

Optional Practical Training Instructions

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

Approval: First, your advisor must sign the “Recommendation for Optional Practical Training” request form. The Office of International Programs must verify your eligibility for OPT prior to your application to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS). If you are eligible, OIP will issue you a new I-20 indicating recommendation for OPT, which you must submit to BCIS with your application.

Mail Method

1. Prepare an application packet with the following forms and information, stapled in the order listed. Remember to make a copy of your application for your records before sending it to BCIS.

- Check or money order for \$180, payable to USCIS
- Two (2) passport-size photos. Lightly print your name and I-94# on back of photos, and enclose them in a small plastic bag.
- Complete Form I-765, available on the BCIS web site:
<http://www.immigration.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/i-765.htm>. The answer to question 16 is **c 3 i**.
- Photocopy of your new OPT I-20, pages 1 & 3. Also include a photocopy 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

2. Send your packet to 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**

3. Approval takes 90-120 days. BCIS 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 BCIS will mail all correspondence related to your application. *BCIS does not allow its mail to be forwarded, even if you have a forwarding address filed with the post office.*

Electronic Method

You may file your application electronically. You can access the electronic application and instructions at <http://www.immigration.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/i-765.htm>. Unfortunately our experience has been that students which file their application in this method have experienced delays in obtaining their EAD card.

Points to Remember: 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.

You are required to report any change of name or address, or disruption of such training to the Office of International Programs for the duration of the authorized training. You are also required to report a change of address to BCIS.

You may change employers after you have begun authorized employment, provided the new job is directly related to your major field of study and appropriate for someone with your level of education.

Travel Outside the United States: It is not advised that you travel while on OPT. If you do so, you may encounter problems with re-entering the US. If you must travel ensure that you carry: 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. To re-enter the United States, you will be required to present your EAD and your current I-20 endorsed for travel by our office. Please consult our office before traveling outside the United States if you plan to re-enter during the course of your OPT.