



WHAT IS OPT?

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a temporary employment benefit extended to F-1 students who have been maintaining status. Its purpose is to give students the opportunity to gain work experience pre- or post-completion of their degree and is limited to 12 months total for each degree level in a field directly related to the student's course of study.

Different ways to use OPT

- » (c)(3)(A) Part-time or full-time pre-completion OPT during the student's annual vacation, when school is not in session and the student intends to register for the next semester.
» (c)(3)(A) Part-time pre-completion OPT (no more than 20 hours per week) while school is in session.
» (c)(3)(B) Full-time post-completion OPT for up to one year after completion of the student's program.

Eligibility Requirements

- » Students must be in valid F-1 status at the time of the application and have been enrolled full-time for at least one academic year.
» Students registered in thesis or dissertation hours may apply and engage in post-completion OPT prior to completion of studies.
» Students are eligible for one year of OPT per level. This means you may apply for one year of OPT for the bachelor's level, one year for the master's level, and one year for the doctoral level.

WHEN TO APPLY

Students applying for pre-completion OPT may apply at any time. Student applying for post-completion OPT, please refer to the chart below.

Table with 5 columns: GRADUATING SEMESTER, FIRST DAY TO APPLY, DATE OF GRADUATION, LAST DAY TO SUBMIT APPLICATION TO UCF GLOBAL, FINAL DAY OF 60-DAY GRACE PERIOD. Rows include Summer 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Summer 2018.

HOW TO APPLY

- » STEP 1: Review
» STEP 2: Gather Application Materials
» STEP 3: Meet with Immigration Advisor

» **STEP 4: Mail your Application**

- ☐ Your immigration advisor will mail your complete OPT packet to USCIS. USCIS must receive your application before your 60-day grace period ends and within 30 days of your new I-20 with the OPT recommendation being entered into SEVIS. Depending on when you apply for OPT, you may be required to purchase FedEx express shipping..

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- » In approximately three weeks, your check/money order will be cashed by USCIS and you will receive a Notice of Action I-797 containing your case number. You can check your case status online at <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus>.
- » Current processing time with USCIS is approximately 3 months.
- » Once approved, you will receive a Notice of Approval I-797 and then the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) will arrive in the mail at the address you listed on the I-765 a few days later.
- » **You cannot work on-campus past your I-20 end date. You must update your I-9 with UCF Global Employment & Taxation if your I-20 end date was updated through the OPT application process. (If you work at UCF while on OPT, you must have a valid EAD and be within the validity dates.)**

OPT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- » Please email or drop off a copy of the front and back of the EAD to the UCF Global front desk or an immigration advisor.
- » While on OPT you are required to report changes of address, legal name, employment, employer, and/or any interruption of employment within 10 days of the change. To report these changes, submit the OPT & STEM OPT Reporting Form to UCF Global. (link: <http://global.ucf.edu/formsandfiles/8768/>)

WHILE ON OPT

- » You may only work within the dates authorized on your EAD card.
- » Work can be paid or unpaid. You may, also, work as a volunteer or an unpaid intern, employment through an agency, self-employed business owner (must have the proper business licenses and must be related to your program of study), work for hire (1099 employment), multiple short-term multiple employers and regular paid employment.
- » You are allowed to work for more than one employer or change employers as long as the employment is directly related to your field of academic study.
- » You may take classes and enroll for up to 6 credits per semester. If you would like to study in excess of 6 credits, you must cancel your OPT and request a new Initial I-20 for the new degree program.
- » Graduates with certain Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) degrees may be eligible for a 24-month STEM extension of OPT. You can find more information, such as, the approved list of STEM programs, a tutorial on how to complete the I-983 training plan, and an overview of the new regulation at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov>. Students must contact a UCF Global immigration advisor to determine eligibility. STEM extension applications should be received by USCIS up to 90 days before your current OPT employment authorization expires, and within 60 days of the date your designated school official (DSO) enters the recommendation for the STEM extension into your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) record.

Unemployment During OPT

- » You cannot accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during post- completion OPT. As a result of accruing more than 90 days of unemployment, your EAD will be cancelled.

Travel While on OPT

- » Travel outside of the U.S. is permitted **if you are employed**. You will need your I-20 (endorsed for travel by an advisor at UCF Global), your EAD card, a job offer letter or proof of employment (employment verification letter and pay stubs), as well as a valid passport and valid F-1 entry visa. If you are renewing your visa while on OPT, you may be subject to more scrutiny, as you will need to establish that your purpose in the U.S. is still temporary even though you have completed your studies. To obtain additional information on travel during OPT, please visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel> or consult with an UCF Global immigration advisor.

AFTER OPT

- » You have a 60-day grace period after your EAD expires to make departure plans or other arrangements within the U.S. You may elect to do one of the following before the end of your grace period:
 - » Return to your home country.
 - » Be admitted to another academic program at UCF and receive a new I-20 for that new program.
 - » Transfer to another institution within the U.S.
 - » Continue employment if approved for a 24-month STEM extension of STEM Program (application must be submitted well before current EAD card expires).
 - » Apply to change your visa status.

OPT AND H-1B

- » Students who properly file an H-1B petition AND whose OPT expires prior to October 1 (H-1B start date), are eligible for a “cap gap extension.” Please note that although the extension is automatic for both employment and F-1 status, students must verify with their immigration advisor that their SEVIS record and I-20 is updated.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Make an appointment with an immigration advisor at UCF Global and have all items below prepared **before** the appointment. Students arriving without all checklist items completed will be rescheduled.

- OPT Recommendation Letter from your academic adviser.
Sample letter available at <http://global.ucf.edu/formsandfiles/7716>
- Check or money order for \$410.
Make check/money order payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security.”
- Two 2 inch by 2 inch photos taken within the past 30 days. Lightly print your name, date of birth, and I-94 number on the back of each photo. View the photo requirements at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photos.html>
- Completed G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf>
- Completed I-765, Application for Employment Authorization.
Form must be typed.
<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf>
 - Be sure that you will reside at the address you list on the I-765 for at least 150 days from the submission of your application. The U.S. Postal service will not forward mail from the federal government to a different address.
- Copy of new I-20 with OPT recommendation (issued by UCF Global during OPT processing appointment).
- Job offer letter, if you already have one (optional).
- Copy of all previous I-20s in order from newest to oldest
- Copy of your I-94
Download from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>
- Copy of your F-1 visa or change of status approval notice
- Copy of the biographical page of your passport
- Copy of any previous Employment Authorization Documents (EAD), if applicable

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

UCF ID: _____ SEVIS Number NO: _____

Knights Email Address: _____

Personal Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Current Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

I am currently working on campus Yes No

If yes, list your employer: _____

Assistantship

Fellowship

On-campus job

I am applying for

Part-time Pre-Completion OPT (c)(3)(A)

Full-Time Pre-Completion OPT (c)(3)(A)

Full-time Post-Completion OPT (c)(3)(B)

Requested OPT Start Date: _____

For Post-Completion OPT, the requested start date must be within the 60-day grace period following your date of graduation/program-completion

Requested OPT End Date: _____

AGREEMENT

Please type your name and sign.

I, _____, understand that while on OPT I am required to abide by all F-1 immigration regulations. I also understand, agree to, and accept the following specific items:

- » I read and understand the this OPT Application Packet for F-1 Students
- » I understand that my OPT application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the recommendation being entered in SEVIS AND before the end of my 60-day grace period.
- » I will provide a copy of the employment authorization document (EAD) to UCF Global as soon as it is received.
- » I cannot start employment until I receive my employment authorization document (EAD) and by the “valid from” date listed on the card has been reached.
- » I cannot accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during post-completion OPT.
- » I will report any changes of address, legal name, employment, and/or any interruption of employment within 10 days of the change using the OPT and STEM OPT Reporting Form (link: <http://global.ucf.edu/formsandfiles/8768/>).
- » I cannot continue on-campus employment after my I-20 end date unless I have my EAD and the start date is valid.
- » If my I-20 end date was updated through the OPT application process, I will update my I-9 with UCF Global Employment and Taxation.

Signature: _____ Date: _____