



F-1 STUDENT JOB AID FOR ALL NON-STEM OPT APPLICATIONS

Note: This checklist is intended to serve as general guidance on the OPT application process. Your school may have special requirements that are not covered on this checklist. You should always speak with an international advisor at your school regarding OPT or any other benefit associated with your F-1 status.

Step	Action	Completed
1.	If you believe you are eligible for OPT and would benefit from practical training in your field of study, request a recommendation for OPT from an international advisor who is a Designated School Official (DSO) at your school. Your DSO has to recommend you for OPT in SEVIS and provide you with an updated Form I-20 showing the recommendation. You will submit that Form I-20 with the application for employment authorization.	
2.	Complete the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization . The Form I-765 and instructions are available on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Web site (www.uscis.gov) under Immigration Forms.	
3.	Gather all immigration documents and other supporting materials to submit with the application for employment authorization, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form I-94 - photocopy of both sides • Valid passport - photocopy of photo page, renewal page if original has expired, and pages showing amendments such as name changes, corrections, etc. • Visa (if applicable) - photocopy of visa page • Photocopies of all Forms I-20 you have been issued • Photocopies of any previous employment authorization documents (EAD) • Two identical photographs (photograph instructions are found on the Form I-765 instructions under Required Documentation) • \$340 fee (check or Money Order payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security) 	
4.	Schedule a meeting with your DSO to receive the updated Form I-20 with OPT recommendation, and to review your application to ensure you have properly completed the Form I-765 and have all of the required supporting documents.	
5.	Make a photocopy of all application materials.	
6.	File the Form I-765 and supporting documents listed in item 3 with the appropriate USCIS Service Center (depending on where you live).	

Important OPT Reminders:

- For pre-completion OPT, you can file the Form I-765 up to 90 days before being enrolled for a full academic year, as long as the OPT will not begin until after you have completed a full academic year. If you have been enrolled for a full academic year, you can file the Form I-765 up to 120 days prior to the requested OPT start date.
- For post-completion OPT, you can file the Form I-765 up to 90 days before your program end date and no later than 60 days after your program end date.
- The Form I-765 must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date your advisor made the OPT recommendation in SEVIS (see page 1 of the printed Form I-20 for the date).
- If you move and do not provide USCIS with your new address, your EAD will be returned to USCIS. To change your address, submit an online Form AR-11 to USCIS, and ask your DSO to update SEVIS.
- Your OPT employment must be directly related to your field of study and cannot begin until you have the EAD card in hand (and the start date has arrived).
- F-1 status is dependent upon full-time employment or volunteer service while on post-completion OPT. You cannot accrue more than 90 days of unemployment while on post-completion OPT. If you are close to 90 days, consult with your DSO.
- You will need to continue to update your DSO with address changes and changes in employment while on post-completion OPT.