



## Optional Practical Training (OPT) Guide

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F-1 students studying at colleges, universities, conservatories, or seminaries may qualify for practical training, which allows them to engage in temporary employment to gain practical experience in their field of study.

### Who Can Apply?

There are two types of Optional Practical Training:

1. Pre-Completion OPT, prior to the completion of all coursework excluding thesis/dissertation credits. You are eligible if:
  - a) You have been enrolled as a full-time student in valid F-1 status for at least one academic year.
  - b) Your proposed experience (internship, work, practicum, etc.) is directly related to your major field of study.
  - c) You will not be working more than 20 hours per week while school is in session.
2. Post-Completion OPT, after the completion of all necessary coursework excluding thesis or dissertation credits, usually (but not always) after a graduation. You are eligible if:
  - a) You have been lawfully enrolled as a full-time student in valid F-1 status for at least one academic year.
  - b) Your proposed experience (internship, work, practicum, etc.) is directly related to your major field of study.
  - c) You will be working more than 20 hours per week.

### How to Apply?

If you are applying for post-completion OPT, make sure that you have officially registered for graduation or can demonstrate that you are enrolled in only thesis or dissertation hours. If you do not end up graduating as planned, you are still responsible for maintaining your status on OPT and finishing your coursework during your OPT validity period.

Make an appointment with the director of international students and programs to apply for OPT. You must bring all of the following documents:

1. The completed Form I-765 (this is the application for work authorization). Please type the form, as it is a fillable PDF: <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>. For Number 16 – pre-completion OPT is (c)(3)(A); post completion is (c)(3)(B).
2. A copy of your passport biographical page. Your passport cannot be expired.
3. A copy of your most recent U.S. visa.
4. An original check or money order, made out to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for \$380.
5. Two recent 2" x 2" passport-style photos, cut in 2" x 2" squares. Please write your I-94 number in pencil on the back.
6. A copy of the front and back of your I-94 card. If you entered the U.S. after May 2013, go here to print your I-94: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html>. If you have changed your status to F-1, please bring your change of status approval notice.
7. A copy of any previous EAD cards, if you have previously been approved for a work authorization.

You will be given an updated I-20, a copy of which will be included with the application materials.

If you cannot come to the Gainesville campus, please email the director. You will need to send, by email, scans of the above listed documents for the director to look over. Your I-20 will then be mailed to you and you will be responsible for mailing the documents to USCIS.