



OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR F-1 STUDENTS (OPT)

Eligibility:

Nonimmigrant F-1 students who have been in lawful full-time student status for at least one full academic year are eligible to apply for up to 12 months of Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment in an area related to their field of study. With few exceptions, students use OPT authorization just after completing the degree program. (Post-completion OPT must be completed within 14 months of completion of studies.) Students may apply for OPT no earlier than 90 days before, or 60 days after graduation, though it is highly recommended that OPT applications are sent for processing at least three months prior to graduation.

Students applying for OPT will prepare an application for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) with the help of the Office of International Student Services. To make an OPT intake appointment, visit Atherton 004 or call (317) 940-9888. Completed OPT applications will be mailed to the USCIS Nebraska Service Center.

You are not required to have a job at the time you apply for OPT, but any employment you undertake as a part of Optional Practical Training must be related to your field of study. Students may change jobs within the authorized period of OPT as long as it is related to the field of study and “commensurate with his or her educational level”. You are allowed only 90 days of unemployment starting from the start date on your work permit.

Note for the future: Students who later earn a higher level degree from a U.S. institution may be eligible for an additional 12 months of OPT upon completion of that degree.

Documents Needed for Processing Appointment:

1. An **Optional Practical Training Recommendation letter** from your Department Chair or Academic Advisor verifying your degree program, the expected date of completion, and recommending Practical Training is appropriate to your field of study (the second page of this document is your recommendation)
2. **SEVIS Form I-20** with OPT request (will be generated at time of OPT recommendation appointment). Completed **Form I-765**. (Available in the Office of International Student Services)
 - ◆ Item #3, be sure to enter the address where you want your EAD to be mailed. ***If you think you might change addresses within the 3-month processing time (or before employment begins), please enter:*** 704 West Hampton Drive, Atherton 004, Indianapolis, IN 46208;
 - ◆ *Item #10*, enter the 11-digit Admission Number on current I-20 or I-94;
 - ◆ *Item #16*, enter code (c) (3) (B)
 - ◆ *Do not complete #17*
 - ◆ **Money order for \$340.00** made payable to the “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”. (Personal checks not accepted.)
3. **Passport, Visa, I-94, Social Security Card, all I-20s ever issued**
4. **Two photos** taken the “passport” style, with the subject facing forward. Photos should not be larger than 2” by 2”.

SOCIAL SECURITY (FICA) TAXES: Employers are not required to withhold Social Security Tax from the wages of nonimmigrant F-1 students who have authorization from the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Service to be employed. The Office of International Student Services can provide you with a copy of the publication from the Social Security Administration which should be presented to your employer.

Note: Please make an appointment in the Office of International Students Services to set up a processing and advising session. Sessions last approximately 30 minutes.

F-1 STUDENT OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING RECOMMENDATION

To Be Completed By Academic Advisor or Department Chair

Please review handout, "Optional Practical Training for F-1 Students", located on reverse.

TO: Office of International Student Services, Atherton Union Room 004

FROM:

Print Name of Faculty

Title

DATE:

____/____/____

RE:

Student's Family Name

Student's First Name

This memo serves to confirm that the above named student has completed or will complete an academic program in the department of _____.

The practical training sought by this student is directly related to his or her field of study, commensurate with his or her educational level, and recommended by this academic department.

This student (*please check one*):

_____ **Has completed all course requirements excluding thesis or dissertation.**

_____ **Completed the course of study on** ____/____/____ **.**

_____ **Is expected to complete the course of study on** ____/____/____ **.**

Faculty Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Department: _____

International Student Services use ONLY:

Full time OPT recommended from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____

by _____ on ____/____/____.