KU Medical Center Mail Stop 3033, 3901 Rainbow Blvd., Kansas City, KS 66160

International Programs

Optional Practical Training Instructions

Optional practical training (OPT) provides you opportunity for employment experience in your chosen profession for one year. The work must be directly related to your major field of study and appropriate for someone with your level of education.

Authorization for OPT comes from USCIS. The application processing time is typically 90 days. So please apply in advance and allow sufficient time for your application to process. Once approved, USCIS will issue you an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). You can only work within the days listed on your EAD card.

The instructions on the USCIS website show the option of filling electronically. We advise against this. We advise that you file the application through the mail. Electronic filling has not been effective.

Instructions:

Step One: Your advisor must sign the "Recommendation for Optional Practical Training" request form. You can find this form at
http://www.kumc.edu/international/pdf/immigrationpdf/optrecommd.pdf

Step Two: Complete the I-765 application form. Go to www.USCIS.gov under Immigration Forms scroll down to find the I-765. You can download the form and instructions from this site.

Step Three: Contact an advisor in International Programs for an appointment. At this appointment they will review the I-765. They will also create a new OPT I-20 based on the OPT Request Form. If you have questions about the dates you want to choose for OPT, you can discuss during the appointment.

Step Four: Create your application packet for mailing to USCIS. The packet should include:

- ☐ Check or money order for application fee. The fee is listed on the USCIS website.
- ☐ Two (2) passport-size photos. Lightly print your name and I-94# on back of photos, and enclose them in a small plastic bag.
- ☐ Photocopy of your new OPT I-20, pages 1 & 3.
- ☐ Photocopies of all previous I-20s.
- ☐ Photocopy of your I-94 card, front and back
- ☐ Copy of your passport identification pages
- ☐ Copy of your last Employment Authorization Card (EAD), if you were ever issued one

Remember to make a copy of your application for your records before sending it to USCIS.

Send your packet to in a track-able manner using the following address:

U.S. Postal Service:
BCIS Service Center
P.O. Box 87765
Lincoln, NE 68501-7765

Courier Service (e.g., FedEx):
BCIS Service Center
850 "S" Street
Lincoln, NE 68501

A Good Mailing Address

Approval takes 90-120 days. USCIS will confirm the receipt of your application within 2–4 weeks after receipt with the Notice of Action Form I-797. Ensure that you use your current address on the I-765 form, as this is where USCIS will mail all correspondence related to your application. *USCIS does not allow its mail to be forwarded, even if you have a forwarding address filed with the post office.* If you will be moving or changing address during this time period, you can use the OIP address as your mailing address. When notices are received, we will forward them to you or send notice so you can pick them up.

Your Responsibilities under OPT

You continue to be a KUMC sponsored F1 student while on OPT. You must remain in contact with our office. So please provide a personal email address that we can reach you at. Immigration requires that the OIP reports on your status in OPT on a regular basis. We will email you to inquire about your status. If we are unable to contact you, or if you fail to respond, your F-1 immigration status will be changed to "terminated" in the SEVIS system.

You must report all employment to our office. If you change employers you must report the new employment. If you should leave your employment, you must report this change also.

You may not begin work until you have received the EAD **and** the beginning date has arrived. Failure to obtain proper authorization and documentation for employment may result in loss of status and deportation.

Travel Outside the United States

If you must travel ensure that you carry: a current visa; your EAD; your OPT I-20 endorsed for travel; and a letter from your current employer indicating the specifics related to your position and that you will be returning to your employment following travel.

If you do not have a current visa, we advise that you do not leave the US. It may be difficult to obtain an F-1 student visa based solely on your desire to complete OPT. Please consult our office before traveling outside the United States if you plan to re-enter during the course of your OPT.

Continuing your employment after OPT

Depending on your employment and situation there may be several options for you to continue employment in the US. These options currently include: extension of OPT; and, change of status to another status (J-1, H-1B, L-1, TN). Please contact our office, 3 – 4 months prior to your EAD expiration, to determine how you can continue to be legally employed in the US.