

Palo Alto University
Post-Completion Optional Practical Training for F-1 Students

Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) is post-degree work authorization so you may pursue employment in your area of study. A job offer is NOT required in order for you to apply for or be granted optional practical training.

You must apply for OPT authorization to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). *You may not begin any employment without USCIS authorization.* For USCIS's current processing time of I-765s (OPT applications), please check: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>.

Disclaimer: Any advice provided to you by PAU International Student Services, as well as the information in this packet, does not constitute legal advice. Additionally, due to the fluid nature of governmental interpretation, the 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, but please be mindful that each case is fact-specific and it is advised that you contact an experienced immigration attorney if you have questions regarding your situation.

WHEN TO APPLY: Starting **90** days before the program end-date (see item #5 on your I-20) until **60 days** after the program end-date.

WORK AUTHORIZATION DATES: Your Post-Completion OPT can start as early as the day after your program end date (usually your last day of internship), or no later than **60 days** after the program end date or any day in between. *You will specify what start date and end date on this application form.* The period of time allowed for Post-Completion OPT is 12 months, minus any previous periods of OPT that you may have used prior to completing your degree.

Authorization comes in the form of a card called an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) which is mailed to you once your OPT application is approved.

PLEASE NOTE: Twelve months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) disqualifies you for any Optional Practical Training. On-campus employment does not reduce the amount of available Optional Practical Training.

How to Apply:

OPT applications can be submitted ONLINE by creating an account at: <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/> If you apply online, have all documents ready for upload before you begin filling out the I-765 form. ***Do not complete and submit application online until you have completed all steps below!***

Have a meeting with International Student Services at PAU to review the following:

- **A completed I-765 Form** (Application for Employment Authorization): You will submit this form online at uscis.gov, but you can download the form to fill it out as a draft at: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>. For step by step instructions on how to fill out the I-765, click here: https://www.paloalto.edu/sites/default/files/i-765_with%20comments.pdf
OR
Complete but DO NOT SUBMIT the online I-765 form at <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/> download a copy.
- DocuSign Post-Completion Optional Practical Training Application Form, with faculty advisor. This will be sent to you from the international student services office, and routed to you, your DCT or academic advisor and then to ISS.

- Photocopy of current I-20
- Photocopy of any previous employment authorization documents (EAD)

After receiving these documents, you will be issued a new I-20 form with OPT endorsement on it.
****You must submit your complete Practical Training application to the USCIS online within 30 days of the date on the new OPT – endorsed I-20****

The Complete Application includes:

- Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization
Fillable form: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> OR
- Form I-20s
A photocopy of the new I-20 with Optional Practical Training endorsement located on page 2.
- Photocopy of your passport photo page
- Photocopy of your F-1 Visa
- Photocopy of your I-94 Download your I-94 form (if you don't already have a copy of it) from here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>
- Fee for processing Form I-765 (Currently it is \$410.00). Credit card fee payment is available for online applications.
- Two identical full-frontal color passport photographs – Please review photograph requirements [here](#). Using [a photo tool](#) to ensure passable photos is an option. Photo files to upload for online applications- select 620x620 size, 300 dpi

After submitting the I-765 and all supporting documents online, you will automatically get a “**Notice of Action**” (form I-797) stating that your documents have been received, and that the “processing time is approximately 90 days from the date of this receipt notice.”

After Submitting Your Application

Employment is permitted only *after* you receive the EAD (Employment Authorization Document) card, and only during the period specified on the card.

You may check the current processing times for your OPT application by going to:
<https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>

Please check your EAD to ensure that the information is correct. Send a photocopy of your EAD to the International Student Services.

90 DAY UNEMPLOYMENT RULE = Out of Status

F-1 students on Post-Completion OPT who are unemployed for more than 90 days will be considered out of status. When you are hired, you must report the name and address to the Student Services as soon as possible

so she can update your SEVIS record and print out a new I-20 for you. Once your SEVIS record is updated with your employer information, the 90 day clock stops ticking.

USCIS has also advised that unpaid work can be considered as employment, but must be in your field of study.

Traveling Outside the U.S. While on Post Completion Practical Training

If you are planning to apply for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training it is not recommended that you leave the U.S. until you have received your EAD card and have employment. *If you leave the U.S. after you graduate and have not applied for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training completion practical training, you will lose your eligibility to apply.*

Here is a list of documents needed to re-enter the U.S. while on your year of OPT.

- The EAD card
- A valid I-20 with a travel signature on page 3 that is no older than 6 months.
- Valid passport with an expiration date of at least 6 months into the future.
- Valid F-1 visa stamp in passport (Visa stamps may only be renewed outside of the US, ideally in your home country.)
- Evidence of a job offer in the form of a letter from your employer that states that you will be employed by that company for the period indicated on your EAD.

Reporting Requirements after Graduation

During your post completion OPT, you are still in F-1 status. It is your legal responsibility to report the following information to the office of student services:

- Any change in your residence address or name within 10 days of the change occurring.
- The name and address of your employer as soon as you are employed. If you change employers, you must report the name and address of the new employer.
- Your departure from the U.S. prior to the end date of the practical training period if you have decided not to return or will return in another visa status.
- Any change of immigration status
- Addition of an F-2 dependent or termination of an F-2 dependent's status.
- Please remember to send a copy of your EAD to International Student Services

We will update your SEVIS record, but you can choose to report updates/changes directly to USCIS via the SEVP Portal. Once your EAD card becomes valid, you will get an email invitation to set up an [SEVP Portal login](#) (this is not required).

Questions? Contact Lisa Harris, International Student Services Email: lharris@paloinc.edu Phone: 650-433-3851