



# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Part 1: Eligibility and Intro to OPT

International Studies Office  
[lssp.virginia.edu](http://lssp.virginia.edu)

# OPT Mini-Series

## Section 1: Eligibility & Intro to OPT

Section 2: OPT Checklist

Section 3: How to Complete I-765

Section 4: Application Requirements

Section 5: Responsibilities During OPT






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# What is OPT?

Allows for off-campus work authorization for F-1 students in their primary field of study.

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- Students do not need an offer letter to apply for OPT.
  - Students must be in full-time F-1 status for at least one academic year.
  - Apply in your final semester of study no more than 90 days before your program end date.
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# OPT and CPT Usage

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- If you used 1 year or more of full-time **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**, during your current degree level, you do not qualify for OPT.
- Part-time CPT should not count towards OPT disqualification.
- Heavy CPT usage (part-time or full-time) may result in additional scrutiny of your OPT application. Be prepared to provide evidence of all prior CPT I-20s, as well as the academic work related to your CPT.

# Types of Qualifying Employment

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**During your 12-month OPT period, OPT employment must be a minimum of 20 hours per week in a job directly related to your degree program. It is the student's responsibility to demonstrate relationship between coursework and employment. Here are types of employment permitted:**

- Paid employment
- Multiple employers
- Work for hire (commonly referred to as 1099 employment)
- Self-employed business owner (must obtain proper business licenses)
- Employment through an agency
- Volunteers or unpaid interns (Post-Completion OPT only. Not eligible for OPT STEM Extension)

# OPT Start Date

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- Your OPT start date is the date that your 12 months of work authorization begins.
- OPT start date must be *within the 60-day grace period* after the program completion date.
- The requested start and end dates will be noted on page 2 of your new OPT I-20
- The end date will be 1 year from your start date (i.e. July 2, 2021 to July 1, 2022)

**IMPORTANT:** Once USCIS receives your OPT application, it is not possible to change your OPT start and end dates.

# OPT Timeline



Tip: Apply early. Average processing time is 3-5 months.

Tip: When selecting your OPT start date, don't select holidays or weekends.

# Application Process Overview

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1. Review our F-1 OPT webpage and our tutorial
2. Initiate the [OPT Request Process](#) through ISSP Connect. Submit only 1 request. You can return to an incomplete application by logging onto ISSP Connect. Remember to click on the 'submit' button when you have completed the application.
3. You will receive an email when your OPT I-20 has been uploaded to your application. Log onto [ISSP Connect](#) and retrieve your I-20 from the Documents section of your OPT application.
4. Review our OPT Filing Instructions page. OPT I-20 and full OPT application must be in the hands of USCIS no later than 30 days after the OPT I-20's issue date. Do not e-file your application.
  - Do not use an electronic signature on your I-765. Use a wet blue ink for all signature and dates.
  - Obtain a tracking number when mailing your application.



# OPT Mini-Series

Section 1: Eligibility & Intro to OPT

**Section 2: OPT Checklist**

Section 3: How to Complete I-765

Section 4: Application Requirements (Part 2)

Section 5: Responsibilities During OPT





# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Part 2: OPT Checklist

International Studies Office  
[lssp.virginia.edu](http://lssp.virginia.edu)

# OPT Application Checklist

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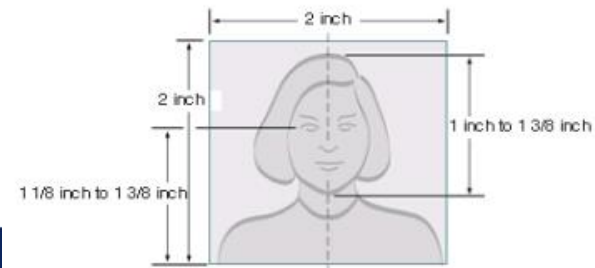
- 2 U.S. Passport Photos taken within the past 30 days.
- USCIS Fee of \$410. Always check USCIS webpage for any fee changes.
- Form G-1145, e-notification form
- Original Form I-765. Don't forget to sign in wet ink. No e-signatures.
- OPT I-20 issued by ISO within the past 30 days. Don't forget to sign in wet ink. No e-signatures.
- Copy of valid passport biographical page
- Copy of latest F-1 visa stamp
- Printout of electronic I-94 record, or copy of paper Form I-94
- Copies of all previous I-20s (from UVA and previous schools, if applicable)

# Passport Photo Requirement

The photos required to use for the OPT application must meet the specifications of U.S. style passport photos. To see a full description of these specifications, go to the [U.S. Department of State website](#).

- **Submit two identical color passport photos taken within the past 30 days.**
- **DO NOT use old photos you used for your passport or visa applications. You will get denied.**
- **Write your name and SEVIS number lightly in pencil on the back of both photos. Do not damage the photo surface by pressing hard while writing**

**Tip: USCIS has been strictly examining photos. ISO recommends students have their photos taken professionally.**



# USCIS Fee

- Check, Money Order, or Credit Card for \$410. Always check USCIS website for fee.
- Check or Money Order should be made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” with SEVIS number in the memo line. Money orders can be purchased at banks, post office, and some local grocery stores. Make sure a name and address are printed on the check.
  - Do not use “temporary checks” often issued by the bank when opening a new account. These checks have no name or address in the upper left hand corner.

## Credit Card (not recommended by ISO)

- Submit form G-1450 for the proper amount. Credit card must have U.S. billing address. Ensure you sign G-1450 and that the financial institution will clear your transaction the first time.

Your Name Here  
Your Street Address Here  
Your City, State, Zip Code, Here  
Your telephone number Here

1936  
MM/DD/YYYY  
DATE

PAY TO THE ORDER OF U.S. Department of Homeland Security \$ 410.00  
Four-hundred and ten dollars 00/100 DOLLARS

Your SEVIS ID Number  
Your Signature Here

⑆000000186⑆ 000000529\* 1000

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®  
POSTAL MONEY ORDER

Serial Number Year, Month, Day Post Office U.S. Dollars and Cents

000000000000  
This section will be completed by issuer of money order.

Pay to U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Address USCIS Mailing Address

Memo OPT Application: Your SEVIS ID number

Your name  
Your mailing address

⑆000000000⑆ 000000 000000⑆

SEE REVERSE WARNING • NEGOTIABLE ONLY IN THE U.S. AND POSSESSIONS

# Form G-1145 (e-Notification)

- Attach to top of OPT application packet
- Use [Form G-1145](#) to request text and/or email notification(s) regarding your application.



## e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS  
Form G-1145

### What Is the Purpose of This Form?

Use this form to request an electronic notification (e-Notification) when U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services accepts your immigration application. This service is available for applications filed at a USCIS Lockbox facility.

### General Information

Complete the information below and clip this form to the first page of your application package. You will receive one e-mail and/or text message for each form you are filing.

We will send the e-Notification within 24 hours after we accept your application. Domestic customers will receive an e-mail and/or text message; overseas customers will only receive an e-mail. Undeliverable e-Notifications cannot be resent.

The e-mail or text message will display your receipt number and tell you how to get updated case status information. It will not include any personal information. The e-Notification does not grant any type of status or benefit; rather it is provided as a convenience to customers.

USCIS will also mail you a receipt notice (I-797C), which you will receive within 10 days after your application has been accepted; use this notice as proof of your pending application or petition.

### USCIS Privacy Act Statement

**AUTHORITIES:** The information requested on this form is collected pursuant to section 103(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended INA section 101, et seq.

**PURPOSE:** The primary purpose for providing the information on this form is to request an electronic notification when USCIS accepts immigration form. The information you provide will be used to send you a text and/or email message.

**DISCLOSURE:** The information you provide is voluntary. However, failure to provide the requested information may prevent USCIS from providing you a text and/or email message receiving your immigration form.

**ROUTINE USES:** The information provided on this form will be used by and disclosed to DHS personnel and contractors in accordance with approved routine uses, as described in the associated published system of records notices [[DHS/USCIS-007 - Benefits Information System and DHS/USCIS-001 - Alien File \(A-File\) and Central Index System \(CIS\)](#)], which can be found at [www.dhs.gov/privacy](http://www.dhs.gov/privacy). The information may also be made available, as appropriate for law enforcement purposes or in the interest of national security.

Complete this form and clip it on top of the first page of your immigration form(s).

Applicant/Petitioner Full Last Name	Applicant/Petitioner Full First Name	Applicant/Petitioner Full Middle Name
Email Address		Mobile Phone Number (Text Message)

# Check your OPT I-20 for accuracy

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1. Check your Educational Level (i.e. PhD candidate decides to graduate with a Masters)
2. Program End Date
3. Student Attestation
4. School Attestation: USCIS must receive your application within 30 days of the “Date Issued” date on Page 1, not the travel signature date.
5. OPT Start and End Dates
6. You will receive a new travel signature at the time you request your OPT I-20

# OPT I-20

## UVa OPT I-20 (all pages):

- Must be received by USCIS within 30 days of DATE ISSUED on page 1
- Original must be signed by an ISO advisor
- Original must be signed by the student at the bottom of page 1.
- The requested OPT start and end dates will appear on page 2.
- Mail the original OPT I-20. All other I-20's will be mailed as copies

SEVIS ID: N				
SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME	GIVEN NAME	CLASS <b>F-1</b> ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE		
PREFERRED NAME	PASSPORT NAME			
COUNTRY OF BIRTH	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP			
DATE OF BIRTH	ADMISSION NUMBER			
FORM ISSUE REASON CONTINUED ATTENDANCE	LEGACY NAME			
<b>SCHOOL INFORMATION</b>				
SCHOOL NAME University of California at Berkeley University of California at Berkeley	SCHOOL ADDRESS Berkeley International Office, Berkeley, CA 94720			
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR ADVISOR	SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE S021492361258 27 JANUARY 2013			
<b>PROGRAM OF STUDY</b>				
EDUCATION LEVEL DOCTORATE	MAJOR I Political Science and Government, Course# 45.1001	MAJOR II None 00.0000		
NORMAL PROGRAM LENGTH 48 Months	PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient		
PROGRAM START DATE 21 JANUARY 2014	PROGRAM END DATE 16 DECEMBER 2015			
<b>FINANCIALS</b>				
ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR 12 MONTHS		STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR 12 MONTHS		
Tuition and Fees	\$ 30,903	Personal Funds	\$	0
Living Expenses	\$ 19,000	Dept. Support	\$	80,503
Expenses of Dependents (0)	\$ 0	Funds From Another Source	\$	0
Other	\$	On-Campus Employment	\$	0
TOTAL	\$ 49,903	TOTAL	\$	80,503
<b>REMARKS</b>				
<b>SCHOOL ATTESTATION</b>				
I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the submission of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the program of study required to pursue a program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(b)(5). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to sign this form.				
SIGNATURE OF: Scholar Advisor	DATE ISSUED 05 October 2013	PLACE ISSUED Berkeley, CA		
<b>STUDENT ATTESTATION</b>				
I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form is specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.5(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.				
SIGNATURE OF: NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN	SIGNATURE	DATE		
			ADDRESS (city/state or province/country)	DATE

ICE Form I-20 (3/31/2018) Page 1 of 3



# Photocopy of Passport and Visa



Photocopy the passport biographical page with photo and passport expiration date. Copy your valid passport, even if it is not the passport you most recently used to enter the U.S.



Photocopy the F-1 visa, if applicable.  
Visa may be expired.

# Photocopy of I-94

## The I-94 can be:

- An **electronic I-94**. Visit [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94) to access and print your record
- A **paper I-94 card** stapled into your passport. Include a copy of both sides, even though the back side may be blank.
- A copy of an **I-797 Change of Status Approval Notice** which includes a new I-94

U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
Securing America's Borders

**Most Recent I-94**

Admission (I-94) Record Number : 2123456789

Most Recent Date of Entry: 2017 March 06

Class of Admission : F1

Admit Until Date : D/S

Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname : \_\_\_\_\_

First (Given) Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Passport Number : \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Issuance : \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Effective April 26, 2013, DHS began automating the admission process. An alien lawfully admitted or paroled into the U.S. is no longer required to be in possession of a preprinted Form I-94. A record of admission printed from the CBP website constitutes a lawful record of admission. See 8 CFR § 1.4(d).

▶ If an employer, local, state or federal agency requests admission information, present your admission (I-94) number along with any additional required documents requested by that employer or agency.

▶ Note: For security reasons, we recommend that you close your browser after you have finished retrieving your I-94 number.

## Electronic I-94 Record

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Departure Record  
123456789 01

18. Family Name \_\_\_\_\_

19. First (Given) Name \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Birth Date (DD/MM/YY) \_\_\_\_\_

21. Country of Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

SEP 13 2006  
D/S  
J1

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION  
ADMITTED  
DHS

CBP Form I-94

Paper I-94 (front)

Warning: A nonimmigrant who accepts unauthorized employment is subject to deportation.

Important: Return this permit to your processor, **not mail** regardless if when you leave the U.S. Failure to do so may delay your entry into the U.S. in the future. You are authorized to stay in the U.S. only until the date written on this form. To remain past this date, without permission from Department of Homeland Security authorities, is a violation of the law.

**Surrender this permit when you leave the U.S.:**

- By sea or air: In the Transportation Lane.
- Across the Canadian border, to a Canadian Official.
- Across the Mexican border, to a U.S. Official.

Students planning to reenter the U.S. within 30 days to return to the same school, see "Arrival-Departure" on page 2 of Form I-20 prior to surrendering this permit.

**Record of Changes**

Part: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Record

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_

Flight # / Ship Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Paper I-94 (back)

# Photocopies of all previous OPT and CPT I-20s

- Include copies of all previous I-20s at UVA and previous institutions
- Old and new versions of the I-20 are acceptable
- Copy all pages except the instruction page
- Keep original for your records

U.S. Department of Justice  
 Immigration and Naturalization Service

Condition of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Status  
 Form I-20 For Academic and Language Students (FORM I-20) (11-01-01)

Page 1

Please read Instructions on Page 2  
 This page must be completed and submitted to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

1. Identify these locations:

For the sponsor (name)	Address (name)	For the nonimmigrant (name)	Address (name)
Country of birth	City or town/village/post office	Country of birth	City or town/village/post office
Country of citizenship	Postal code	Country of citizenship	Postal code

2. Information of the institution to be attended:  
 Name of institution: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY  
 Department: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY  
 School: School of Public Health  
 Address: 1111 California Hall  
 City: Berkeley, CA 94720-7100  
 Telephone: (415) 848-2100  
 Fax: (415) 848-2100  
 E-mail: berkeley@california.edu

3. This condition is based on the student's record at the institution named above. The student's attendance at this institution is required for the student to remain in the United States.

4. The student's record at the institution named above is based on the student's record at the institution named above. The student is required to report to the school no later than 15 days before the start of the school year. The school's record is based on the student's record at the institution named above.

5. This school certifies the student's average grade for an academic year is:

a. Excellent and Honors	0	100.00%
b. Very Good	0	100.00%
c. Good	0	100.00%
d. Other category	0	100.00%

6. School enrollment:  
 a. Full-time enrollment: 100%  
 b. Part-time enrollment: 0%

7. This school certifies the student's average grade for an academic year is:

a. Excellent and Honors	0	100.00%
b. Very Good	0	100.00%
c. Good	0	100.00%
d. Other category	0	100.00%

8. School enrollment:  
 a. Full-time enrollment: 100%  
 b. Part-time enrollment: 0%

9. School enrollment:  
 a. Full-time enrollment: 100%  
 b. Part-time enrollment: 0%

10. Student Certification: I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of this admission and those of page 2. I certify that all information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I understand the consequences of providing false information.

11. Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Signature of institution: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department of Homeland Security  
 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Condition of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status  
 (FORM I-20) (11-01-01)

SEVIS ID: 0

STUDENT/PRIMARY NAME	SIVEN NAME	CLASS
PREPARED NAME	PARENT NAME	F-1
COUNTRY OF BIRTH	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE
DATE OF BIRTH	SEVIS NUMBER	
UNIVERSITY NAME	SCHOOL NAME	

SCHOOL INFORMATION

SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL ADDRESS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY	Berkeley International Offices, Berkeley, CA 94720
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY	
SEVIS OFFICE TO CONTACT FOR ADVICE	SEVIS CODE AND APPROVAL DATE
International Student & Scholar Advisor	1901 1901000000
	17 January 2010

PROGRAM OF STUDY

PROGRAM LEVEL	MAJOR I	MAJOR II
POSTGRADUATE	PH.D./M.A. IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNMENT	PH.D. IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
PROGRAM LENGTH	24 Months	24 Months
PROGRAM START DATE	19 JANUARY 2010	19 JANUARY 2010
PROGRAM END DATE	19 DECEMBER 2012	19 DECEMBER 2012

FINANCIALS

UNEXPECTED EXPENSE COSTS FOR 12 MONTHS	STUDENT'S FINANCIAL PLAN FOR 12 MONTHS
Callison and Room	PAID/TO BE PAID
Callison Expenses	2 10,000
Department of Anthropology (2)	2 10,000
Insurance	2 10,000
Medical	2 10,000
Other	2 10,000

REMARKS

SCHOOL ATTESTATION

I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was correct when I signed this form and is true and correct. I understand this form is the United States official record of the student's status and is subject to review by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. I understand that the student's status is subject to review by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. I understand that the student's status is subject to review by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. I understand that the student's status is subject to review by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

SIGNATURE OF Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF Institution: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# OPT Mini-Series

Section 1: Eligibility & Intro to OPT

Section 2: OPT Checklist

**Section 3: How to Complete I-765**

Section 4: Application Requirements

Section 5: Responsibilities During OPT





# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Part 3: How to Complete I-765

International Studies Office  
[lssp.virginia.edu](http://lssp.virginia.edu)

# I-765

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**IMPORTANT:** Download the [I-765](#) from the [USCIS website](#). Use the current version. It's best to download the form just before mailing the application since USCIS updates it frequently.

## How to fill out Form I-765

- Review I-765 instructions on [USCIS webpage](#)
- Page 3, #27 use code (c)(3)(B) for Post-Completion OPT
- Type within the Form. Sign in wet ink.
- Answer all questions fully and accurately.
- If a question does not apply to you, type or print “N/A” or “None”
- Print and complete all pages.
- Contact ISO with any questions.

# OPT Mini-Series

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# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Part 4: OPT Application Requirements

International Studies Office  
[lssp.virginia.edu](http://lssp.virginia.edu)

# The Application Deadline

- USCIS must receive your complete OPT application **no later than 30 days** after the OPT I-20 issue date on page 1.
  - The issue date is located next to the advisor's signature on page 1 of the OPT I-20. Please account for mailing time.
- Additionally, USCIS must receive your application before the end of your 60-day grace period.
- Track the status of your mailed application to be certain it was delivered on time.

**We recommend that you apply early.**

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status  
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: **N**

SUBNAME/PRIMARY NAME	GIVEN NAME	CLASS <b>F-1</b> ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE
PREFERRED NAME	PASSPORT NAME	
COUNTRY OF BIRTH	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	
DATE OF BIRTH	ADMISSION NUMBER	
FORM ISSUE REASON CONTINUED ATTENDANCE	LEGACY NAME	

**SCHOOL INFORMATION**

SCHOOL NAME University of California at Berkeley University of California at Berkeley	SCHOOL ADDRESS Berkeley International Office, Berkeley, CA 94720
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & Scholar Advisor	SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE 89021#F00012000 27 JANUARY 2003

**PROGRAM OF STUDY**

EDUCATION LEVEL DOCTORATE	MAJOR I Political Science and Government, General 40.1002	MAJOR II None 00.5000
NORMAL PROGRAM LENGTH 48 Months	PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient
PROGRAM START DATE 01 JANUARY 2014	PROGRAM END DATE 18 DECEMBER 2015	

**FINANCIALS**

ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR: 12 MONTHS		STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR: 12 MONTHS	
Tuition and Fees	\$ 30,860	Personal Funds	\$ 0
Living Expenses	\$ 18,000	Dept. Support	\$ 48,503
Expenses of Dependents (0)	\$ 0	Funds From Another Source	\$ 0
Other	\$ 0	In-Campus Employment	\$ 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 48,860</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 48,503</b>

**REMARKS**

**SCHOOL ATTESTATION**

I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school prior to the submission of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to sign this form.

SIGNATURE OF: International Student      **DATE ISSUED: 03 October 2015**      PLACE ISSUED: Berkeley, CA

**STUDENT ATTESTATION**

I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of my extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I will enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information they may need to DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.5(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.

SIGNATURE OF: \_\_\_\_\_      DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN      SIGNATURE      ADDRESS (city/state or previous country)      DATE

ICE Form I-20 (3/31/2015) Page 1 of 3

# Mailing your application to USCIS

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ISO strongly recommends using an express carrier such as FedEx or UPS to deliver your OPT application.

**Always check USCIS for the most up-to-date mailing address**

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses>

**FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:**

**USCIS**

**Attn: I-765 C03**

**131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor**

**Chicago, IL 60603-5517**

# I-797 Notice of Action & USCIS Case Tracking

- You will receive an I-797 Notice of Action in the mail within 2-4 weeks after mailing your OPT application to USCIS.
- Visit <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus> to check your case status

## CASE STATUS ONLINE

Use this tool to track the status of an immigration application, petition, or request.

Enter a Receipt Number ?

CHECK STATUS

[PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT](#)

- You can track the status of your OPT application with your receipt number on your I-797. **DO NOT LOSE YOUR I-797.** Make a copy for your records and keep in a safe place.
- Verify your name, date of birth and address on your I-797 receipt notice. If incorrect, please contact the USCIS service center listed on your I-797.

# Application Problems – RFE or Rejection/Denial

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## **Request for Evidence (RFE)**

If there is a problem with your application, USCIS may send you a notice by mail. An RFE does not mean that your application has been rejected. It simply means that you need to send in additional documents before your EAD can be issued. Getting an RTI will delay the processing of your application. Contact the International Studies Office immediately so we may assist you with your application.

## **Rejection/Denial**

In some cases, if too many items are missing from your application, USCIS will return the entire application to you. If this happens, you must make the corrections and send the application before the end date of your 60-day grace period. Contact the International Studies Office immediately so we may assist you with your application.

**To avoid delays, review your application materials carefully for completeness and sign all the forms before mailing to USCIS.**

# The Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

- Review card to make sure the information is accurate. If not, contact an ISO advisor.
- Present your EAD to employers as proof of your legal work authorization in the United States.
- The EAD is a required document for entry to the U.S. during OPT.



# OPT Mini-Series

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Section 2: OPT Checklist

Section 3: How to Complete I-765

Section 4: Application Requirements

**Section 5: Responsibilities During OPT**





# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Part 5: Responsibilities During OPT

International Studies Office  
[lssp.virginia.edu](http://lssp.virginia.edu)



# Your Responsibilities During OPT

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1. Reporting Requirements
2. Employment Requirements
3. Travel Documents for Re-entry
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# SEVP Portal

- The Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has its own “[SEVP Portal](#)” for students on OPT and OPT STEM. You will receive an email with instructions on how to create an account.
- You are required to report any changes in address or employment through the portal within 10 days of change.
- If you are unable to access SEVP Portal, please report employment on ISSP Connect using the “OPT Employment Update” form.

## Sign In

Attention: Only students who have OPT approved may use the SEVP Portal. You must create an account and set a password before using this log in page. Go to [Portal Help](#) for more information.

Email

Password

[Login](#)

[Reset Password](#)

*Login page for the [OPT Portal](#)*

**Beware of scams! SEVP will never ask you for payment to register for the SEVP Portal.**

# Employment Requirements

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- You must work a minimum of 20 hours per week in a position related to your field of study.
- **You cannot exceed more than 90 days of unemployment while on OPT.** Days of unemployment prior to your EAD start date do not count towards the 90 days of unemployment. It is your responsibility to keep record of your employment history and any periods of unemployment.

# Travel Documents for Re-entry to United States

Documents	Before Completing Program and Before EAD Issuance	After Completing Program and Before EAD Issuance	After Completing Program and After EAD Issuance
Valid Passport	✓	✓	✓
Valid F-1 visa stamp (if applicable)	✓	✓	✓
OPT I-20 with valid travel endorsement signed within 6 months by an ISO Advisor	✓	✓	✓
Evidence of continued enrollment (e.g. <a href="#">Enrollment Certificate</a> )	✓		
Evidence of financial support	Strongly recommended	Strongly recommended	Strongly recommended
OPT Receipt: I-797 Notice of Action		✓	✓
Job offer letter from employer		Strongly recommended	✓
EAD (Employment Authorization Document)			✓

# Travel Tips

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- **Avoid long absences from the US during the OPT period. Time spent outside of the US while unemployed by a US employer counts toward your 90 days of unemployment.**
- **Attempting to re-enter the U.S. close to the expiration date of your OPT can be risky.**
- **You must not enter the U.S. in a status other than F-1. This may result in the loss of your OPT eligibility.**

## **Travel after Program Completion, but before OPT Card is received**

- **There is a higher risk associated with travel and return while your OPT is pending after the program completion date. If there are any problems with your application, you may not be able to respond to USCIS in a timely manner, which could delay processing of your EAD.**
- **If your OPT application is denied while outside the US, you will not be able to re-enter the US in F-1 status and will not be able to reapply.**

# Applying for F-1 Visa on OPT

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If you are traveling abroad and your F-1 visa has expired, you must obtain a new F-1 visa before returning to the U.S. When going to your visa interview, bring the documents below.

- **Valid Passport**
- **Valid I-20 with travel endorsement from UVA ISO Advisor within the past 6 months from the date of return to U.S.**
- **Unexpired EAD Card**
- **Job offer letter or proof of current employment directly related to your field of study**
- **Evidence of sufficient funds (e.g. a bank statement, a letter from sponsor or a job offer letter)**

# Options After Post-Completion OPT



## Further Education

OPT is granted once per degree level. OPT STEM can be granted twice, but only once per degree level. Outside of employment, you can remain in the United States by pursuing a new degree program.



## OPT STEM Extension

If you are in a STEM program, you are eligible for an additional **2 years** of employment. Apply **90 days** before your OPT authorization expires. Visit [issp.virginia.edu](http://issp.virginia.edu) for more information.



## Change Your Status

Examples: Change of status to H1b through employer, or change of status to F-2 through spouse. Contact an immigration attorney to learn more about other visa types to remain in the United States.



## Depart the United States

After OPT authorization ends, you are permitted **60 days** to remain in the United States, after which you must depart or change your status.

# Resources

## ISO Website

- <https://issp.virginia.edu/f-1-optional-practical-training-opt>

## ISSP Connect

- [Connect.issp.virginia.edu](https://connect.issp.virginia.edu)
- OPT Application
- Make an appointment with an ISO Advisor

## USCIS Website

- <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

## Email

- [issp@virginia.edu](mailto:issp@virginia.edu)