## **Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) Information and Authorization Form**

Optional Practical Training is an opportunity for F-1 visa to gain one year of practical work experience in their major fields of study. This information sheet is for F-1 students who wish to apply for a period of Optional Practical Training prior to the end of their degree program. If you wish to apply for <u>Post-Completion</u> OPT, please contact the International Office.

### **Required documents**

A complete OPT application will include the following:

- 1. Form I-765: Application for Employment Authorization
  - Download this form from <a href="http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf">http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf</a>
  - ➤ If possible, type the form I-765 online and print it so the optical scanner will recognize all characters.
  - At item #16, write (c) (3) (A) for pre-completion OPT.
  - List an address where you can receive mail for the next 4 months. If you do not know where you'll be living, you may list the International Office as your mailing address.
  - Sign the form I-765 in <u>blue ink</u>, and be sure that the signature at the bottom of the page <u>does not touch the</u> line.
- 2. **Form G-1145:** E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
  - Download this form from http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf
  - > By submitting this form, you will receive an email or text when your application has been received.
- 3. Two passport-sized **photographs** (available at most drug stores)
  - You must submit two identical color photographs of yourself taken within 30 days of filing your application. They must have a white to off-white background, be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish, and not be mounted or retouched. The passport-style photos must be 2" by 2". They must be in color with full face, frontal view. Head height should measure 1" to 1 3/8" from top to bottom of chin, and eye height is between 1 1/8" to 1 3/8" from bottom of photo. Your head must be bare unless you are wearing a headdress as required by a religious order of which you are a member.
  - ➤ Using pencil or felt-tip pen, lightly print your name and your admission (I-94) number, if known, on the back of each photo.
- 4. Photocopy of your valid **passport**
- 5. Photocopy of your **F-1 Visa** or **Change of Status Authorization**
- 6. Photocopy of both sides of your **I-94 card**
- 7. Photocopies of all **previous forms I-20**
- 8. Photocopy of your **most recent EAD** (only if you previously have been authorized by USCIS for off-campus employment)
- 9. Record of all previous periods of **Curricular Practical Training** (provided by the International Office)
- 10. **Application fee** in the amount of \$380
  - > Payment in the form of a personal check is preferred, but you can use a bank check or money order if necessary.
  - Make check payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security." Do not abbreviate the payee information!
- 11. New form **I-20**, prepared for Pre-Completion OPT.
  - ➤ This new I-20 will be issued at your OPT meeting.
  - You will sign the I-20 on page 1 in blue ink; The DSO will sign on pages 1 and 3.
- 12. **OPT Acknowledgment form** 
  - This form must be completed by you. You may wish to discuss the date section at your OPT meeting.
  - > This form is for North Park's use only; you will not send it with your OPT application.
- 13. Optional Practical Training Authorization Form
  - > This form must be completed by your academic advisor prior to your OPT meeting. The program completion date must be an exact date (month/day/year), but it might not be the same date as your graduation date.
  - This form is for North Park's use only; you will not send it with your OPT application.

#### **General information about Pre-Completion OPT**

- Employment while on OPT must be directly related to your major field of study.
- You are eligible for pre-completion OPT after one year in F-1 status.
- OPT gives you permission to seek employment. You are not required to have a job when applying for OPT.
- A total of 12 months of OPT is available for each academic level. Days of pre-completion OPT will be deducted at ½ time from the days of available post-completion OPT. (For example, if you are granted 200 days of pre-completion OPT, you will only be allowed to apply for 265 days of post-completion OPT (365-100), not a full year.)
- You must remain enrolled in full-time coursework during the period of pre-completion OPT.
- If you have completed one year or more of full-time CPT during the degree program, you are not eligible for OPT.
- Application must take place in cooperation with the International Office. It is not possible to apply for OPT without a new I-20 from the DSO and recommendation in SEVIS.
- You must apply for OPT with US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); receipt of OPT is not guaranteed.

#### **Applying for OPT**

- Your responsibilities during the OPT application process:
  - o Attend an OPT workshop or otherwise familiarize yourself with OPT processes and requirements.
  - o Schedule a 30 minute OPT appointment with the International Office.
  - o Collect all required documents and bring them to the OPT appointment.
  - o Submit all documents to USCIS in a timely fashion.
- International Office responsibilities during the OPT application process:
  - o Provide OPT workshops to educate students on OPT processes and requirements.
  - o Meet with students to prepare Forms I-20 for the purpose of OPT application.
  - o Review all documents and make a copy for the student's file.

### **Submitting the OPT application**

You must file the OPT application within 30 days of the date when an International Office staff member recommends OPT in SEVIS. Allow extra days for shipping so your application is received on time. If you are just completing your first year in F-1 status, you may apply for pre-completion OPT up to 90 days before the completion of your first year.

Use the following address when sending by US Postal Service:	Use the following address when sending by mail service (FedEx or UPS):
USCIS P. O. Box 21281 Phoenix AZ 85036	USCIS Attn: AOS 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S Suite 100
**If mailing by USPS use Certified Mail so you will receive a receipt of delivery.	Phoenix, AZ 85034 Phone: 800-375-5283

#### **After Applying for OPT**

- You can expect the OPT application process to take up to four months. You may track the status of your application by entering your receipt number at <a href="https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do">https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do</a>.
- If your application is approved, USCIS will send you an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). The EAD contains your photo and shows the beginning and ending dates of eligible employment. You may begin work only after you receive the EAD. As soon as you receive the EAD, please bring the card to the International Office so it can be photocopied for your file.

#### **OPT Employment Guidelines**

- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) gives specific guidelines about the nature of employment you may have while on OPT. OPT employment must be related to your major field of studies; you may work a maximum of 20 hours per week on pre-completion OPT. Types of employment may include:
  - **Multiple employers**—student may work for more than one employer, but all work must be related to student's degree.
  - Short-term multiple employers (gigs)—performing arts student may complete several gigs. Maintain a list of all employers, dates, and duration of the gigs, and be prepared to provide evidence of all gigs.
  - Work for hire—an individual provides a service based on a contractual, rather than an employment, relationship. Students must keep records and be prepared to show the duration of the contract periods and the name/address of the contracting company.
  - Self-employed business owner—students on OPT may start a business and be self-employed, and work
    in this case must be full time. The student must prove that he/she has proper business licenses and is
    engaged in a business related to his/her degree.
  - o **Employment through an agency**—students who choose this option must be able to prove they worked an average of at least 20 hours/week while employed by the agency.
- SEVP recommends that students maintain evidence for each job concerning the position held, the duration of the position, job title/description, and supervisor contact information. If it is not clear from the job description that the work is in the student's field of studies, SEVP highly recommends that the student request a signed letter from the employer, stating how the student's degree is related to the work performed.

#### **Reporting Requirements**

All students on OPT are required to report their activities to the North Park International Office. Students must report any of the following within 10 days: new job, end of job, multiple short-term gigs, work for hire, start of a new self-employed business, end of a self-employed business, change in U.S. home address, or decision to leave the U.S. prior to the end date of OPT. The DSO will immediately add the information to the student's SEVIS record.

# Acknowledgment of Optional Practical Training Responsibilities

To the F-1 student: This acknowledgment form is part of your application for Optional Practical Training. Please fill in your name, your NPU ID number, and the start and end dates and proposed employment for OPT. If you are not sure about dates or employment, an International Office staff member will help you fill out this information. Be sure to sign and date the form, and provide a current email address.

To be	completed by the student:	
Stude	ent's Name:	NPU ID#
Reque	ested OPT Start and End Dates: From	to
Propo	osed OPT Employment	
(If you	osed OPT Employment already have a job offer, write the employer's name here. d of" and list your degree field.)	If you do not already have a job offer, write "work in
	ning this form, I acknowledge that I have applied for Option, Illinois. I have been advised of the following OPT regu	
<ul><li>2.</li><li>3.</li><li>4.</li><li>5.</li></ul>	OPT in SEVIS. Use of pre-completion OPT will limit my use of OPT for	that OPT is not guaranteed. the date when the International Office (IO) recommended llowing graduation. I understand that the number of days half-rate from the one year maximum of post-completion ast provide the IO with a copy of the card. ges to my personal contact information or employment
7.	Any work I undertake during OPT must be directly related	ed to my major field of study.
	y that all information provided on this form and in my OP listed regulations.	T application is correct. I agree to comply with the
Signatu	ıre:	Date:
Email /	Address:	

# **Authorization for Optional Practical Training**

To the F-1 international student: This authorization form is part of your application for Optional Practical Training. Complete the top part of this form yourself, and complete the bottom portion with your academic advisor. You must bring the signed form to the International Office before your OPT application can be processed.

Name:	NPU ID #:
Proposed OPT Employment:(If you already have a job offer, write write "work in the field of	the employer's name here. If you do not already have a job offer
To be completed by the student's acad	lemic advisor, department chair, or school dean:
• The above named student is a cano	didate for a (check one):
<ul><li>Bachelor's Degree</li><li>Master's Degree</li></ul>	
1 0	ing degree:, Master of Nonprofit Administration, etc.)
_	tanding and is making normal progress toward the completion of ed to complete her or his studies on:
-	ay not be the date of graduation ceremonies.)
Advisor's Name:	
Advisor's Title:	
Advisor's Signature	Date: