to iss@du.edu.

From that point on, you may visit the USCIS website at <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do> to check the status of your application using the receipt number (e.g., LIN #) listed in the upper left corner of your receipt notice. You can sign up for email updates at: <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/selectusertype.jsp>.

What YOU Can Do If You Do Not Receive Your Receipt Notice (30 days) or EAD (75 days)

If 30 days after submitting your application to ISSS, you have not received a receipt notice from ISSS or USCIS: check with your bank to see if your check has been cashed by USCIS. If the check has not been cashed and no receipt notice has been sent, then it is very possible that the application has been lost. You will need to resubmit the application. Please discuss options with an International Student Advisor during quick question hours or make an appointment: <http://www.du.edu/iss/advising.html>.

- 1) If your Form I-765 has been pending more than 75 days, you can submit an inquiry by calling the USCIS Customer Service Number on your form I-765 receipt notice or you can submit an on-line inquiry at <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>.
- 2) You can also check the processing time at the Nebraska Service Center for Form I-765 based on a request by a qualified F-1 student at <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/processTimesDisplay.do>. If the receipt date of your Form I-765 is earlier than the date in the last column, Processing Cases as of Date, call the USCIS Customer Service number on your I-765 receipt notice to report that your case is outside of normal processing times or submit a case inquiry on-line at <https://egov.uscis.gov/e-Request/Intro.do>.
- 3) Request an appointment through the InfoPass system: <http://infopass.uscis.gov/>. When you make the request, state that that you are requesting expedited handling of an I-765 application because it is currently outside the normal processing time. Rather than scheduling an appointment, USCIS will likely respond by sending a request to the appropriate USCIS Service Center for the file to be pulled and adjudicated.

If, after following either of these processes, no response is given within five business days after you contacted USCIS, please email ISSS at iss@du.edu to indicate the actions that you have taken. Please provide your full name as you listed it on your OPT application, date of birth, country of citizenship, USCIS receipt number (starting with LIN if you used a Colorado address on the I-765), USCIS receipt notice date, date and time you contacted USCIS to request expedited handling, and the name and referral ID number of the officer with whom you spoke (if you called).

Approval and Receipt of Employment Authorization Document

It can take 90 days or more for USCIS to process your application and mail the OPT employment authorization document (EAD) to the address indicated on the I-765.

Important Reminders Concerning Optional Practical Training

- You may not work on-campus or on CPT after the final day of the term in which you complete all degree requirements even if the program end date on your I-20 is later.
- You may NOT work before or after the dates indicated on your EAD.
- Your employment must be directly related to your major area of study.
- It is your responsibility to confirm that you do not have incompletes or classes you must retake, and that you have met all degree requirements as expected.
- You may begin to search for employment prior to receiving OPT authorization, but you may not begin working until you both receive your EAD and the start date on the card has arrived.
- If you receive a new I-20 for any academic program, either at DU or another institution of higher education, your OPT EAD will be cancelled even if you have not reached the EAD end date.
- It is very important that you maintain current contact information including email address on PioneerWeb (<http://pioneerweb.du.edu>) so ISSS can contact you when the EAD arrives or if there is a problem with your application.

Canceling the Authorization Process for Optional Practical Training

Once USCIS has approved your OPT, the authorization cannot be canceled, rescinded, revoked, or changed. Even if you do not actually work, USCIS counts all authorized OPT time against your total allowable time. This is particularly important for post-completion OPT. If you are authorized and then do not complete your studies on time, you must continue to be enrolled full-time, and are only eligible for part-time employment until you finish degree requirements. Once authorized for post-completion OPT, even if you do not actually complete the degree as expected, you may not exceed more than 90 days of unemployment and are no longer eligible for program extensions.

Unemployment on OPT

Under USCIS regulations, you are only allowed to have a total of 90 days of unemployment on F-1 Post-Completion OPT. **All periods of unemployment and employment, along with employer's name and your physical work address, must be reported to iss@du.edu.**

OPT Cap Gap Extensions

An F-1 student who is the beneficiary of a timely-filed H-1B petition requesting **change of status** and an **employment start date of October 1** of the current year that has not been withdrawn or denied is eligible for a cap gap extension of OPT in which duration of status (D/S) and any post-completion OPT work authorization, is extended to the September 30th, the day before the start of the H-1B or until the petition is withdrawn or denied. An automatic cap-gap extension of an F-1 student's duration of status also applies to the duration of status of the student's dependents in F-2 status. Email your H-1B receipt or approval notice to iss@du.edu to request an I-20 with a comment indicating that your H-1B is either pending or has been approved.

Travel Before Approval of OPT and Receipt of EAD

If you leave the U.S. after you complete your studies and before you receive the EAD, you must have the following documents in your possession to reenter the U.S. in F-1 status:

- EAD Card
- Letter from your employer confirming employment
- An OPT I-20 with a travel signature less than six months old
- A valid passport
- A valid F-1 entry visa (unless you traveled to Canada, Mexico, or the Adjacent Islands and qualify for Automatic Visa Revalidation).

NOTE: If you leave the U.S. after your OPT is approved and you do not have a job, you may not be able to re-enter the U.S. as employment is required for maintenance of F-1 status during your OPT employment authorization period. If you are applying to renew your F-1 entry visa while on OPT, be prepared to show your EAD card and proof of employment at the U.S. embassy.

Social Security and Other Taxes

In general, as an F-1 student, you will be exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes for your first five years in the United States, as long as you are considered a non-resident for tax purposes—see:

<http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/Foreign-Student-Liability-for-Social-Security-and-Medicare-Taxes>. Income earned in the United States, including assistantships, is usually subject to any federal, state, or local income regulations that apply. Unless you qualify under a tax treaty between the United States and your home government, employers are required by law to withhold those taxes from your paychecks. Annual filing of tax returns is mandated each year by April 15th. Please see <http://www.du.edu/intl/iss/taxes.html> for more information. ISSS staff is not authorized to provide tax assistance or advice.

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Request Form and Academic Advisor's Certification

Section A: Student Information	
LAST (FAMILY) NAME in Passport:	FIRST NAME in Passport:
DATE OF BIRTH (mm/dd/yyyy)	DU ID Number:
I hereby authorize the release of any information necessary for this request and authorize any changes needed to complete my request.	
I hereby confirm that the information I have provided in this application is accurate. I have read and understand the Post-Completion Optional Practical Training requirements.	
STUDENT SIGNATURE:	DATE:

ISSS sends all official communications, including important information about your immigration status, to your official @du.edu email address. It is important that you check this account regularly. For information regarding your DU e-mail, visit <http://www.du.edu/uts/helpdesk/docs/email.html>.

Section B: To be Completed by Student
Requested OPT Start Date (mm/dd/yy) ___/___/___ *Must Start within 60 days of degree completion
<input type="checkbox"/> I am enrolled in a Dual Degree Program at DU (4 + 1 Program)
Please verify that you understand and accept the following items by initialing each item:
_____ I have not engaged in more than 12 months of full-time CPT at this degree level or a higher degree level. _____ I have not engaged in more than 12 months of OPT at this degree level or a higher degree level. _____ If I do not complete all requirements for the degree as determined by my Academic Advisor, I must immediately notify an International Student Advisor. I am also aware that a delay in completion of my degree may impact my application for Post-Completion OPT. _____ All employment must be related to my major. _____ I cannot work before or after the dates printed on my EAD (Employment Authorization Document). _____ If I accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment while engaged in Post-Completion OPT, I will be out of status. _____ While I am engaged in the Post-Completion OPT period, I must report the following to iss@du.edu : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Any changes in residential local U.S. address (including telephone number and email) -Employment start date, employer name, and my physical work address -Any changes in employment (including unemployment, change of employers, etc.)

ADVISOR MUST COMPLETE PAGE 8

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		
Assigned To:	Processing Checklist:	Processing Notes
_____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment checked by _____ <input type="checkbox"/> GA processed ___ / ___ / ___ <input type="checkbox"/> ISA processed ___ / ___ / ___	

SECTION C: To be Completed by ACADEMIC ADVISOR

The student listed above is applying for Post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). Post-completion OPT is work authorization granted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for F-1 students to work in a position related to their major field of study upon completion of their degree program. Immigration regulations require that a student apply for OPT no earlier than 90 days prior to finishing their degree and no later than 60 days after the completion of their degree.

Please complete the following information to help our office to determine whether the student is eligible to apply. Contact International Student and Scholar Services if you have any questions (iss@du.edu or 303-871-4912). Thank you for your assistance.

Please return the completed form to the student for submission to International Student and Scholar Services.

The student will complete or has completed the following degree at the University of Denver:

Degree Level Bachelor's Master's PhD Other (please describe) _____

Primary Major:

Secondary Major (if applicable)

Student's expected term of program completion Fall Winter Spring Summer Year: ____

If completing on another date, please specify ____/____/____ (mm/dd/yy)

The above date represents: Completion of all requirements for degree

Submission of dissertation/thesis

Completion of all requirements for degree except dissertation/thesis (Student MUST meet with International Student Advisor for details)

As the student's Academic Advisor, I verify that the above stated academic information is accurate and understand that it will be used to ensure that the student's request for Post-completion OPT is in compliance with federal regulations governing F-1 immigration status.

Advisor Signature:

Date:

Advisor's Name: (Please Print)

Position or Title:

Department:

Phone Number #:

Email: