Optional Practical Training

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?
Types of OPT

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

• Types of OPT:
  - Pre-completion
    • Part-time (less than 20 hours per week) during academic year
    • Full-time during official breaks and vacations
  - Post-completion
    • Full-Time
  - STEM extension
    • Full-Time
Practical Considerations

During OPT period:

- You remain in F-1 status
- *OPT is not a status, it is a benefit*
- CMU holds your SEVIS record
- OIE still your advisors/visa sponsor!
OPT Usage

- 12 months per advanced degree level
- Can be used before or after program completion
  - Full time when school is not in session
  - Part time when school is in session (no more than 20 hours per week)
OPT Usage

• You choose start and end dates for all periods of OPT

• Once USCIS grants the work permission the time is “used” and cannot be restored

• Full-time pre-completion OPT deducted from the 12 months at 100%

• (can only be used in the summer/official school breaks!!)

• Part-time pre-completion OPT deducted from the 12 months at $\frac{1}{2}$ rate
OPT Usage

• Post-completion OPT application may need to be filed while waiting for Pre-completion to be approved.

• 2 SEPARATE APPLICATIONS must be filed:
  – 1 for pre-completion OPT
  – 1 for post-completion OPT
  – Same time frame for approval
  – 2 fees! 
Employment

What work can you do during Pre-completion OPT?

• **Any/All** – 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**

You can only legally work in the U.S. when:

• Have received the EAD Card
• Within valid dates on EAD
The Application is a Three Step Process

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

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

3. **Step 3. Application**
   - Mail to USCIS
   - Goal: EAD card
   - APPROVAL TIME: 3 to 5 months!!
1. Login to your MyOIE Portal Account
MyOIE Portal

2. Check and make sure all biographical data is correct and up-to-date

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

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

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

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

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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.

**NEW RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

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

- **PLEASE CONFIRM**
  - Personal Email
  - Requested OPT Start Date
  - Requested OPT End Date
  - Department
  - Passport Expiration
  - 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?
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
Contact oie@andrew.cmu.edu if there are any mistakes!
MyOIE Portal
Upload A Copy Of
OIE Advisor’s Form

MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY THE ACADEMIC ADVISOR OR DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR, NOT BY THE STUDENT.
Note: Providing materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent information may subject you to criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001. Other possible criminal and civil violations may also be applicable.

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)

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 has IMPORTANT Timelines!!

No more than **90 days BEFORE** requested start date

OPT I-20 no more than **30 days old**
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!

[Signature]

DATE ISSUED

PLACE ISSUED

2/19/2019

Pittsburgh, PA
Pre-OPT Dates: 20 May 2019 to 9 Aug 2019

Valid for 12 Months

New Travel Signature:

**TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT**

This page when properly endorsed may be used for reentry of the student to attend the same school after temporary absence from the United States. Each certification signature is valid for one year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SIGNATURE</th>
<th>DATE ISSUED</th>
<th>PLACE ISSUED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOREIGN STUDENT/SCHOLAR ADVISOR</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
<td>7-2-2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Choosing Your OPT Start Date

- **Start date:** Start date of employment
- **End date:** End date of employment (can’t go past program completion date)
  - Summer: OPT can start after classes/finals end and must end before start of fall term.
- **Remember, it will take up to 3-5 months for approval!**
- **CAREFUL – CAN’T CHANGE DATES** once sent to USCIS
- **NO WORK WITHOUT EAD!**
Timing of Your Application

• Be aware of processing times:
  • Up to 3-5 months to be approved...
    ..or longer if application is returned, something is missing, etc...
  • **Cannot Expedite OPT!!** Trying can slow the process!
What do I include with my application?

Include *ALL* Materials on PAGE 1 in *Pre-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 passport
✓ Copy of F-1 visa stamp
✓ 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

- 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
Preparing Your Check

Your Name
123 Street Name
City, State, Zip Code
(123) 456-7890

Sign Your Name Here

PAY TO THE ORDER OF U.S. Department of Homeland Security $410.00
four hundred and ten dollars only

DATE mm/dd/yyyy

MEMO 1025 for SEVIS #N000000000

Carnegie Mellon University
Preparing Your Check

Leave the back **BLANK**
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 back!
  - Write lightly – don’t damage the photo
- Make sure they are the correct size!
- DO NOT Wear Glasses!
- DO NOT USE OLD PHOTO’S!!!
Preparing Your Application: Tips

• You can include your check & photos in marked white envelope:

• Attach to application – don’t staple photos!
Check the box: “Permission to accept employment…”
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...
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. 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.

**PLEASE 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.
- Enter your current US address – where you are currently living.
Form I-765

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

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.

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
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](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
22 and 23: Refer to your latest port of entry stamp in your passport

Please Note:
   **ANY** U.S. **Point of Entry** outside the U.S. - Where you enter through immigration

24: “F-1 Student”
25: “F-1 Student”
26: SEVIS Number
Form I-765

27: Write Pre-Completion OPT code: (c)(3)(A)

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

Please 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**.

**Sign** within lines in **dark blue ink**

**Applicant’s Signature**

7.a. Applicant's Signature

7.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

**NOTE TO ALL APPLICANTS:** If you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents listed in the Instructions, USCIS may deny your application.
Form I-765

If you have had:
• Curricular Practical Training (CPT) AND/OR
• Optional Practical Training (OPT) AND (if applicable)
• A Previous SEVIS ID # in the past -> then complete 1.a, 1.b, and 1.c -> Leave #2 Blank and then follow the sample picture
> 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 ALL or NONE of the above applies to you, 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)
  **OR** White I-94 card (front & back)

- Photo page of passport

- Most recent F-1 visa stamp

- 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*
On I-765 (Part 2 - #5.e), if you use an address in:

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
On I-765 (Part 2 - #5.e), if you use an address in:


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
  - (within 2 to 4 weeks)
- Paper Receipt Notice
  - (within 4 weeks)
- Approval Notice
  - (up to 3-5 months)
- EAD card
  - (up to 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
Keeping Records & Maintaining Status

• Paid work: Offer letter, 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**!
• F-1 students on OPT MUST keep local & permanent addresses current
• Must notify OIE within 10 days of a move
• How?
  • Update SIO: [https://www.cmu.edu/hub/sio/about.html](https://www.cmu.edu/hub/sio/about.html)

**Unemployment days do not “count” on pre-completion OPT**
Adding to your I-20 “collection”

- Pre-Completion I-20 is your new I-20
- Valid even after Pre-Completion OPT period is over
- KEEP all I-20s! Needed for Post-Completion OPT
Travel

“I’m traveling before/after my Pre-OPT...”

• If you have applied for Pre-OPT and travel outside the U.S.... You will travel with the usual:
  ✓ 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 Pre-OPT – my I-94 record will change...”

• This is expected – And does not impact your Pre-OPT Application
OIE Web Resources
Posner Hall, 1st Floor
Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30-5:00
412-268-5231
www.cmu.edu/oie
oie@andrew.cmu.edu