OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS

IMPORTANT: OPT applications will not be accepted by ISSS unless the student has attended an OPT workshop. Register at usfca.edu/isss/workshops.

The process of applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment authorization begins with submitting an OPT request to the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office in University Center 5th Floor. A complete OPT request consists of the following documents:

☐ Form I-765
☐ OPT Request Form
☐ Your current and old I-20 forms (Copies Page 1 & 2)
☐ Passport (Copy biographical page)
☐ Most recent I-94/Arrival Record (can be obtained at www.cbp.gov/I94)
☐ Advisor Recommendation Form
☐ Missing I-20 Letter (Required if Missing any I-20s)
☐ A photocopy of previous EAD card, if applicable

Additional information about these documents is provided below.

After receipt of a complete OPT request, an ISSS staff member will produce a new Form I-20 for you with a request for OPT noted on Page 2. ISSS requires five business days for processing. We will contact you to pick up the new Form I-20 and application documents, which you must then mail to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Mailing instructions will be provided to you when you pick-up your new OPT Form I-20.

The ISSS office recommends that you begin your OPT request process at least 3 weeks before you want your application to be received by the USCIS.

Completing the Form I-765


Step 2 If this is the first time you are applying for OPT mark “Permission to accept employment.” If you have previously applied for OPT mark “Renewal.”
Step 3  Enter your personal information in Part 2. Make sure your mailing address used will be valid for at least the next six months to receive your EAD card. Government mail will not be forwarded by the postal service if your address changes. If you choose to put a friend or family member’s address, write the person’s name before the street address and make sure you correctly fill out your residential address in addition to the mailing address.

Step 4  If you have ever had an EAD card before then enter the USCIS# or A#. Include a copy of the EAD card in the application.

Step 5  If you already have a Social Security Number (SSN), list it in Part 2 and do not enter your family information in the following fields. If you do not have a SSN, you may apply for one through this OPT application. If you wish to apply for a SSN, indicate that you do not have one and that “yes” you want to apply for one. To apply for an SSN you will need to list your parents’ names.

Step 6  List your 11-digit I-94 number from your online Arrival Record. You can find and print your Arrival Record at www.cpb.gov/i94. Enter your passport number for your valid passport (valid more than 6 months into the future).

Step 7  Enter when and where you last entered the United States and what your current status is. This should be “F-1 Student” unless you last entered the United States in another status and applied for a change of status from within the US.

Step 8  Enter your current SEVIS ID number in the space requesting it. If you have had OPT, CPT or a previous SEVIS ID Number, you will need to list this in Part 6.

Step 9  Enter the correct code for your eligibility category:
- (c) (3) (A) for Pre-Completion OPT
- (c) (3) (B) for Post-Completion OPT
- (c) (3) (C) for 24-month extension for STEM students

Step 10  Part 3 check the box 1a to say that you read and understand the application.

Step 11 Enter your phone number, email address and sign and date.

Step 12 Sign, date, and enter your telephone number.

Step 13 Use Part 3 to enter all previous OPT, CPT and SEVIS ID numbers. You need to include the degree level and if the employment was part-time or full-time. Use the example provided to complete this section.

*Note:* All unanswered questions should be handwritten with “N/A” or “None” to show that this questions does not apply to your case. Use the ISSS example to do this correctly.
Completing the OPT Request Form

Indicate on this form your requested OPT start and end date* and any previous CPT or OPT authorizations. Sign and date both copies of the form—submit one copy of the form to the ISSS office as part of your OPT request.

*For post-completion OPT: your start date can be as early as 1 day after your program end date, and as late as 60 days after your program end date. Your OPT end-date depends on how many months of OPT you have used. If you have not used any OPT, your OPT end date can be 1 full year after the start date. For example: If you choose a start date of 5/30/2019, your latest end date will be 5/29/2020.

Current and Old Form I-20s

Submit all original I-20 forms that have been issued to you by all U.S. schools you have attended. If you have misplaced any of your previous Form I-20s, you may need to contact the school that issued them to you to request a replacement copy.

Once you submit your current and old I-20 forms to the ISSS office, we will make photocopies of the forms and return the originals to you.

If you cannot locate one or more of your previous I-20s, you need to include all previous study and any OPT or CPT in the Previous Study and Employment letter. You need to submit this letter with your application for ISSS to verify that that you are providing this information.

Passport

You will need a clear copy of your biographical page of your passport. ISSS can make this for you if you do not have access to a copier.

Electronic I-94 Record

You need to retrieve and print your Electronic I-94 Record/Arrival Record at www.cpb.gov/I94

Advisor Recommendation Form (see attached sample)

This form must verify your degree program, area of specialization, and expected date of completion*. Your advisor is also requested to state that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the proposed employment involves training that is directly related to your major field of study. The form should have your academic advisor’s original signature.

*Program completion date for undergraduates = last day of the semester in which degree requirements are fulfilled. For graduates, completion is the day on which all degree requirements are fulfilled, such as filing the thesis or dissertation, or, if no thesis or dissertation is required, the date on which all required academic work, including coursework, final projects, presentations, and/or exams, has been finished.

Missing I-20 Letter
Use the ISSS letter template provided to list all previous SEVIS records, and any periods of OPT or CPT. If you have not had a previous SEVIS ID, OPT or CPT, then write “None”. The letter template can be found on the ISSS website: https://myusf.usfca.edu/isss/students/f-1/employment/opt

**Previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) – if applicable**

If you have previously received an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Card, submit a photocopy of the EAD card, or bring the card to the ISSS office and we will make a copy for you.

**Next Steps**

While your application is being reviewed and processed by an ISSS staff member, please prepare:

1) Two color photographs (refer to the attached handout on photograph specifications)

These should be standard passport-size photographs. You may want to bring a copy of the photograph instructions with you to show the photographer. Ask for a small envelope with your photographs so that when you mail them, they do not get lost or damaged. Write your name and I-94 number lightly with a pen or pencil on the backside of each photograph. NOTE: You must get new photos. Do not use photos from a previous visa/passport application. Do not take photos yourself with a phone.

2) Processing fee of $410 (Check or Money order ONLY made payable to the “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”)

Attach payment to the top of your application when mailing to the USCIS. As with any other immigration application fees, this amount is subject to change. Please make sure to check the USCIS web site for the current Form I-765 application filing fee before mailing your payment.

3) Complete Form G-1145 and include on top of OPT application before mailing.

This form is optional but recommended. If you include it with your application you will be emailed when your application is received by USCIS, which means you will have your receipt number for your application sooner and can check the case status online. You can download this form at: http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf