



**ARKANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY**

International Student Services

PO Box 2230, State University AR 72467

Phone: 870-972-2329

www.astate.edu/international

OPT Timeline: Review the rules and regulations about when to start OPT on the A-State International Programs website

A. Program completion date _____

B. 60 days after program completion date _____

I would like to request my OPT begin on _____

***OPT may start any time between the dates indicated in Line A and Line B. The start date may not be earlier than Line A and not later than Line B.**

	<u>Completed</u>
Read all rules and regulations on the ASU International Programs website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pay \$100 Initial OPT Fee through Marketplace: https://secure.touchnet.net/C20019_ustores/web/store_main.jsp?STOREID=11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sign and date Acknowledgment of OPT Rules form	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete the ASU OPT Request Form	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete Form I-765 (www.uscis.gov , click on "Forms")	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete Form G-1145 (www.uscis.gov , click on "Forms")	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtain 2 passport style photos and write name on back with pencil. Passport photos must have been taken in the past 30 days. 2X2 in size.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Payment- G-1450, personal check or money order to U.S. Department of Homeland Security for \$410.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make copies of all immigration documents (I-94, visa, passport, two previous I-20's)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email Student Immigration Specialist to make an appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Request for Optional Practical Training Recommendation Form

Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 students is intended to provide hands-on practical work experience complimentary to their academic program. An F-1 student (excluding ESL) is eligible for a maximum of 12 months of OPT. This benefit is available to students who have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one academic year. The practical training sought by the student must be directly related to his or her current field of study and commensurate with his or her current education level.

Name _____

A-State # _____

Current address _____

Level of study Bachelor's Master's Doctorate

Major as indicated on I-20 _____

Expected Date of Graduation (completion of course of study) _____

Applying for:

- Pre-completion OPT STEM Extension
 Post-completion OPT Cap Gap Extension

Are you Required to do Thesis or Dissertation Work (for relevant majors) _____

Proposed OPT Start Date _____ End Date _____ Full Time/Part Time _____

*See checklist on how to calculate start date



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List all periods of previously authorized employment for practical training (if applicable)

Curricular Practical Training

Example: Full Time, Jan/1/2018-Jan/1/2019

Optional Practical Training

Example: Part Time, Jan/1/2017-May/1/2017

Signature of Student _____

Date _____



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Post Completion OPT Rules and Regulations

1. Who is eligible to apply for post completion (standard) OPT?

-F-1 student who has been enrolled in a bachelor's, masters or doctoral program for at least 1 academic year.

-Students engaged in full time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for one year are not eligible for OPT.

-English as Second Language students (ESL) are not eligible to apply for OPT.

-Students are eligible to split OPT between two consecutive degree levels as long as they have not applied and been approved for all their OPT on the first degree level. Students who move to a higher educational level forfeit the OPT at the previous level.

2. When should I apply?

Students may apply no earlier than 90 days before the program completion date. The Student Immigration Advisor will set the program completion date as the graduation date. Students' OPT application must be received by USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) no later than 60 days after the program completion date. Students should keep in mind that USCIS can take 60-120 days or longer to approve work authorization.

3. How do I apply for OPT?

Students should complete the OPT checklist located on the A-State International Student Services website. Once all steps are completed the student should make an appointment with the Immigration Advisor to request OPT. All documents should be brought to the meeting.



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Incomplete application or missing documents will require the student to reschedule the meeting until they have completed application packet.

4. What is my "program completion date"?

A student is considered "finished" by immigration regulations when they have finished all coursework necessary for program completion (excluding thesis, dissertation or equivalent). The DSO usually sets the program completion date as the day of graduation. Students are considered finished whether or not they walk at the graduation ceremony.

5. What if I still have to do thesis or take my comprehensive exam?

Students who have completed all coursework necessary for graduation (including internships) but are required to do thesis, dissertations hours or equivalent (such as a comprehensive exam) may choose to apply for pre-completion or post-completion OPT.

A. Pre-Completion OPT:

- Students must still be registered in full time hours according to their status (registering for or dissertation hours)
- Students will follow the same procedures to apply for OPT through USCIS

Advantages of doing OPT as Pre-Completion:

- Unemployment is not counted towards the 90 days of unemployment requirement
- Students have the flexibility to change their program end date as they define thesis.
- Students are allowed to work full time.



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Disadvantages of doing OPT as Pre-Completion

- Students are not eligible for the 24 month STEM Extension.
- Students are not eligible for the cap-gap extension.
- When students complete their thesis or dissertation work, they will have to apply again for post-completion OPT. This can cause a gap in work between pre-completion OPT and post completion OPT.

B. Post-Completion OPT

- Students who choose this option should confer with their academic advisor to understand if they will be conferred a degree if their thesis or dissertation has not been completed. By not being conferred a degree, students may have difficulty finding jobs.

Advantages of doing OPT as Post-Completion

- Students can work full time
- Students can apply for STEM Extension if degree is applicable
- Students are eligible for the cap-gap extension

Disadvantages of doing OPT as Post-Completion

- Unemployment is counted towards the 90 days of unemployment requirement.
- Students cannot change their program of study date. This means if the student has completed opt but he/she has not finished his/her thesis.



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6. What kind of work can I do while on OPT? Do I have to have a job offer before I apply?

No offer of employment is required to apply for OPT. Students may secure employment in a job that is directly related to their field of study. If a student works multiple jobs, all jobs must be directly related to the field of study.

Types of employment allowed:

- Regular paid employee:** Must work at least 20 hours per week.
- Contracted employment:** Must provide proof of contracts, times and duration.
- Self-employed business owner:** Must work full-time, have proper business licenses and the business must be directly related to the student's field of study.
- Employment through an agency:** Must provide proof they have worked 20 hours per week at the agency.
- Volunteering or Internships:** Allowed as long as labor laws are not compromised. Must work at least 20 hours per week. May use this option to stay in status if having difficulty finding paid employment.
- Multiple employers (such as artists, musicians etc.):** Must keep a detailed list of all employment. Allowed 10 days between paid performances or work in between multiple employers.



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7. When can I start working?

Students can only begin work after they have received the Employment Authorization Card (the EAD card) for USCIS. Students may not begin working until the start date on the card has commenced even though if they receive the card early.

8. How do I choose a start date?

The student should choose a date that is at least 1 day after the program completion date and up to 60 days after the program completion date. Students should keep in mind that USCIS processing times and the job search process when choosing a start date.

9. What if I can't find a job right away?

Students on post completion OPT cannot exceed 90 days of continuously accrued unemployment. Students who are outside the US and not working also accrue days of unemployment. Students who exceed the allotted days of unemployment may be considered out of status and can lose future F-1 benefits. Students who switch jobs are allowed 10 days of unemployment between jobs that do not count towards accruing unemployment.



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10. How long can I work while on OPT?

Students are allowed 365 days of employment. If a student engaged in pre-completion OPT, this counts against the total days available for post completion OPT.

11. Do I have to let the school know when I find a job?

Yes. Students must provide the DSO with the employer's name, address, and other relevant information. Students must also report any changes in employment within 10 days of the change. In addition, students must also report their current residential address. If a student moves, they must report the move within 10 days. Students **must** use the OPT Reporting form found on the university's website.

12. What if I want to travel outside of the United States?

If a student has filed the I-765 but have not been approved yet for OPT, travel outside of the US is permitted but not recommended. The student must carry their I-797 Receipt Notice, valid/signed I-20, passport, visa and other relevant immigration documents. If a student is approved while outside of the US, they cannot re-enter unless they have a job offer and have received the EAD card.



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If a student has applied for OPT and been approved, travel outside of the US is also permitted. The student must carry the EAD card, valid/signed I-20, passport, visa and employment offer letter. If a student has been approved for OPT but does not have a job offer, they cannot re-enter the United States.

13. What is a STEM Extension?

Students who graduated from A-State with a degree in Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics are eligible for a one-time 24 month extension of their OPT status. Majors must have the appropriate CIP code associated with the major as defined by the Department of Homeland Security and the Arkansas Higher Education Board. It has to be an e-verified employer.

14. What happens when I'm finished with OPT?

Students have 60 days after the end of their OPT to do one of the following:

- Transfer to a new school and receive a new I-20. The start of the new school may not be more than 5 months from the end of OPT.
- Leave the United States.
- Start a new program at the current university and receive a new I-20.

If a student does not do one of the above 3 things, after 60 days the students record will automatically terminate itself. The student will then be considered out of status and will have to file for reinstatement.



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Optional Practical Training I-765 Form Instructions

Revised: January 2019

Students can find the most current I-765 form at www.uscis.gov Click on “Forms”, scroll down to form and select I-765 “Application of Employment Authorization”. Below are the most common questions students have while filling out the form.

Instructions to Complete the I-765 Form (numbers on this sheet correspond with the numbers on the I- 765 form)

3. Provide the address you would like your EAD card to be mailed or relevant issues regarding your OPT application. Please note that #3 has two spaces. The first space is for street address and apartment #, the second space is for the town or city, the state and country, and the zip code. This must be an address you can receive mail after you graduate so make sure you put an address that will work once you graduate.

Example: 2222 Johnson Avenue, Apt #D7
 Jonesboro AR 72401

8. This is found on your printed I-94 record. It is the 11 digit number found on top of it.

9. You will leave this blank unless you have an on-line account with USCIS already.



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15. USCIS and the Social Security Administration now work together to issue Social Security cards at time of applying for EAD card. If you already have one, skip this question. If not, fill out the corresponding information.

17. Place of your Last Arrival or Entry into U.S.-

You will need to put the airport abbreviation of your last port of entry into the United States. Ex. NYC, LAX, HOU, DAL

20. Eligibility Category-

If you are applying for:

- Pre-Completion OPT your code is (C) (3) (A)

- -Completion OPT your code is (C) (3) (B)

- For STEM Extension your code is (C) (3) (C)

Link to Form on www.uscis.gov:

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



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Optional Practical Training

G-1145 Form

Revised: January 2019

G-1145:

E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance

Link to form on www.uscis.gov:

<https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>



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Optional Practical Training

G-1450

The G-1450 is a form for students to pay fees for any USCIS form through a USCIS Lockbox. There is no additional fee to use it and the information is destroyed after the amount is deducted from the credit card.

Instructions on how to use it and link to the form through www.uscis.gov :

<https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450>



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Acknowledgement of OPT Rules

I, _____ acknowledge that as an F-1 student on Post Completion OPT I agree to abide by the following rules and regulations:

- Report any changes in personal information such as name, address or immigration status to the OIP within 10 days of the change occurring.
- Report employer's information including company name, address, position title and dates of employment.
- Begin employment only when the EAD card has been received and the start date has commenced. Employment may not go past the end date indicated on the EAD
- Engage only in employment that is directly related to the major and degree received at ASU. If employed in multiple jobs, they must all be related to the major.
- Unemployment cannot exceed 90 days total for the duration of OPT. If changing jobs, a period of 10 days or less is allowed between the end of one job and the start of another in which it will not be counted toward the days of unemployment.
- At the completion of OPT, a 60 day grace period is allowed in which to start a new program, transfer schools or depart the US.

I understand that this is not an exhaustive list of rules and regulations related to my immigration status. By signing below, I agree that I have read the rules and regulations related to post-completion OPT and understand the laws that will affect me. I understand that while on OPT I am still considered an F-1 student and must comply with immigration regulations related to F-1 status.

Signature

Date