F-1 Post-Completion Optional Practical Training

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS OFFICE

Columbia University

Agenda

- General Information
- Application Process
- Traveling Abroad on OPT
- Tips & Reminders

General Information

General Information

OPT is authorization from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to work in your field of study, commensurate with your educational level.

General Information

- Maximum of 12 months of OPT *per educational level* (Example: BA, MA, Phd.)
- Must be in lawful student status for two semesters to be eligible.
- OPT does not require a job offer at the time of application.

General Information

During initial 12 month period of OPT, no student may be unemployed for an aggregate of more than 90 days.

General Information

90 day limitation on unemployment
- Time spent without a qualifying job during post-completion OPT
- Travel abroad while unemployed is counted
- Time over 90 days is considered a violation of F-1 status
- Travel abroad while employed during a period of authorized leave or as part of employment is *not* included in the 90 day limit

General Information

Employment for the purposes of OPT reporting is defined as paid or unpaid work of at least 20 hours per week in your field of study.

General Information

Forms of employment under pre-and post-OPT
- **Paid employment** – can work part-time (at least 20 hrs/wk) or full-time
- **Multiple employers**
- **Short-term multiple employers-** performing artists
- **Work for hire** – service based contractual relationship (1099 employment)
- **Self-employed business owner-** must work full-time
- **Employment through an agency-** work at least 20 hrs/wk
- **Unpaid employment** – volunteer or unpaid internship (not violating any labor laws)

General Information

Keep letters from your employers printed on letterhead that states the following:

- Position held
- Proof of duration of job
- Job title
- Contact information of supervisor
- Description of job

General Information

There is a 60-day grace period after the end date on the EAD.

Not allowed to work or travel during this time.

STEM Extension

Students graduating with a degree in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM), may be eligible for an additional 17 months of OPT.

Cap-Gap Provision

If you are on authorized OPT at the time that an employer files an H-1B petition for you requesting change of status and an employment start date of October 1st, your F-1 status and OPT authorization are automatically extended until September 30th. (The earliest an employer can file an H-1B subject to the annual quota (or cap) is April 1, 6 months in advance of Oct. 1).

Application Process

Application Process

Obtaining OPT approval is a 3-part process:

1. Obtain a recommendation from the ISSO in SEVIS and on the new I-20.
   - $100 administrative fee.
   - Takes up to 5 business days to process.
2. Send application and $380 fee to USCIS.
3. USCIS will process and send student EAD (Employment Authorization Document).

Application Process

Earliest time to apply:

  90 days prior to the completion of your program

Application Process

Latest date to apply:

USCIS must _receive_ your application no later than 60 days after the completion of your program.

Application Process

1. Complete OPT Recommendation Request Form

   Start Date of OPT:

   Within 60 days from the completion of your program

Application Process

Completion Date for Spring 2014:
May 21, 2014

Start date of OPT: May 22 – Jul 20

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS OFFICE

F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) Recommendation Request Form

This section is to be completed by the STUDENT for all OPT requests.

Students applying for OPT based on completion of a program or based on completion of all requirements except the dissertation (ABD) also must submit a completed OPT ACADEMIC ADVISER FORM (p. 2)

Family Name _____   First Name _____

Date of Birth _____   CU Email _____

(1) I am requesting a recommendation for:

_____ PRE-COMPLETION OPT (before completion of degree requirements)

      _____ Part-time OPT (during the summer or during the academic year <20 hrs/wk)

      _____ Full-time OPT (during vacation period >20 hrs/wk)

      _____ Full-time OPT during the academic year (Available only to students who have completed all degree requirements and have received MPhil but have not yet completed thesis/dissertation) *You also must submit a complete OPT Academic Adviser Form on p. 2.*

_____ POST-COMPLETION OPT (Full-time only)
You also must submit a complete OPT Academic Adviser Form on p. 2.

(2) If you have ever been issued an EAD for OPT before, please provide the following information: start and end dates on the card(s) you have received, whether full-time or part-time, and the degree level:

_____

_____

(3) I would like to work from (mm/dd/yy) _____ to (mm/dd/yy) _____

NOTE: Once submitted, requested dates cannot be changed. You cannot redeem OPT time even if you don't work.
For post-completion OPT requests, the start date must be within the 60-day period following completion of the program. For example, if your completion date is May 15, the OPT start date could be between May 16 to July 14.

(4) Name and Address of Employer_____

_____

Student's Signature _____   Date _____

Office & Courier Address: 524 Riverside Drive New York, NY 10027
Mailing Address: Mail Code 5724 2960 Broadway New York, NY 10027 212-854-3587 Fax 212-851-1235

Revised 08/04/2011

Application Process

2. Ask your Academic Adviser or Dean to complete the Form for Academic Advisers confirming your completion of studies.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS OFFICE

For Post-Completion and ABD Students

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Form for
Academic Adviser, Department Chair, or Program Coordinator

This form must be completed in its entirety for the ISSO to accept the student's OPT application.
- **ITEM 1 MUST BE COMPLETED FOR ALL APPLICANTS.**
- **Box 2 or 3 should be checked if applicable to the student's situation.**

The student listed below is requesting the ISSO recommendation for employment authorization in his/her field of study. In order to issue a recommendation, we are required to obtain the following information. Please complete and sign the section below. If further information is advisable or necessary, describe in an accompanying letter.

This is to confirm that:

Student Name: _____

1. is expected to complete [bachelors / masters / doctoral] degree (please circle one) requirements by
_____
(DATE: mm/dd/yyyy) *Note: For terms other than spring, this is not the degree conferral date. It is the end of the term in which degree requirements are met.*

Please check any box that is applicable to this student:

2. ☐ has completed all coursework, is at the "all but dissertation" (ABD) stage and has received MPhil **(if applicable)**.

3. ☐ has received a grade for any course-related Curricular Practical Training previously authorized **(if applicable)**.

Faculty/Adviser Name (please print) _____

Title and Department _____

Email _____ Phone ext. _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Office & Courier Address: 524 Riverside Drive New York, NY 10027
Mailing Address: Mail Code 5724 2960 Broadway New York, NY 10027 212-854-3587 Fax 212-851-1235

Revised 08/04/2011

Application Process

3. Complete **I-765** application (either typed or in blue ink). Refer to your electronic I-94 record/card to fill in questions regarding your last entry to the U.S.

Mark the first box!

U.S. mailing address must be valid for 3 months

I-94 Number 11 digit Admission #

Sign here in blue ink

(C) (3) (B)

I-765, Application For Employment Authorization

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Do not write in this block.

Remarks	Action Block	Fee Stamp
A#		

Applicant is filing under §274a.12 _____

☐ Application Approved. Employment Authorized / Extended (Circle One)   until _____ (Date).
_____ (Date).

Subject to the following conditions: _____

Application Denied.
☐ Failed to establish eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (a) or (c).
☐ Failed to establish economic necessity under 8 CFR 274a.12(c)(14), (18) and 8 CFR 214.2(f)

I am applying for:
☒ Permission to accept employment.
☐ Replacement (of lost employment authorization document).
☐ Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach previous employment authorization document).

1. Name (Family Name in CAPS)   (First)   (Middle)

Which USCIS Office?   Date(s)

2. Other Names Used (include Maiden Name)

Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)

3. U.S. Mailing Address (Street Number and Name)   (Apt. Number)

12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S., on or about: (mm/dd/yyyy)

(Town or City)   (State/Country)   (ZIP Code)

13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S.

4. Country of Citizenship/Nationality

14. Status at Last Entry (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)

5. Place of Birth (Town or City)   (State/Province)   (Country)

15. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.)

6. Date of Birth   (mm/dd/yyyy)   7. Gender   ☐ Male ☐ Female

16. Go to the "Who May File Form I-765?" section of the instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. (For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.)

8. Marital Status ☐ Married ☐ Single ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced

(___) (___) (___)

9. Social Security Number (Include all numbers you have ever used, if any)

17. If you entered the eligibility category, (c)(3)(C), in Question 16 above, list your degree, your employer's name as listed in E-Verfy, and your employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in the space below.

Degree: _____

10. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or I-94 Number (if any)

Employer's Name as listed in E-Verify: _____

11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?
☐ Yes (Complete the following questions.)   ☐ No (Proceed to Question 12.)

Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number _____

Certification

Your Certification: I certify, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the **"Who May File Form I-765?"** section of the instructions and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in **Question 16.**

Signature   Telephone Number   Date

Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Above: I declare that this document was prepared by me at the request of the applicant and is based on all information of which I have any knowledge.

Print Name   Address   Signature   Date

LEAVE THIS AREA BLANK

Remarks	Initial Receipt	Resubmitted	Relocated		Completed			
			Received	Sent	Approved	Denied	Returned	

Form I-765 04/01/13 Y

I-765 Tips

- Before Question 1 under "I am applying for:" check the box for "Permission to Accept Employment"

- #11 - is asking if you ever applied for an EAD card before. CPT or on-campus work does not count.

- #16 - The code for post-completion OPT is (c)(3)(B).

- # 17 - Leave blank as does not apply to regular OPT applications.

Application Process

Mailing Address Tips- select an address that is valid for 3-4 months from the time you mail out the application.

When using an address that is not your own:

- c/o John Smith, 405 W. 119th St. Apt. 2P,

New York, NY 10027

- c/o J. Smith (if name is too long, first initial with last name is fine)

I-94 ARRIVAL RECORD

Must submit proof of your F-1 status.

- Print out of Electronic I-94 admission record (www.cbp.gov/I94)

OR

- Copy of both sides of white I-94 card

I-94 ARRIVAL RECORD

Application Process

- Come to the ISSO with the following documents:

    - Print out of electronic I-94 information / white I-94 card
    - Passport
    - All I-20s
    - Completed I-765
    - Completed OPT Request Form and form from school advisor
    - Trainee Administrative Fee -$100 by cash or credit card
    - **online-https://lexington.columbia.edu/isso/trainee**

Application Process

An ISSO advisor will review your eligibility and the required forms.

Application Process

Within 5 business days, the ISSO will issue a new I-20 with the OPT recommendation on page 3 and e-mail you when it's ready to pick up.

Please check your Columbia email account.*

Application Process

Pick-up envelope will include mailing instructions for completing the application process.

Application Process

Application must be received by USCIS within 30 days from the OPT recommendation date in SEVIS or it will be denied.

Section 10 of I-20 - date issued

Verify completion date before you send application to USCIS

Date issued

OPT Recommendation

Recertification

Application Process

PLAN EARLY

The USCIS can take anywhere from 1 to 3 months (or more) to process OPT applications.

The ISSO may take up to 5 business days to process a new I-20 with the OPT recommendation.

Application Process

OPT Checklist

- G-1145 form
- I-765 form
- Fee $380 - payable to Department of Homeland Security
- Copies of page 1 and 3 of all previously issued 1-20s
- Copy of your passport ID page (page with picture and passport expiration date)
- Copy of F-1 entry visa
- Print out of I-94 information OR copy of both sides of I-94 card
- Copy of both sides of any previously issued EAD cards
- Two U.S. passport style photos – http://tinyurl.com/optphotos

Application Process

Form G-1145 – This form should be on top of your application if you want USCIS to notify you by email and/or text message that they have accepted your application. You can access this form through our website or at http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf

Application Process

Mailing address

All applications must either be filed at the USCIS Dallas or USCIS Phoenix lockbox facilities.

If you indicate an address on the I-765 form in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut or Pennsylvania, please send the application to:

US Postal Service (USPS)
USCIS
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

Express mail or Courier service (FedEx, UPS, DHL)
USCIS
ATTN:AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121, Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

EAD cards are delivered separately from your Approval Notice.
The envelope looks like this:

Employment Authorization Document (EAD Card)

OPT Approval Dates

Travel Abroad
and OPT

Travel Abroad and OPT

Before your EAD is issued, you may reenter the U.S. to *resume* searching for employment. You must carry evidence of a PENDING OPT application (Receipt Notice).

Travel Abroad and OPT

After EAD is issued, you may reenter U.S.

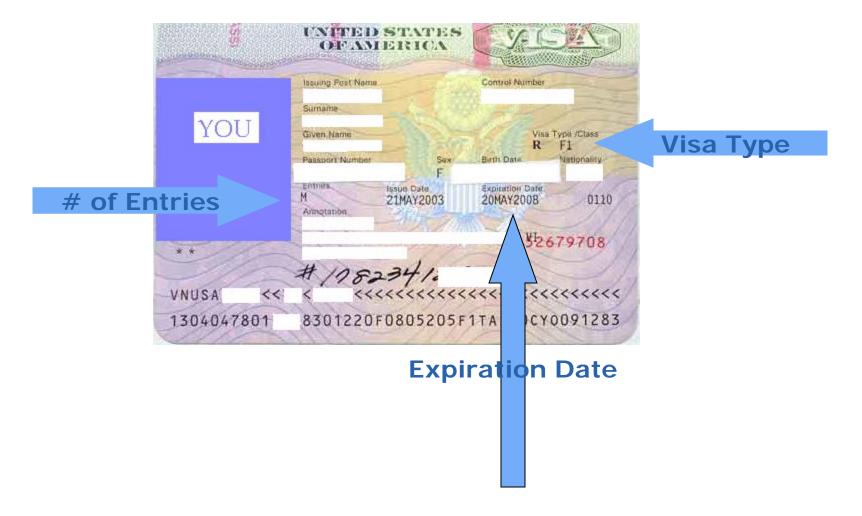- to *resume* employment that has already commenced, OR

- to begin a job that has already been offered.

This means you should carry a letter from the employer, in addition to the EAD.

Travel Abroad and OPT

After the completion of your program, the following documents are required for re-entry in F-1 status:

- An unexpired **passport** valid for 6 months into the future (some exceptions)
- A valid, unexpired **F-1 entry visa** (except Canadians)
- An **I-20** that has been **recertified** in the last **6 months**
- **Proof of your OPT**
  - Receipt notice (pending OPT application)
  - EAD and a letter from an employer (once OPT approved)

Entry Visa

Entry Visa

- Eligibility to <u>enter</u> the U.S. as an F-1 student

- Does NOT determine how long you may <u>remain</u> in the U.S.

Travel Abroad and OPT

VISA APPLICATIONS

- <u>NOT guaranteed</u> an entry visa (from a U.S. Consulate) simply because you have been granted OPT (by the USCIS).

- You <u>always</u> need to establish non-immigrant intent to qualify for an F-1 visa.

Tips and Reminders

Tips and Reminders

Contact the ISSO if there is an error on your receipt notice or EAD or if you receive a Request for Further Evidence (RFE) for your application.

Tips and Reminders

IMPORTANT

You MUST have the EAD in hand before beginning any employment.

Tips and Reminders

OPT REPORT FORM

You are required to report any changes in employment or status within 10 days:

- Change in name or address of residence
- Name and address of employer
- Name and address of any new employer
- Any period of unemployment
- Decision not to use OPT and departing the U.S. to return home or to another country
- Change to another nonimmigrant status in the U.S. or change to Permanent Resident status

https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isso/OPT_Reporting.html

Tips and Reminders

Social Security and OPT

You can apply for a social security number on the start date of your OPT authorization indicated on your EAD.

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/visa/F-1/SSN.pdf

Tips and Reminders

Sign up with Columbia Alumni Affairs to have your e-mail from your Columbia UNI-based account forwarded to another account to receive important information about OPT from the ISSO.
http://cuit.columbia.edu/email-alumni

Tips and Reminders

ISSO –Optional Practical Training

- http://www.tinyurl.com/issoOPT
- Application forms and detailed instructions

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

- http://www.uscis.gov
- Track your case online

Tips and Reminders

Be sure to read your *ISSOnews* e-mail for information on regulations, workshops and deadline reminders.

ISSO CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

   10:30 – 4:00 pm.
   Closed on Wednesday

Address and Phone Number

   524 Riverside Drive in International House North, between 122nd Street and Tiemann Place

   (212) 854-3587

Website

   http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/

E-mail Address

   isso@columbia.edu