

International Student Services

F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What is Optional Practical Training?

Optional Practical Training allows F-1 students 12 months of full-time, practical work experience in their field of study per degree level. OPT employment authorization may be granted **pre-completion** (part-time while school is in session or full-time during winter or summer breaks) or **post-completion** (full-time after the completion of studies).

What is STEM OPT Extension?

The STEM program allows a 24-month OPT extension for students who qualify. Students with the following majors may qualify for the OPT STEM extension: BS in Biology, BS in Teaching Licensure in Secondary Computer Science, MS in Information Systems, BS in Information Technology, MS in Information Technology, BS in Mathematics, and BS in Teaching Licensure in Secondary Mathematics. The student's employer must be enrolled in the E-Verify program. Companies enroll in this program at their discretion, and Marymount University does not maintain a list of employers enrolled in this program.

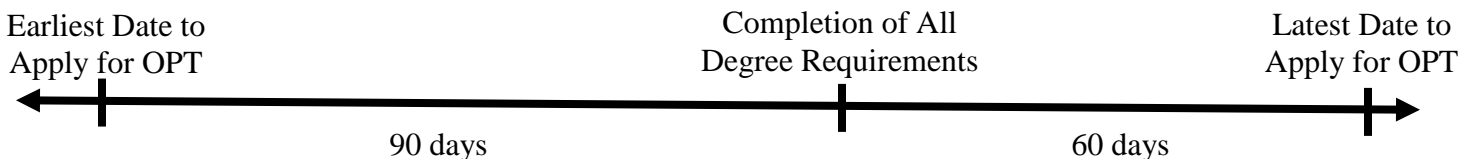
Who is eligible for OPT?

F-1 students who have been enrolled on a full-time basis for a minimum of one academic year and whose proposed OPT employment will directly relate to their field of study may be eligible for OPT. If the student's last semester of study is spent outside the United States, the student may not qualify for OPT.

When should you apply for OPT?

An eligible student can apply for **pre-completion** OPT up to 90 days prior to their desired start date. **A qualified student can apply for post-completion OPT up to 90 days prior to the completion of all degree requirements or up to 60 days following degree completion. The OPT start date must fall between the date on which the student completes all degree requirements and the 60th subsequent day.** A student does not need to have a job starting exactly on the requested start date, but the selected date will be noted on the EAD card (work permit). Students will only be allowed to work between the dates noted on the EAD card.

Please note that your OPT application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the I-20 issue date and before the last day of your 60 day grace period.



Application Procedure:

Please review the following steps in regards to the OPT application procedure:

PART 1

1. **First, attend one of the mandatory OPT workshops offered by ISSS staff.**
2. Go the [ISSS portal](#) and complete the OPT application review request and submit it to ISSS, This request includes a quiz, a questionnaire and the upload the draft of the [I-765](#), only.

PART 2

1. After we receive your OPT application review request, one of the ISSS International Student Advisors will review it and if it is correct, then the ISSS Advisor will prepare a new I-20 for you with the OPT recommendation on page 2. You will be contacted to schedule a final appointment for your online application review. You **MUST** have ALL the documents in the checklist scanned and saved in a folder on your computer the day of the appointment so that the advisor can review them before you upload them in the online USCIS application system.

PART 3

1. In order to submit your online application to USCIS, you will have to create an account at <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/> Use your personal email and create a password.
2. To initiate the OPT application click on **File a form online**, then select **Employment Authorization (765)**. Answer the questions that follow using your answers from the I-765 form draft you completed earlier.

USCIS OPT Application Packet Checklist for the day of your appointment (All documents should be scanned and saved in a folder on your computer for the day of the appointment with ISSS)

- 1 passport style photo scanned in JPEG format
- A \$410.00 application fee available in your bank account or credit card for immediate payment to USCIS online
- Completed Immigration [Form I-765](#)
- Scanned copy of Passport and Visa
- Scanned copy of I-94 Record: It can be printed from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>.
- Scanned copy of Previous OPT cards if applicable
- Scanned copies of All I-20s, even if for a previous F-1 status (We may not send them all, but need them for the application.)
- Scanned copy of OPT I-20

What happens after your application is submitted?

You should receive a Receipt Notice of Action immediately. This will prove that you have an application pending with USCIS. This Notice of Action will include a receipt number (LIN number). This is the number that you will use to check your case status on the USCIS online account you created at any time.

You will also be asked to upload your USCIS final application and the receipt notice to the ISSS portal.

Once your OPT is approved and you received your EAD Card you must do the following

- Submit a copy of the card through the [ISSS portal](#) – EAD Upload Request.
- Set up your SEVP Portal: DHS's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will send a link inviting you to create an SEVP Portal Account the date of your employment start date printed on your card.

How to report your Employment or Personal information changes?

1. Log in to your [SEVP portal](#) account and enter your employer and job information or any other personal information change.

Set up your SEVP Portal: DHS's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will send a link inviting you to create an SEVP Portal Account once the OPT is approved and the start date on the EAD is reached. The email

will be sent to the address you have in SEVIS from do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov. Please always check your Spam, Junk, or Trash folders to see if this email is redirected.

Follow the instructions in that email immediately upon receipt and create your SEVP Portal Account. This link expires in 30 days from the time it is sent and it can only be clicked once to register your SEVP Portal Account. If the link is already expired, contact your IS Advisor to reset it. For any additional help with this process view the Study in the States website: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help>

If you are having difficulty accessing your SEVP portal, contact ISSS and you will receive a form to complete

If your SEVP account is blocked, please contact iss@marymount.edu to request a password reset.

Types of Work that are valid as employment while on OPT

- Regular paid employment for at least 20 Hours per week. (You may work for multiple employers, as long as it is directly related to your program of study.)
- Short-term multiple employments such as in the music and art field.
- Work for hire or provide services by contractual relationships.
- Self-employed business owner. You must work full time, and show evidence of business licenses.
- Employment through an agency.
- Volunteer or unpaid internship for at least 20 hours a week in a position related to your field of study. This can be counted as “employment”. Document your volunteer position, responsibilities and dates and report it to ISS to avoid accumulating days towards the 90-day unemployment limit.

During and After OPT:

- While on OPT, you will no longer be eligible for student health insurance after August of your graduation year.
- You have a 60-day grace period after your OPT completion date. During that time, you may apply for change of status, transfer your record electronically to another school or prepare to leave the United States.
- When you leave the United States, make sure to use official ports of departure to exit the US. Allow time at airports and land crossings to complete exit interview, even if traveling to Mexico and Canada, if you are subject to Special Registration.

Travel while on OPT:

ISS cautions against F-1 OPT travel if a new visa stamp is needed. Please consult your ISSS advisor prior to traveling.

If you decide to travel, please take the following with you.

- Make sure your I-20 is signed for travel within 6 months. If you need a new travel signature, bring or send your I-20 to ISS with a copy of your Employment Authorization Document card.
- Make sure your passport is valid at least 6 months into the future.
- Take your original EAD card
- Proof of employment with a letter from your employer that certifies your employment and that you are required to report back at a certain date.
- Make sure that your F-1 visa stamp is valid. If your visa is not valid for re-entry, plan accordingly to renew your visa while overseas at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Disclaimer: The International Student Services office is able to provide you with general guidance. However, any advice or printed materials provided to you by our office, as well as the information in this packet, do not constitute legal advice. Additionally, due to the fluid nature of governmental regulations interpretation, USCIS may change its interpretation of the above-mentioned immigration policies, procedures, regulations, and eligibility requirements for benefits at any time. This office will do its best to provide you with the most current guidance. However, it is up to U.S. Immigration authorities to make final determinations for individual eligibility of benefits. If you prefer, you may contact an experienced immigration attorney if you have questions regarding your situation.

Agreement: I understand that I must have ALL the required documents completed, signed and scanned the day of my appointment with the ISSS advisor. The ISSS advisor will not be responsible of any missing document or errors in the packet after the individual meeting.