

PURDUE

UNIVERSITY
CALUMET

Optional Practical Training Certification

To be completed by the student:

Name _____ Student ID # _____

Major _____ Email Address _____

By signing below, I understand that:

*With Optional Practical Training (OPT), I must work in a position related to my major

*I must request OPT prior to the completion of all course requirements or prior to the completion of my plan of study

Student Signature _____ Date _____

To be completed by the student's academic advisor:

The student who is listed above wished to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT provides authorization for F-1 students to be employed in a job related to their major field of study. A job offer is not required before the application. We ask that you complete the following information to allow us to recommend this student for OPT.

*What is the expected date the student will complete all degree requirements?

(This date is not necessarily the graduation date. For graduate students, it could be the date they defend or deposit their thesis.)

(month/day/year) _____

Advisor's Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name and Title _____ Phone Number _____

Commonly Asked Questions About Applying For Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What is Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

OPT is available to F-1 visa holding students who are lawfully enrolled in an accredited university on a full time basis and have been for at least one full academic year. An eligible F-1 visa student may request OPT in order to work in a position, which is directly related to his/her major area of study. OPT does not require a job offer before the application.

When should I apply for OPT?

You should submit your OPT application approximately 4 months before completion of your course work. It is critical that you do not apply for OPT until your completion date is certain. This will be the new ending date on your I-20. If you do not complete by the date indicated by your advisor and you are an undergraduate student or a graduate student non-thesis option you may not begin your OPT. If you are a graduate student you may start your OPT only if you have completed all of the course requirements.

What documents do I need to apply?

- Valid, non-expired passport
- Copy of passport picture, identification, expiration date, visa page, copy of I-94 (front & back)
- Form I-20 (and all previously issued I-20s)
- Form I-538 (Complete only section A)
- Form I-765
- Optional Practical Training Certification (completed by your academic advisor, department head, or dean)

Should I send my application in the regular mail?

We recommend that you pay extra to have your application sent certified mail, post office express, or another service that allows you to track or confirm that your application has been received by the INS. Remember, you cannot send your application by Federal Express or DHL. These services will not send mail to a post office box.

How can I check on the status of my application?

When the INS sends your receipt notice in a month to six weeks, you will have a receipt number, which begins with the letters "LIN". You can use this "LIN number" to access information about your application by calling the INS phone number in this letter. Unfortunately, this line is almost always busy, and you will have to be very patient and call many times in order to get through. This receipt notice also includes an estimate of the amount of time it will take for your form to be processed. This estimate is usually inaccurate. Check with the International Counselor for the latest information about processing times. If it has been more than 90 days since the "receipt date" listed on your receipt notice, you may be able to obtain a temporary EAD in the regional INS office. Contact the Counselor to determine whether this special provision is in effect. *You are not eligible to work until you have received the EAD card.*

Will I be able to travel outside of the U.S. while I'm on OPT?

In order to re-enter the U.S. after you have completed your program of study, you must have an I-20 that has been signed by the counselor in the past six months *and* your Employment Authorization Document (EAD card). ***You cannot travel without your EAD card.*** If you need a new visa, you should bring your I-20, your EAD card, and a letter from your employer that states the amount you are being paid and the date you are expected back at work. If you do not have a job or have been on OPT for more than 6 months, your chances of being granted a new visa are reduced. Remember, there is never a guarantee that you will get a new visa.

What if I change my mind and want to cancel my application for OPT?

Once you have sent in your application and your EAD card is approved, you cannot cancel your OPT. Even if you only use a few months and then go back to school, you cannot cancel the remaining months of OPT.

If I work on OPT for a year after I finish my Master's Degree and then I go back and get a Ph.D., will I get 12 more months of OPT when I finish my next degree?

Yes, you can now get 12 months after each degree that you complete.

Can I get a continuation of my OPT?

OPT is granted for 12 months. It is not possible to extend this amount of time. If you would like to work for a longer period, ask your employer about the possibility of applying for an H-1B or another temporary work authorization after you begin work. Don't wait until the OPT is over to do this.

Forward any additional questions to Marsha Gordon in the Office of the Graduate School and International Student Services at 989-2257 or in Lawshe 356.