



Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

SISU INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
AND SCHOLAR SERVICES

Topics Covered in Tutorial

Optional Practical Training

“Temporary employment that is directly related to an F-1 student’s major area of study”

Up to 12 months may be authorized by USCIS

Pre-Completion

Occurs during your studies when:

CPT is not an option;
You are not eligible for CPT.

Post-Completion

Occurs after degree completion OR Grad students only: After completion of all course requirements and are only left with a project, thesis or comprehensive final exam.

* This presentation will focus on Pre-Completion OPT.

Eligibility

Pre-Completion OPT

1. Must have been a full-time student for at least one consecutive academic year;
 - a. *OPT eligibility requirements may reset due to a leave of absence or SEVIS record termination. Please consult with an ISSS Advisor for more information.
2. Be in valid F-1 status when requesting OPT I-20 from ISSS and when application is submitted to USCIS;
3. Be in good academic standing (minimum 3.0 for graduate students and 2.0 for undergraduate students);
4. Be physically present in the U.S. when requesting the OPT I-20 from ISSS and submitting your application to USCIS.

When to Apply

1. You may submit the Pre-Completion OPT I-20 request to ISSS up to **100 days** BEFORE you want

Pre-Completion OPT Process

1. Recommend [scheduling a zoom appointment](#) to meet with an International Student Advisor from ISSS to discuss Pre-Completion OPT.
2. Email ISSS to request the Pre-Completion OPT I-20 Request iSpartan link.
 - a. international-office@sjsu.edu
3. **Student requests a Pre-Completion OPT I-20 from ISSS. *You will need this I-20 with Pre-Completion OPT recommendation from ISSS to file your Pre-Completion OPT application with USCIS.***
 - a. Complete the e-form.
 - b. Select the requested Pre-Completion OPT start and end dates. Review [Pre-Completion OPT web page](#) for allowable dates.
 - i. You are not required to have a job to request pre-completion OPT.
 - c. You will need to indicate full-time or part-time in your request.
 - i. Review slide for more details.
 - d. Academic Department (Major Advisor or Graduate Program Coordinator) information will need to be added into the e-form. Name, title and email address.
 - i. Request will be routed to ISSS once your Academic Department reviews request.
 1. Please note that it is your responsibility to notify your academic/major advisor of the OPT approval request. It will be sent via email to the indicated advisor.
 - ii. Once your Academic Department has signed off on your Pre-Completion OPT request, you will receive an email that your request has been routed to ISSS for processing.
4. **ISSS Receives Pre-Completion OPT I-20 Request**
 - a. Once submitted to ISSS, processing time is 5-7 business days.
 - c. DSO will review your eligibility for Pre-Completion OPT.
 - d. DSO will recommend Pre-Completion OPT in your SEVIS record and issue you a new I-20 with the OPT recommendation on page 2.
 - ii. DSO will email you the I-20 with Pre-Completion OPT recommendation.
 - iii. **You will need this I-20 to file your Pre-Completion OPT application with USCIS.**

Pre-Completion OPT Process

5. Student files Form I-765 and supporting documents with USCIS.

- a. **Do not file your application with USCIS until you have a new I-20 with Pre-Completion OPT recommendation from ISSS.**
 - b. USCIS must receive your pre-completion OPT application within 30 days of the date your pre-completion OPT was recommended by ISSS, or your pre-completion OPT application will be denied.
 - i. DSO will tell you when your pre-completion OPT recommendation was done, when they email you the I-20.
 - ii. We recommend checking this [date calculator](#) to find your deadline for USCIS to receive your application. If the deadline is on a Saturday or Sunday, we recommend that it be received by the Friday before
 - iii. If you are unable to file within 30 days, then contact ISSS for an updated I-20.
 - c. Review checklist for documents needed to apply.
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USCIS offers 2 different ways to file an I-765 (OPT) application with USCIS.

*You must choose one option. You cannot choose both options.

1. Mail application to [USCIS lockbox](#).
2. Online filing of [I-765](#).

Filing I-765 (Pre OPT) with USCIS

You must have a new I-20 with Pre-Completion OPT recommendation from ISSS to file I-765 (Pre-Completion OPT) with USCIS.

USCIS offers 2 different ways to file an I-765 (Post-Completion OPT) application with USCIS. You must choose one option. You cannot choose both options. ISSS recommends you file online.

1. Online filing of [I-765](#).
2. Mail application to [USCIS lockbox](#).

See next slide for Comparison

*Go to ISSS [Pre-Completion OPT webpage](#) for the following tutorials:

1. Online filing of I-765 for OPT/STEM OPT
2. Mailing I-765 for OPT/STEM OPT

Only if you are unable to file online, then you can mail your application and supporting documents to [USCIS](#). Review ISSS Mailing I-765 for OPT/STEM OPT tutorial . (BEFORE mailing your application, we highly recommend [meeting with an Advisor](#) from ISSS to find out why you are unable to file online).

Online Filing vs. Mailing Application

ISSS recommends that you file online. ***You must choose one option. You cannot choose both options. **Do not file with USCIS until you have the I-20 with OPT recommendation from ISSS.***

Online Filing

Save all required documents for Pre-Completion OPT application on your computer.
Create online account with USCIS.
File I-765 for Pre-Completion OPT.
Upload supporting documents in online application.
Receive same day notification, receipt number, that application has been filed with USCIS.

Review slides 11-14

Mailing Application to USCIS

Gather all required documents for Pre-Completion OPT application.
Complete I-765.
Make a copy of your complete application, prior to mailing.
Mail application to USCIS.
If application is rejected, it will be returned to you. ****If your application is returned to you, contact ISSS, to get a new I-20 (outside 30 day filing window).***

Review slides 15-16

Required Documentation if Filing Online

2 x 2 Photo of You

You will need to get a new passport style color photograph taken.

Review the [Department of State photo guidelines](#).

Form I-94

Retrieve I-94 at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>

If you have a paper I-94, include a copy both sides of the card

If you changed your status to F-1 and have not left the US since getting F-1 status, you will need to submit a copy of your I-797A approval notice.

Employment Authorization Document (EAD) or Government ID

Copy of previous EAD card, if you have ever had OPT(pre- or post-completion) or STEM OPT.

If you do not have an EAD, then you will need to submit a copy of your passport bio page.

*If your passport will be expiring within 6 months, you will need to write a letter acknowledging your passport expiration date and that you plan on renewing your passport before it expires.

*If your I-94 has your old passport number on it, then you will need to submit a copy of your current and your previous passport.

Proof of Enrollment

Submit documentation to show that you have been enrolled full-time for one academic year.

University Transcript.

Previously Authorized CPT or OPT

Additional Information if Filing Online

For filing the online I-765 Pre-Completion OPT Application to USCIS

Additional Information Continued

Give the details of your currently authorized post-completion OPT

Also, If you had previous CPT authorization:

Section: Select “Evidence”

Question: “Previously authorized CPT or OPT”

Additional Information: Enter the type of employment authorization, indicate if part-time or full-time, degree level, authorization dates, and any receipt numbers (IOE or YSC) associated with the authorization.

Example for CPT: CPT; Full-time; Master’s; Authorized (05/31/2020 - 08/15/2020).

Example for OPT: Post-Completion OPT; Full-time; Master’s; Authorized (01/21/2021 - 01/20/2022); IOE123456789.

Review and Submit Online to USCIS

Review your application

This is where you can check your application before you submit.

Check to make sure that you have spelled things correctly as well as entered any dates in the US format of MM/DD/YYYY.

Your application summary

This is a summary of all the information that you have provided in your application.

Your statement

You must read and agree to the statements that are listed in this section.

Your signature

Type in your full legal name, for the digital signature.

Pay and submit

The final step to submit the Form I-76–

Required Documentation if Mailing

Assemble your documents using the suggested order below; held together by a paper clip or binder clip. Do not staple your documents together.

1. Application/filing fee. Fees are subject to change, so please refer to uscis.gov/i-765 for the current filing fee amount.
 - a. You will need to use a personal check, cashier's check or money order [from a U.S. bank account] payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security". If needed, search online about how to write a check.
2. 2 recent passport-style color photographs.
 - a. You will need to get new passport style color photographs taken.
 - b. Review the [Department of State photo guideline](#) for size dimensions.
3. Form [G-1145](#), E-notification of Application/Petition Acceptance.
4. Form [I-765 Application for Employment Authorization](#). (All pages, completed, and signed).
 - a. Read the [USCIS Instructions for Form I-765](#).
 - b. Review slides 7-27 of ISSS [Mailing I-765 for OPT/STEM OPT](#) for I-765 Completion Guide.
5. Photocopy of I-20 with Pre-Completion OPT recommendation.
6. Photocopy of valid passport biographical page.
 - a. *If your passport will be expiring within 6 months, you will need to write a letter acknowledging your passport expiration date and that you plan on renewing your passport before it expires.
 - b. *If your I-94 has your old passport number on it, then you will need to submit a copy of your current and your previous passport.
- 7.

Review and Mail to USCIS

Pre-Completion OPT Process

6. USCIS processes Pre-Completion OPT application.

- a. Within 2-3 weeks of USCIS receiving your Pre-Completion OPT application, a paper receipt (Form I-797) will be mailed to the mailing address that you provided as your mailing address in your application (Form I-765).
 - i. If you filed online, then you will receive notification that your application was received on the day that you filed the application with USCIS. .
 - ii. Review the receipt for any errors in your name or date of birth. If there are errors, please contact ISSS.
- b. Processing of your OPT application can take 2-3 months, sometimes longer.
 - i. You cannot change your requested OPT dates, once you have filed/mailed your OPT application with USCIS.
 - ii.

While I-765 is Pending

1. Do not work.
 - a.

Employment Authorization

EAD work permit

- Report EAD typographic error(s) to ISSS.
- Only work based on given dates printed on card, unless there is an error.
- Paid or unpaid employment, must be directly related to major field of study.

7. Student receives EAD card.

- a. Once your OPT application has been approved, USCIS will mail you 2 documents, separately:
 - i. Form I-797 approval notice;
 - ii.



Maintaining F-1 Status on Pre-Completion OPT

Maintain your F-1 status by continuing to be enrolled and pursuing your degree.

Do not work until your Pre-Completion OPT has been approved, you have your EAD card in hand, then work within the approved dates indicated on your EAD card.

All employment must be directly related to your major field of study.

Employment can be paid or unpaid.

You are not required to report your employment to ISSS or via the SEVP Portal during Pre-Completion OPT.

Report living address and any change in living address within 10 days of the change directly in your mySJSU account.

THANK YOU!

Email: international-office@sjsu.edu

