**Optional Practical Training (OPT)** is a period during which undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students with F-1 status who have completed their degrees for more than nine (9) months are permitted by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to work for at most twelve (12) months on a student visa towards getting practical training to complement their field of studies.

## Eligibility students must:
1. Be enrolled in a degree program;
2. Be on their last quarter;
3. Pay off any tuition balance;
4. Submit the Application for Graduation prior to applying for OPT.

## Application Requirements
1. A completed **Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization.** Download at http://www.uscis.gov/forms
2. Photocopies of your **passport, VISA, and I-94 (front and back).** For **Electronic I-94**, print out at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/
3. A copy of your previous EAD or OPT card (front and back), if applicable.
4. An updated **Form I-20** (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant F-1 Student) showing your OPT period. Designated School Official (DSO) will issue a new form I-20. An additional copy of I-20 form can be issued upon student's request.
5. Submit **two identical color photographs of yourself** taken within 30 days of the filing of the application. The passport-style photos must be 2" by 2". The photos must be in color with full face, frontal view on a white to off-white background. Head height should measure 1" to 1 3/8" from bottom of photo. Using pencil or felt pen, lightly print your name on the back of the photo.
6. **$410 Filing Fee** (**Check** or **Money Order**)
   - Must be drawn on a bank or other financial institution located in the United States and must be payable in U.S. currency.
   - Must be payable to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security.** Do not use the initials "USDHS" or "DHS."

## OPT Application Procedure
1. Submit this form and all **Application Requirements** to PSU's Designate School Official (DSO);
2. Collect all documents once you are informed by school to pick up.
3. Mail all documents to USCIS (registered mail with tracking number recommended) no later than two (2) weeks after the issued date of form I-20 to either addresses below

| **U.S. Postal Service deliveries:** | **Private Courier:** |
|---|---|
| USCIS Phoenix Lock Box | USCIS |
| USCIS | Attn: AOS |
| P.O. Box 21281 | 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100 |
| Phoenix, AZ 85036 | Phoenix, AZ 85034 |

4. Track whether USCIS receive your OPT application by using postal tracking number or monitoring your bank account if you paid the application fee by personal check.
5. After the I-765 is received by USCIS, you will receive Form I-797 Receipt Notice by mail in a couple of weeks.
6. Use the receipt number in I-797 Receipt Notice to track the case status of your OPT application at http://www.uscis.gov/
7. After your OPT application is approved, you will receive the I-797 Approval Notice and Employment Authorization Document (EAD Card) by mail.

## When I Can Start My OPT
- If you **DO NOT HAVE** a job prospect / offer at the time of your OPT application, you may request a start date for OPT at the end of your 60-day grace period.
- If you **HAVE** a job prospect / offer at the time of your OPT application, you may
  a) Request a start date for OPT to begin when your position begins (within 60 days of your completion date); or
  b) Request a start date for OPT at the end of your 60-day grace period (if the position will begin after this time).

## After You Receive the I-797 Approval Notice and EAD
1. Make a copy of the I-797 Approval Notice and EAD (front and back);
2. Complete the Employment Information Form. Download form at http://psuca.edu/files/forms/Employment_Info_Form.pdf;
3. Submit the above documents and a letter of proof of employment from your employer in person at PSU campus or email to studentservice@psuca.edu or fax to 323-731-7276.

## Important Information Regarding OPT
1. You are not required to have a job before applying for OPT.
2. USCIS will now accept your OPT applications **up to 60 days** after you complete your degree requirements. PSU recommends you to apply at the beginning of your last quarter.
3. **"Use it or lose it"** OPT cannot be used during studying. If you do not apply OPT within the time mentioned above or continue your study in another program after you complete a degree, you will not be able to use your OPT for that degree.
4. You must work in a job directly related to your field of study.
5. You are not authorized to begin employment until the start date on the EAD arrives, even if you have the card in hand.
6. You are not permitted to accumulate more than a total of **90 days of unemployment** for the entire period of 12 months of OPT.
7. It is very important to report your employment to Designated School Official (DSO) for your SEVIS record **no later than 90 days** after the start date on your EAD card or USCIS will cancel your OPT. Please refer to **After You Receive the I-797 Approval Notice and EAD.**
8. You are required to report any changes in employment within **10 days** to Designated School Official for your SEVIS record. Submit the Employment Information and a letter of proof of employment from your employer in person at PSU campus or email to studentservice@psuca.edu or fax to 323-731-7276.
9. U.S. Department of Homeland Security Address Notification Requirement requires you to update your address to the University within **10 days** of any change, even while you are on OPT.

## Travel While on OPT
Travel while on OPT is not restricted. However, in order to reenter the US after you complete your degree and during the entire OPT period, you should be in possession of your EAD card, OPT I-20 with travel signature, a valid F-1 visa, a valid passport, and a letter from your employer verifying employment. If you are missing any one of these documents you risk being denied entry and losing your OPT. **While on OPT the travel signature on the I-20 form is valid for only 6 months.**

## Ending OPT Early
1. **Abandoning OPT** If you decide to abandon your OPT before the end date of your EAD and leave the United States, you must notify the Designated School Official so we can end your SEVIS record. Please email to studentservice@psuca.edu telling us that you have decided to abandon your OPT and the date you plan to depart the United States. We will end your SEVIS record effective the date you indicate you plan to leave the U.S. or the date you notify us, whichever is later.
2. **Admission to A New Degree/Program** If you decide to apply to another program either at PSU or another university before the end date of your EAD, your authorization for OPT will end on the transfer release date. The authorization for OPT is not transferable. On your transfer release date, you must stop employment regardless of your EAD card's appearance of validity.

**For more information regarding OPT, please refer to http://www.uscis.gov/**

## STUDENT INFORMATION (All required to identify your record – please print clearly)

| PSU Student ID (if available) | Degree/Program | Major |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| **Last Name** | **First Name** | **Middle Name** |
| | | |
| **Telephone** | **E-mail Address** | **OPT Start Date** (mm/dd/yyyy) |
| | | |

I wish my OPT to start on the date mentioned above and I agree that it is my responsibility to review my OPT applications before sending to USCIS.

| Student's Signature Required *(Digital or electronic signature is not accepted)* | Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy) |
|---|---|
| X | |