Carnegie Mellon University
SIGN-IN REQUIRED!
Did you Swipe your Student ID Card?
Carnegie Mellon University
OPT Work Permission for F-1 Students

2020 EDITION
OIE OPT Session
Optional Practical Training (OPT)

E-FORMS!
READ THE OPT HANDOUT!

Today we will:

• Outline OPT Basics
• Review Application Process & Timing
• Discuss work options in US after OPT (H-1B, etc.)
• Questions?
Optional Practical Training

OPT = Temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study.

- Types of OPT:
  - Pre-completion
  - Post-completion
  - STEM extension

- Part-time or **Full-time**
  - *Always full-time after completion of requirements for degree*
Practical Considerations

During OPT period:

• You remain in F-1 status

• **OPT is not a status, it is a benefit**

• CMU/OIE still maintains your SEVIS record

• **So you still have reporting requirements to OIE!!**
Employment

What work can you do during Post Completion OPT?

• **Any** – As long as it:
  • *Is related to YOUR field and level of study*
  • *Paid, unpaid, volunteer, contract*
  • *Job title doesn’t matter…*
  • **BUT** the nature of the work *does*

NO JOB OFFER NEEDED to apply for OPT!
Employment

Types of employment that are acceptable while in the initial period of Post-Completion OPT:

- Multiple employers.
- Short-term multiple employers (performing artists).
- Work for hire.
- Self-employed business owner.
- Employment through an agency or consulting firm.
- Paid employment.
- Unpaid employment.*

*A student may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern, where this practice does not violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week for a student on post-completion OPT. A student must be able to provide evidence acquired from the student’s employer to verify that the student worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment.
OPT Usage

• 12 months per advanced degree level
• Can’t have another 12 months of OPT after 2nd Master’s

• Once USCIS grants OPT, you have used the benefit!!
The Application is a Three Step Process

Step 1. Recommendation
- Signed by your advisor & submitted to OIE through the MyOIE Portal

Step 2. New I-20
- Goal: new I-20 with OPT recommendation
- I-20 TIME: 5 to 10 business days at OIE

Step 3. Application
- Mail to USCIS
- Goal: EAD card
- APPROVAL TIME: 3 to 5 months!!
You can only legally work in the U.S. when:

- Have received the EAD Card
- Within valid dates on EAD
If OPT is denied before end of 60 day grace period, it MAY be possible to apply again.

If OPT is denied after 60 day grace period, the benefit is forfeited.
The Application Process has **IMPORTANT Timelines!!**

*NOTE: PhD Students Program End Dates Can Vary*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If You Are Graduating In:</th>
<th>Then Your Program Ends On:</th>
<th>The EARLIEST Your Application MUST Reach USCIS Is:</th>
<th>The LATEST Your Application MUST Reach USCIS Is:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2020</td>
<td>August 11, 2020</td>
<td>May 13, 2020</td>
<td>October 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>December 23, 2020</td>
<td>September 24, 2020</td>
<td>February 21, 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PhD Students: Potential End Dates

• Date of defense
• Date corrections will be completed
• Date you turn in dissertation and committee signs off
• OR Employment start date (if you have completed all your requirements – EXCEPT thesis/dissertation)

PhD students need to apply for Post-OPT no earlier than 90 days before one of the above examples of end dates, and no later than 60 days after that date.
Program End Date Listed On Your OPT I-20 Is The Last Day You Can Work at CMU!
ARE YOU WORKING ON-CAMPUS!!?

Then, if your Program End Date has changed, you **MUST** give a copy of your New OPT I-20 to **CMUWorks and your CMU Department Payroll Administrator!!**

*(ONLY if your Program End Date has changed!!)*

REMEMBER, ALL WORK MUST STOP ON THIS DATE!

Unless – you have an approved EAD card and are within the dates listed on the card!
OPT I-20: The 30 Day Rule!!

• OPT application **must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date your OPT I-20 is issued.**

• Be ready to file when you turn in your request!

• I-20 more than 30 days past issuance date = **OPT DENIED!**
1. Login to your MyOIE Portal Account
MyOIE Portal

2. Next click on: “F-1 Practical Training”

3. Then click on: “Post-Completion Optional Practical Training Request Form”
Next complete the Post-OPT e-form as required:

- **REMEMBER** – **YOU MUST ATTEND AN OPT INFORMATION SESSION BEFORE YOU SUBMIT THIS E-FORM!**

- Is the above information correct?
Next complete the Post-OPT e-form as required:

- CURRENT RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
  - Do you live at the current address listed below?
  - If NO... STOP

STOP. You are legally required to report ALL address changes to the Department of Homeland Security within 10 days of a change. **LOC INTO SIO TODAY and update your address and contact information.** Once you have made the change in SIO, also enter your current address below before submitting this form.

U.S. Address Line 1: *

Apartment Number:

City: *

State: *

Zip Code: *

Failure to update the address in SIO will result in OPT application denial.
Next complete the Post-OPT e-form as required:

- PLEASE CONFIRM
  - Personal Email
  - Requested OPT Start Date
  - Requested OPT End Date
  - Department
  - Passport Expiration
    - Passport **MUST** be valid!
  - Are you graduating with multiple majors/degrees at this time?
  - Have you applied for OPT before?
  - How would you like to receive your new I-20?
**REMEMBER!!**

*NOTE: PhD Students Program End Dates Can Vary*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If You’re Graduating In:</th>
<th>Then Your Program Ends On:</th>
<th>Select Any OPT Start Date Between The Following Dates:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2020</td>
<td>August 11, 2020</td>
<td>August 12, 2020 – October 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>December 23, 2020</td>
<td>December 24, 2020 – February 21, 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MyOIE Portal
Upload A Copy Of Your I-94 Record

- Electronic arrival record (called I-94) **MOST** important immigration document you have
- Make sure all information is correct
- Proof of your F-1 status and D/S (Duration of Status)

**Obtain I-94 record:** [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94)
Contact oie@andrew.cmu.edu if there are any mistakes!
MyOIE Portal
Upload A Copy Of
Academic Advisor’s Form

This is to certify that ___________________________ will receive the degree of ___________________________ in ________________
(Student’s Full Name) (Degree Level)

the field/major of ___________________________ and is expected to complete all requirements for the
(Field of Study/Major)

degree at the end of ___________________________ Term Or (PhD’s ONLY) on this specific date: ___________________________
(Fall/Spring/Summer) (mm/dd/yyyy *actual completion)

(Name of Academic Advisor/Authorized Department Personnel - Print) (Telephone Number and/or email address)

(Signature of Academic Advisor/Authorized Department Personnel) (Date)

Your academic advisor completes this section.
OPT CANNOT begin before this date.

Bachelors and Masters Students – Term You Will Graduate

PhD Students – Exact Date You Will Complete Requirements
MyOIE Portal – FINAL STEP

- STUDENT CERTIFICATION:
  - ONLY **CERTIFY** AND **SUBMIT** THIS E-FORM IF EVERYTHING IS CORRECT
  - If needed, you can save this e-form as a **DRAFT**
The Application Process: OPT Dates

• Choose dates **CAREFULLY**!

  *CAN’T CHANGE OPT DATES AFTER APPLICATION IS MAILED TO USCIS!*  

• OPT Pending?

  *Fine to stay in the U.S. But **NO WORK** without EAD Card!
Choosing Your OPT Start Date

• **Early Start:**
  - Work permission right after completion
  - On-campus work continues

• **Late Start:**
  - Good if no job offer
  - Consider travel plans
  - Won’t cut into days of unemployment (90 days)
If there is a **GAP** between your Program END DATE and your EAD CARD START DATE... *(example)*

**Program Completion Date**
May 14, 2020

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**HAVE NOT GRADUATED**

---

**GAP BEFORE EAD CARD START DATE**

---

**NO WORK!**

**NOTE:** YOU are still in a Valid STATUS inside the U.S. While OPT Application is PENDING.

---

**EAD CARD HAS ARRIVED!**

---

**WORK OK!**

**As long as** you are within the dates listed on the EAD Card!
OPT Duration

ONLY Eligible for 365 days of Post-OPT per degree level!

If you applied for a period of Pre-Completion OPT, you must deduct that time from your 12-months of Post-OPT.

• Part-time pre-OPT deducted at ½ rate.
• Full-time pre-OPT deducted at full rate.

•NOTE: If you choose less than 12 months, only way to “redeem” remainder of 12 months is to go back to school, complete another program (at same level) and reapply for OPT
When Can I Pick-Up My New OPT I-20?

- It will take 5 to 10 business days to process your new OPT I-20 after you submit your OPT e-form.
- You will receive an email once your OPT I-20 is ready for pick up at OIE.
- However, your OPT I-20 will **NEVER** be ready prior to the date listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If You Are Graduating In:</th>
<th>Then Your Program Ends On:</th>
<th>The EARLIEST You Can Mail Your Application To USCIS Is:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>May 14, 2020</td>
<td>February 15, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2020</td>
<td>August 11, 2020</td>
<td>May 13, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>December 23, 2020</td>
<td>September 24, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPT I-20: The 30 Day Rule!!

**IMPORTANT!**

• OPT application **must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date your OPT I-20 is issued.**

• Be ready to file when you turn in your request!

• I-20 more than 30 days past issuance date = **OPT DENIED!**
OPT Dates

Travel Signature should be updated every 6 months during OPT
EAD’s Issued After Start Date Requested

• You requested OPT dates of 5/14/2020 to 5/13/2021

But

• IF USCIS does not process your application until 7/2/2020
  Then your EAD card will have new dates 7/2/2020 to 7/1/2021

*Your Post-Completion OPT EAD card end date will NEVER go beyond 14 months from your program completion end date!*

NO WORK until EAD received and you are within start and end dates on EAD!
Timing of Your Application

Be aware of processing times:

• Up to 3 to 5 months to be approved...

...or longer if application is returned, something is missing, etc...

Cannot Expedite OPT!!

NOTE: Always check [https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/](https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/) for most up-to-date processing times. Select “I-765...” & “Potomac Service Center” from the drop-down menus.
What do I include with my application?

Include *ALL* Materials on PAGE 1 in **OPT Handout**.
What Do I Include?

- **G-1145** form
- Check for $410 (payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security) **OR**,
  - **Form G-1450** – to pay by Credit Card
- **Two U.S. passport-sized photos** *(No Glasses)*
- Completed, signed **I-765** form
- **Copies** of all I-20s issued to you
- Copy of **VALID** passport
- Copy of F-1 visa sticker
- Copy of I-94 record *(www.cbp.gov/i94)*
- Copy of previous EAD (if you’ve applied for OPT before)

**Items are listed on page 1 of the OPT handout!!**
G-1145 Form

Complete this form and clip it on top of the first page of your immigration form(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant/Petitioner Full Last Name</th>
<th>Applicant/Petitioner Full First Name</th>
<th>Applicant/Petitioner Full Middle Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your LAST NAME</td>
<td>Your First Name</td>
<td>Your Middle Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Address <a href="mailto:xxxxxxxx@gmail.com">xxxxxxxx@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Mobile Phone Number (Text Message)</td>
<td>412-123-4567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- G-1145 - first page of application
- Free to file
- More like 2-4 weeks...
- Disregard form expiration date – be sure to download from uscis.gov

When Will I Be Notified?

We will send the e-Notification within 24 hours after we accept your application.

USCIS Form G-1145
Expires 9/26/14 Y
Different Options For Paying The I-765 Fee Can Be Found On The [USCIS Website](https://www.uscis.gov)

For A Personal Check
Prepare Your Check Like The Image Below
Preparing Your Check

Leave the back **BLANK**
G-1450 Form

If you wish to pay by credit card – please fill-out at attached the **G-1450 Form** to your application.

Type or Print in Black Ink

**“Petitioner is person applying for the OPT”**

Card Holders Information Can be your information or a friends -> enter that information here.

Make sure “Card Holder” SIGNS the form!
Preparing Your Application: Photos
OIE Cannot Check Photos!

• Write your name AND I-94 # on the back of the photos!
  – Write lightly – don’t damage the photo!!
• Make sure they are the correct size!
• Photos taken within past 30 days!!
• NO glasses!
• White or off-white background with no shadows!

Well Composed Photo Composition Examples
Preparing Your Application: Tips

• You can include your check & photos in a white envelope, marked with your name and I-94 number:

• Attach to application – don’t staple photos!
New I-765 FORM!!

DO NOT use an old I-765 from a previous OPT application!

https://www.uscis.gov/i-765

Complete:

- Form fillable pdf
- Handwrite in black ink
Check the box: “Permission to accept employment...”

Form I-765

Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):

1.a. [ ] Initial permission to accept employment.

1.b. [ ] Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.

NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to Replacement for Card Error in the What is the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.

1.c. [ ] Renewal of my permission to accept employment.
   (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)
Form I-765

1.a: Last name
1.b: First name
1.c: Middle Name (If No Middle Name – Leave Blank)

Only complete this section if your name has legally changed. i.e. You updated your passport with a new name, etc...

### Your Full Legal Name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.a.</th>
<th>Family Name (Last Name)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.b.</td>
<td>Given Name (First Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.c.</td>
<td>Middle Name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in Part 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.a.</th>
<th>Family Name (Last Name)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.b.</td>
<td>Given Name (First Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.c.</td>
<td>Middle Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.a.</td>
<td>Family Name (Last Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.b.</td>
<td>Given Name (First Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.c.</td>
<td>Middle Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.a.</td>
<td>Family Name (Last Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.b.</td>
<td>Given Name (First Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.c.</td>
<td>Middle Name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Form I-765

Follow the below instructions **ONLY** if you will use a friend or family member’s address on the I-765.

- If you believe you will change addresses within the next three months, you are advised to list the address of a trusted friend or family member.
- If you choose to enter your friend or family member’s address, you **MUST** fill in 5.a, 5.b, 5.c, 5.d, 5.e with this person’s U.S. name and address.

  • You would then check box “NO”

  • You will now enter **YOUR** current U.S. address to where you are living at the time you submit your application to USCIS.

**NOTE: YOU CANNOT USE OIE’S ADDRESS!**
Form I-765

If you know that you **WILL BE** at your current address for 3 to 5 months after submitting your OPT application to USCIS – then follow the directions below.

- Enter a US address (where you will be located in the next 3 to 5 months)
- You would check box “YES” – if this is the same as your current physical address.
  - You would check “NO” if this mailing address is not the same as you listed for questions 5.a to 5.
- Leave Blank – ONLY if address is the same as listed above!
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form I-765</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any)</td>
<td>▶ A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. USCIS Online Account Number (if any)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Marital Status</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Have you previously filed Form I-765?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 8. Leave Blank
- 9. Leave Blank
- 10. Check Gender Listed On Your Passport
- 11. Check Marital Status
- 12. Have You Filed an I-765 Before? Check Appropriate Answer
Form I-765

13.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 13.a., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 13.a., provide the information requested in Item Number 13.b.

13.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known).

☐ Yes  ☐ No

14. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? (You must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15., Consent for Disclosure, to receive a card.)

☐ Yes  ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 14., skip to Part 2, Item Number 18.a. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 14., you must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15.

15. Consent for Disclosure: I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Numbers 14. - 15., provide the information requested in Item Numbers 16.a. - 17.b.

13.a: Do you have a Social Security Number? Check Appropriate Answer

13.b: Enter SSN Number

**ONLY if you answered NO for 13.a, and would like an SSN Number and will be at address used on I-765 -> Then complete questions 14, 15, 16.a to 17.b**
Form I-765

18.a: Enter Country of Passport
18.b: Leave Blank – *Unless* – You Hold Two Passports

19.a: to 19.c: Enter Needed Information

20: Enter Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)
Form I-765

21.a: Write in I-94 Number
https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home
21.b: Passport Number
21.c: Leave Blank
21.d: Enter Country on Passport
21.e: Passport Expiration Date
  **(Passport MUST BE VALID)**
22 and 23: Refer to your latest port of entry stamp in your passport

NOTE: **ANY** U.S. Point of Entry outside the U.S. – Where you enter through immigration
  **Can be the full city name or the abbreviation!**
24: “F-1 Student”
25: “F-1 Student”
26: SEVIS Number
Form I-765

27: Write Post Completion OPT code: (c)(3)(B)

Information About Your Eligibility Category

27. Eligibility Category. Refer to the Who May File Form I-765 section of the Form I-765 Instructions to determine the appropriate eligibility category for this application. Enter the appropriate letter and number for your eligibility category below (for example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii)).

SKIP Questions 28 through 31.b

*Check Options 1.a to 2 As They Apply To You

3: Current US Phone Number
4: Current US Mobile Number
5: Current “Personal” Email Address – NOT Your Andrew Email
Form I-765

Sign within lines in dark blue ink

Note: You should **ONLY** complete pages 5, 6 and 7 - **IF** they apply to you (**See next slide!**).

If they **DO NOT** apply, then Leave Blank.

However, **INCLUDE ALL 7 PAGES OF THE I-765 IN YOUR OPT APPLICATION TO USCIS.**
Form I-765

If you have ever had **ANY** of the following:
- Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- Previous SEVIS ID Number

Then, complete 1.a, 1.b, and 1.c -> Leave #2 Blank and then follow the example picture with YOUR information
> 3.a. and 4.a write:
  *Page Number – 3
  *Part Number – 2
  *Item Number – 27
>(if applies to you) 5.a write:
  *Page Number – 3
  *Part Number – 2
  *Item Number – 26

If none of the above applies to you, leave page 7 blank.

However, you **MUST INCLUDE ALL 7 PAGES OF THE I-765 IN YOUR OPT APPLICATION TO USCIS!!**
Required *Photocopies* of Documents

- I-94 printout
  - [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home)
  - OR White I-94 card (front & back)

- Photo page of your **VALID** passport

- Most recent F-1 visa sticker

- **ALL I-20s ever issued** (including OPT)
  - Sign all I-20s before copying
Optional Cover Letter

Sample OPT Cover Letter

[DATE OF REQUEST]

[STUDENT NAME]:
[SEVIS ID NUMBER]:
[OPT REQUESTED: PRE or POST-COMPLETION or STEM]
[OPT DATES REQUESTED]:
Dear USCIS Officer:
Please accept this cover letter for my F-1 [PRE or POST-COMPLETION or STEM] Practical Training request. I am writing this letter because [REASON FOR LETTER].

Enclosed, please find my [PRE or POST-COMPLETION or STEM] application materials.

Please contact me if you require additional information or documentation to process this request.

Sincerely,

[signature of student]
[name of student]

• Cover letter **NOT** required, **unless** something is missing or further explanation is required:
  • Missing I-20
  • Missing EAD
Dependents in F-2 Status

• F-2 dependents will receive a new I-20

**F-2 documents NOT submitted in OPT application**

• F-2(s) Must ALWAYS Travel with:
  – New F-2 I-20
  – Copies of F-1’s Documents (OPT I-20, EAD card(s), Job Offer Letter)
Make A Copy of **ENTIRE** Application!!

You will need this information in the future!
Scan, copy, etc...
But make sure it is a copy of the *entire application*!
Mailing your Application: FedEx/UPS

If you live in...
Mail your application to:
Alabama, Arkansas,
Connecticut, Delaware, DC,
Florida, Georgia, Kentucky,
Louisiana, Maine, Maryland,
Massachusetts, Mississippi,
New Hampshire, New Jersey,
New Mexico, New York,
North Carolina,
**Pennsylvania**, Rhode
Island, South Carolina,
Oklahoma, Tennessee,
Texas, Vermont, Virginia,
West Virginia

USCIS
Attn: NFB AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121
Business, Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067
If you live in...
Mail your application to:

USCIS
Attn: NFB AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034
Mailing your Application: FedEx/UPS

If you mail your application with ANY SERVICE other than FedEx or UPS...

Please find that specific lockbox here

DO NOT MAIL Regular Mail!
What Happens After You Send In Your Application to USCIS?

You should receive from USCIS:

• Text message or email with case number
  o (within 2 to 4 weeks)
• Paper Receipt Notice
  o (within 4 weeks)
• Approval Notice
  o (3-5 months)
• EAD card
  o (3-5 months)

Remain Patient!!
If You Make a Mistake on Your Application...

DON’T PANIC!

Contact OIE!
And **NEVER** Send in Duplicate Applications!
Case Status Online: www.uscis.gov

On November 3, 2014, we received your Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, Receipt Number EAC and sent you the receipt notice that describes how we will process your case. Please follow the instructions in the notice. If you do not receive your receipt notice by December 3, 2014, please call Customer Service at 1-800-375-5283. If you move, go to www.uscis.gov/addresschange to give us your new mailing address.
Keeping Records & Maintaining Status

Job **MUST** be related to level & field of study at CMU

Keep documentation of employment for *your* records:

- Employer/company
- Employer address
- # hours per week
- Job description
- Supervisor contact info
  - Paid work: Paystubs, W-2 forms, etc.
  - Unpaid work: Employer letters
    - **NOTE**: Employer **MAY NOT** be able to write letter for unpaid work – **check before starting job**!
Yes
Is your Post-OPT Approved?
Yes
Do you have your Post-OPT EAD Card?
Yes
Have you registered with immigration using the SEVP Portal?
Yes

Then you can update any of the below using the SEVP Portal.

• Add and Edit Employer Information
• Residential Address Personal
• Contact Information

  • NOTE: you should only delete an employer if you NEVER worked for them.
  • You MUST report ANY changes in employer, address, etc... within 10 days of ANY Change!
  • BE SPECIFIC – this information is reported DIRECTLY to immigration (SEVIS)
Keeping Records & Maintaining Status

“I Reported To Immigration... Do I Need A New I-20?”

- **Updated Residential Address?**
  - No new I-20 is needed

- **Updated Personal Contact Information?**
  - No new I-20 is needed

- **Updated Employer?**

At this time, if you update your information through the SEVP Portal and would like an updated I-20, you must also complete the required sections of the OIE OPT Reporting Form.

Have questions about reporting? Read the SEVP Portal Guide.
90 Day Unemployment Rule

You may not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment during the Post-Completion OPT...if more than 90 days...

Your SEVIS record will be terminated

OPT and F-1 status ends!

The start date listed on your EAD is when either:

• Employment starts
• Unemployment clock starts

*Employment (Full-Time) from an Immigration Stand-Point =

• MUST work 20 hours a week or MORE for a job to count as employment on OPT.
Travel

“I’m traveling before...”

- If you have applied for OPT and travel outside the U.S. before your program end-date:
  - You will travel with the usual:
    - Valid Passport
    - I-20 (New OPT I-20)
    - Unexpired Visa
    - Enrollment Verification Letter from The HUB (Optional)

“But when I travel after I have applied for OPT – my I-94 record will change...”

- This is expected – And DOES NOT affect your OPT Application
Travel While on OPT/with Pending OPT

*After Program End Date Listed on OPT I-20

You will always need the following documents in order to travel and re-enter the US while on OPT (or if your OPT application is pending):

- Valid passport (valid for 6 months into the future)
- Valid F-1 visa (not expired)
- I-20 (most recently issued)
  - Employer information [Report to Immigration](#) and listed on page 2 of your I-20 if your EAD Card has been approved
  - Signed for travel within the past 6 months
- EAD Card (or if EAD Card is pending – your USCIS OPT Receipt Notice)
- Job offer letter or proof of a future job interview, etc...
- Check I.C.E’s [website](#) for updated guidance on travel.
Travel

H-1B Application Pending?
• **CONSULT** your H employer and their attorney’s!

F-1 Travel Questions?
• Consult the [OIE Website](https://www.oie.missouri.edu) (need a new visa, etc.)
Travel

EAD says not valid for re-entry!
  • Don’t worry!
  • This means not Valid for re-entry *alone!*

Canada and Mexico + adjacent islands?
  • 30-day exception for expired US visa
    - *unless you apply for and are denied a US visa*
  • Called Automatic Visa Revalidation

➢ DO NOT ENTER THE US AS A TOURIST!
  ➢ This will *END* your F-1 Status and OPT!
My Post-Completion OPT Plan Guide

OPT Application Period

OIE Preferred Submission Date of OPT e-form 100 days before program completion date

100 Days

Apply to USCIS up to 90 days before program completion date

90 Days

OPT Start Date can be any day during 60 day grace period

60 Days

OPT Application MUST be received by USCIS before the end of the 60 day Grace Period

OPT Authorization Period

YOU'RE ON OPT!! (BUT REMAIN IN F-1 STATUS)

12 Months

YOU'RE ON OPT!! (BUT REMAIN IN F-1 STATUS)

OPT Grace Period

After Post-OPT has ended you can transfer, change status, or leave U.S.

60 Days

NO WORK unless authorized for STEM extension or change of status (Cap-Gap)
Options After Your Initial Post-OPT Expires

- **H-1B Temporary Work Visa**
- **24-Month STEM Extension**
H-1B Temporary Work Visa

Private Sector:
• H-1B effective start date is Oct 1st
• The H-1B “CAP” or quota
  • 65,000 annually available to employers April 1st
    (6 months in advance)
  • 20,000 additional H-1B spaces set aside for advanced degree holders

Universities and Non-Profits:
• Not subject to Cap
• University/Non-Profits employers can apply at any time for any start date
Cap-Gap Extension

• If H-1B is *timely* filed:
  • Between April 1 and before the end of your OPT
  • Then your OPT is **AUTOMATICALLY** extended from the end of your OPT to September 30 of the year filed

• **Does your employer want a new I-20?**
  • Directions of how to request a “Cap-Gap I-20” is on our [website](#)
H-1B/OPT Timeline (example)

H-1B filing opens on April 1st of every calendar year

ON OPT/STEM

Current EAD Card Expires after April 1st

GAP IN EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION
If your H-1B Petition was filed as a “change of status” (ONLY) and is accepted in the lottery, then you are eligible for a...

CAP-GAP I-20!

NOTE: You remain in F-1 status until October 1, when your H-1B starts

H-1B Start Date
October 1

H-1B ACTIVE

IF YOU RECEIVE H-1B APPROVAL – YOU MUST EMAIL A COPY OF THAT TO OIE, AS SOON AS IT IS APPROVED!

Current EAD Card Expires after April 1st
H-1B vs. OPT

OPT is *based on your major field of study*

- If you don’t like your job, you can start working somewhere else using your OPT.

H-1B is directly linked to your employer

- If you don’t like your job and decide to quit, you will have no status.
- Once H is approved, OPT is ended and F-1 is complete.
24-Month STEM Extension

Am I Eligible?

To be eligible you MUST:

1. Have your most recent degree in a **STEM designated field**
   - CHECK the Major Code(s)/(cip code) on your I-20 NOW!
2. Be in the initial Post-Completion OPT period
3. Have a job or job offer with a qualified e-verify employer, that is paid employment

*NOTE: CMU is not a qualified e-verified employer for the purpose of STEM OPT!
24-Month STEM Extension

How Do You Apply?
Submit a 24-month STEM I-20 request to OIE
Can be done remotely!
- Directions on our website

Mail STEM application to USCIS

Must reach USCIS:
• Within 90 days of EAD Card end date
• Before end of Post-OPT period
Quiz Time
1. “I **cannot** travel outside the U.S while my OPT is pending....?”

**FALSE!**
Travel While on OPT/with Pending OPT

*After Program End Date Listed on OPT I-20

You will always need the following documents in order to travel and re-enter the US while on OPT (or if your OPT application is pending):

- Valid passport *(valid for 6 months into the future)*
- Valid F-1 visa *(not expired)*
- I-20 *(most recently issued)*
  - Employer information [Report to Immigration](#) and listed on page 2 of your I-20 if your EAD Card has been approved
  - Signed for travel within the past 6 months
- EAD Card *(or if EAD Card is pending – your USCIS OPT Receipt Notice)*
- Job offer letter or proof of a future job interview, etc...
  - Check I.C.E’s [website](#) for updated guidance on travel.
2. “I need a Job Offer to apply for Post-Completion OPT?”
3. “My Job can be unpaid during Post-Completion OPT?”

TRUE!
4. “I can still work at CMU and also get paid by CMU AFTER the Program End Date listed on my I-20?”

FALSE!
5. “I can begin working before the start-date listed on my EAD Card? It’s volunteering – That’s OK!?”

FALSE!
6. “I do not need to report any employment to immigration, if it is unpaid...”

FALSE!
7. “On the Form I-765, if certain characters do not fit, I can fill in the form in Black Ink?”

TRUE!

START HERE - Type or print in black ink.
8. “I should get my I-20 signed for travel on my way to the airport...?”

FALSE
9. “If I get a new or replacement I-20, I should throw my old I-20 in the trash..?”

FALSE!
10. “My OPT I-20 was issued 2 months ago – and I was too busy to mail my OPT application – It’s OK to mail it now, right?”

FALSE!
**“The best source of information on immigration regulations at CMU is...???”**

The Office of International Education!!

FREE ADVICE At OIE!!
Office of International Education
Cyert Hall, 1st Floor
412-268-5231
www.cmu.edu/oie
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

• “How long does it take to get authorization for Post-Completion OPT and when should I apply?”
  • It takes OIE 5 to 10 business days to process, your new Post-Completion OPT I-20. After you mail your Post-Completion OPT application to USCIS, it takes USCIS approximately 3 to 5 months to approve your Post-Completion OPT. Therefore, it is important that you apply for the authorization well in advance of the date you wish to start working. You may apply up to 90 days before your program end date and NO LATER THAN 60 days after your end date. **NOTE: The Post-Completion OPT I-20 cannot be more than 30 days old when it arrives at USCIS or OPT will be denied!**

• Does the job I have while on Post-Completion OPT have to be paid employment, or can it be unpaid?
  • For the 12 month period of Post-Completion OPT, the employment does NOT have to be paid employment. Therefore, a student who is self-employed (including performance majors with regular “gigs”), interning or volunteering in a position directly related to the academic field would be considered “employed” for the purposes of OPT employment. Employer may not be able to write letter for unpaid work - check before starting job. Unpaid work is acceptable by USCIS, but unless it’s truly “volunteer” work, there could be problems with U.S. Department of Labor laws. For the 24-month STEM extension, employment MUST be paid and full-time.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

• “What is considered full-time employment on the Post-OPT?”
  • Students must work at least 20 hours per week in a position directly related to their level and field of study.

• “Can I begin working before I receive the Employment Authorization Document?”
  • NO. You may NOT begin employment before you receive your EAD card from USCIS; working before practical training has been authorized by the USCIS, and you have physically received the EAD card, constitutes illegal employment that will jeopardize your legal status in the U.S. – Also, Students MAY NOT continue on-campus employment after the end date on the I-20 until they have an approved EAD card from USCIS.

• “I have my EAD Card – Now what?”
  • Immigration regulations REQUIRE that while you are on OPT, you MUST report address, name changes, employer and any interruption in employment, within 10 days to immigration. Submit reports to https://www.sevp.ice.gov/opt. If you do not receive an email from SEVP – you can find instructions on next steps here: https://www.cmu.edu/oie/opt-reporting/index.html

• How many days of unemployment am I allowed while on Post-OPT?
  • F-1 regulations require that you have employment in your field of study during Post-Completion OPT period. You are only allowed to have a total of 90 days of unemployment in your 12 month period of Post-Completion OPT.
OPT/STEM EAD Card Expires after April 1st.

Apply to USCIS up to 90 days before program completion date

OPT Start Date can be any day during 60 day grace period

OPT Application MUST be received by USCIS before the end of the 60 day Grace Period

After Post-OPT has ended you can transfer, change status, or leave U.S.

NO WORK unless authorized for STEM extension or change of status (Cap-Gap)