

Florida Atlantic University ~ Division of Student Affairs ~ International Student and Scholar Services

Boca Raton Campus: 777 Glades Road, SU 214, Boca Raton, FL 33431

Tel. (561) 297-3049 Fax: (561) 297-2446

Davie Campus: Multicultural Affairs (MD-G 13), 3200 College Avenue, Davie, FL, 33314

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MacArthur Campus: Diversity Services (SR 117), 5353 Parkside Dr., Jupiter, FL 33458

Tel. (561)799-8585 Fax: (561) 799-8721

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) FOR F-1 STUDENTS

Optional Practical Training is defined as temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study (8 C.F.R. 214.2 (f)(10)(ii)).

General Information about OPT

- Available to students who have maintained F-1 status and been enrolled in a full course of study for at least one academic year in the U.S
- Requires recommendation from ISSS Advisor (DSO) and an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS)
- Employment can begin only on or after the start date on the EAD card
- Is available to students who have not exceeded 12 months of full-time CPT
- Does not require an employment offer at the time of application
- Allows for no more than 90 days of unemployment during the 12-month employment period. Thus employment must begin no later than 90 days after the start date of the EAD card
- Can be authorized once for each degree level (bachelor's, master's, doctorate) for up to 12 months
- Must be received at USCIS within 30 days of the date DSO enters OPT recommendation in SEVIS

Types of OPT

A) Pre-completion OPT (Code: (c) (3) (A))

- Granted prior to degree completion; cannot exceed program completion date listed on the I-20
- Authorized part-time (20 hours per week or less) while school is in session, or full-time during the summer semester (if not enrolled full-time) and other official breaks and holidays, if currently enrolled and expecting to enroll for the next available semester
- Students can apply at any time during their program of study (after completing at least one academic year)
- Deducted from the 12-month period of OPT eligibility (students must apply separately for post-completion OPT for the period not used as pre-completion OPT)
- 90-day unemployment period does not apply

B) Post-completion OPT (Code: (c) (3) (B))

- Granted upon completion of all degree requirements*

*** Graduate students who have completed all degree requirements except for thesis/dissertation may apply for either pre-completion or post-completion OPT.** Students are eligible for the post-completion option only if all program requirements are completed prior to the desired OPT start date (coursework, qualifying examinations, proposal) except for thesis or dissertation hours.

- Application should be made during the semester in which student expects to receive the degree and up to 90 days prior to the desired OPT start date
- Application must be received at USCIS no later than 60 days after the program completion date listed on the I-20
- Authorized full-time for up to 12 months (less any period of authorized pre-completion OPT)

C) Extension OPT for eligible student in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Fields (STEM OPT) (Code: (c) (3) (C))

- Refer to the separate STEM OPT handout for eligibility and application requirements

Travel during OPT

- Pre-completion OPT students: follow travel requirements applicable to all F-1 students enrolled in a degree program.
- Post-completion OPT students:
 - Avoid traveling until they receive their EAD card and they have an employment offer in hand. When traveling, page 3 of the I-20 must have the DSO's travel endorsement (valid for six months).
 - Traveling with a pending OPT application is not recommended.
 - Obtaining a new F-1 visa while on OPT can be risky.
 - Consult with an ISSS advisor before making plans to travel outside the U.S. Each travel situation is different and may require individualized advising.

Reporting Requirements during Post-Completion OPT

FAU is responsible for the F-1 SEVIS record and I-20 for the duration of OPT. Students must keep ISSS informed of the following:

- Initial employment information within 90 days of the OPT start date (employer name, location, address, contact information including email) as well as any consequent changes in employment.
- Completion of OPT prior to OPT end date due to change of status or return to the home country
- Acceptance to another degree program in F-1 status (will require SEVIS transfer)
- Student's current address and contact information (including a non-FAU email address); change of address information must be provided within 10 days.

OPT Application Procedures

- 1) Attend a mandatory Employment/Practical Training Workshop. Workshop times and dates are available at <http://www.fau.edu/iss>. Students who are unable to attend should make an individual appointment with an ISSS advisor.
- 2) Complete the OPT application packet.

Application Checklist

- ___ Optional Practical Training Application Form (signed by student and academic advisor)
- ___ Form I-765; <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765.pdf>

Special Instructions for completing form I-765:

Section 3: Use ISSS mailing address (FAU 777 Glades Road SU 80-214, Boca Raton, FL 33431-0991)

Section 11: Mark "yes" only if you previously received an EAD card issued by USCIS (CPT authorizations and on-campus employment not included)

Section 16: Use appropriate code as follows: (a) Pre-completion OPT: (C) (3) (A); (b) Post-Completion OPT (C) (3) (B)

___ USCIS filing fee of \$380. Money order or Cashier's Check payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

___ Two U.S. passport-size photographs; lightly print your name and I-94 number on the back of the photos;

___ Two copies of passport pages with identification/signature and validity dates

___ Two copies of the most recent F-1 visa (or approval notice for change of status to F-1)

___ Two copies (front and back) of most recent I-94 card

___ Two copies of any previous EAD card(s) obtained during your F-1 status

- 3) Bring completed application packet to ISSS. ISSS will create a new I-20 with the OPT recommendation, prepare the OPT packet for mailing to USCIS, and contact the student to pick up the packet.
- 4) Review and sign the I-20.
- 5) Mail packet to USCIS (ISSS will provide OPT packet checklist and mailing instructions).

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OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING APPLICATION FORM

Note: STEM Applicants should use the STEM Extension Application Form.

SECTION I: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Student ID Z _____
FAU Email _____ Other Email _____ Telephone _____
Degree Level _____ Major(s)/Minor(s) _____

This request is for:

1. Pre-completion OPT (prior to degree/program completion)
Start Date: _____ End Date: _____
Part-time (20 hours or less) Full-time (more than 20 hrs/wk – official breaks & holidays only)
2. Post-completion OPT (authorized full-time); choose one option below:
 To begin after all degree/program requirements have been met except thesis/dissertation
 To begin after all degree/program requirements have been completed
Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Previous practical training experience (use a separate sheet if necessary):

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorizations you received at this degree level:

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____ Part-time Full-time
Start Date: _____ End Date: _____ Part-time Full-time

Optional Practical Training (OPT) authorizations you received while in F-1 status:

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____ Part-time Full-time
 Pre-completion Post Completion
Start Date: _____ End Date: _____ Part-time Full-time
 Pre-completion Post Completion

Student's Signature _____ Date: _____

SECTION II: TO BE COMPLETED BY ACADEMIC ADVISOR*

***This section can be completed & signed by the student's academic advisor, department chair, or college assistant/associate/dean. Colleges may choose to designate specific staff/administrators authorized to recommend practical training for international students. Engineering & Computer Science students must obtain approval from the Dean's Office in the College of Engineering and Computer Science.**

1. Expected Degree Completion Date: _____
2. List any pending requirements other than courses to be completed for graduation (such as Incomplete grades, CLAST, Gordon Rule, etc., qualifying exams, thesis/dissertation hours, etc.) _____

3. Faculty/Staff/Administrator recommending this experience for the above-named student:

I support the above-named student's application for Optional Practical Training benefit as a valuable opportunity to obtain on-the-job training related to his/her major field of study.

Name : _____ Position: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____
Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____