

Auburn University
Office of International Education

201 Hargis Hall
Auburn, AL 36849-5159

E-mail: intledu@auburn.edu
Phone: (334) 844-5001
Fax: (334) 844-4983

Optional Practical Training (F-1 Off-Campus Employment)
Application Instructions

Revised: 9/8/2008 No OPT applications will be accepted during peak periods of check-ins for new students

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is temporary employment authorization that gives F-1 students an opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to a practical work experience off campus prior to or after graduation. Most F-1 students who have been in student status for *one full academic year* are eligible for up to 12 months of OPT. This includes time accrued while maintaining F-1 status at another institution prior to attending Auburn, time authorized by an International Student Advisor to be registered for less than a full course of study during the first year of one's study, and under other special circumstances.

OPT is available in the following cases:

Pre-Completion:

- Part-time or full-time during the student's annual vacation and other times when school is not in session if the student intends, and is eligible to register for the next semester (graduates and undergraduates);
- Part-time while school is in session (graduates and undergraduates);

Part-time or full-time after completion of all course requirements for the degree, excluding thesis/dissertation (graduates only);

- If you choose this option, you will need to reapply for post when you complete.

Post-Completion:

- Full-time after the completion of *all* requirements for one's degree (graduates and undergraduates)

Authorization for Optional Practical Training is granted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Service or INS -and can take 90 days to 120 days to obtain. It is important that you apply for the authorization at the earliest possible date.

If you are applying for OPT based on completion of all coursework and/or completion of your academic program, you must submit an application for optional practical training no later than the day that you take the certificate of completion and no earlier than 60 days prior to taking that certificate.

*NOTE: The term "graduates" in this context refers to those students who will either be graduating at the end of the semester or will qualify for a certificate of completion that term, *even* if they won't graduate until the following semester.

How to Get Employment Authorization for OPT:

Review the information contained in the OIE OPT application packet.

Graduate students who are planning to defend their thesis or dissertation prior to the deadline are advised to submit their OPT application further in advance than if they want to start working prior to or immediately after their defense date. Remember, it takes about 3 months for you to receive your EAD card. Thirty days is the *minimum* amount of time that you want to leave prior to submitting your OPT application to OIE.

An advisor will review your application. If pre-approved, the advisor will produce an 1-20 with the recommendation for OPT to accompany your application. If you are approved, USCIS will send an Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) to OIE listing the dates you are authorized for employment.

An advisor will produce a new 1-20 showing you have been approved for OPT and email you to pick up your new 1-20 and EAD card.

The application for Optional Practical Training consists of the following items:

- ___ OPT Application Checklist
- ___ Completed Optional Practical Training Information Sheet
- ___ Form 1-765*, completed and signed with the following mailing address (# 3 on 1-765): C/O Office of International Education, Auburn University, P.O. Box 2641, Auburn, AL 36831-2641.
In #16 write (c)(3)(A) for pre OR (c) (3) (B) for post.
- ___ Personal check or money order made out to "USCIS" (verify cost on USCIS website as it is subject to change).
- ___ Two color passport style photos (2 inches x 2 inches) with your name, date of birth (dd/mm/yr) and SEVIS number written on the back of both photos. In your photo, your head should be between 1 and 1 3/8 inches from the top of your head to your chin.
- ___ Copy-of most recent 1-20
- ___ Copy of your visa, and the biographical pages of your passport; include a copy of any pages indicating extensions of your passport as your passport must be valid when you apply to be granted OPT.
- ___ Copy of front and back of your 1-94 card
- ___ Copy of any previous Employment Authorization Documents (EAD) (both sides)
- ___ Typed advisor's letter of recommendation for Optional Practical Training printed on department letterhead (see attached sample)

NOTE*: Forms and information on fees available at: www.uscis.gov (Click on "Immigration Forms" at the top)

While on OPT, you still will be considered an F-1 student under the responsibility of the Office of International Education (OIE). Auburn University is responsible for notifying SEVIS with any changes in your address, employer, periods of unemployment, or if you terminate OPT, or begin a new program. You must remember to update us with these changes; we recommend you do this by email to your international advisor or to intledu@auburn.edu

Students on post-completion OPT are also eligible to continue their insurance coverage with Auburn during the time they are engaged in OPT. However, they must elect or decline such coverage PRIOR to starting OPT. See the OPT FAQ's regarding insurance questions while on OPT or contact insurance@auburn.edu.

Sample Advisor's Recommendation Letter for OPT

Date: _____

Director, Office of International Education
Auburn University
201 Hargis Hall
Auburn, Alabama 36849

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter serves to confirm that [student name], a citizen of [country or citizenship], be recommended authorization to engage in (check one):

___ Pre-completion or ___ Post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). He/she is presently a registered student working toward a _____ degree in the _____ Department at Auburn University. This student (check one): ___ Will be taking an annual vacation or official school break of 20___ & intends to register for the following semester; ___ Will be on Optional Practical Training while school is in session; ___ Has completed all graduate course requirements excluding the thesis or dissertation and anticipates completing his/her degree on: _____. ___ Has completed or is expected to complete his/her course of study on _____.

I understand that OPT is defined in the regulations as "temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study". An F-1 student applying for Optional Practical Training MUST have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis in a service-approved institution for at least one full academic year prior to beginning work. A student who still has coursework remaining in his/her degree program can only work 20 hours or less per week while school is in session. OPT after completion of the course of study will only be granted for fulltime use. Use of full time Curriculum Practical Training (CPT) for 12 months or more eliminates the participant's eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Re-enrolling in a degree program will cancel your OPT.

By my signature below I am attesting that to the best of my knowledge the information provided above is accurate.

****NOTE: ALL the above conditions must be met. Failure of students to fulfill requirements of this document will result in the student falling out of F-1 Status and may result in revocation of their OPT card.**

Sincerely,

Signature: _____ Printed Name of Academic Advisor/Major Professor _____

Title: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

STUDENT MUST SIGN BELOW

I understand the conditions under which this request is made and hereby agree to these conditions.

Printed Name of Student

Student Signature

Date

**Optional Practical Training (OPT) Information Sheet Auburn
University, Office of International Education 2008-2009**

Date Stamp

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Auburn ID No.: _____ SEVIS ID No.: _____

Current address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Auburn Email: _____ Personal Email: _____

Department: _____ Degree level of study: _____

Degree Program Status: (Graduate students only): I am pursuing a ___ thesis/dissertation ___ non-thesis/dissertation option

___ I have completed ___ I have not completed all course requirements for my degree

___ I have completed all course requirements for my degree and am working on my thesis/dissertation/final project.

Anticipated completion date (graduation or date you plan to obtain a certificate of completion, whichever is first): _____

Type of OPT Requested: ___ Pre-completion ___ Post-completion (see instructions for definition)—Do not apply for POST unless you

know without a doubt that you will be completed and that you will meet all graduate school deadlines for turning in all work.

Number of Hours per week (Full time = 20+ hours or more; see instructions for restrictions): _____

Requested OPT Start Date*: _____ Requested OPT End Date: _____

Prior to this request, ___ I have ___ I have not been authorized for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for my current degree level. I have used ___ months of Curricular Practical Training (CPT).

Prior to this request, ___ I have ___ I have not been authorized for OPT for my current degree level.

I have used ___ months of Optional Practical Training (OPT).

EXPLAIN What the job Will Consist of and How It Relates To Degree:

Location of Optional Practical Training (if known at time of application)

Your Position/Title: _____

Name of Employer/Company: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Name of Supervisor/Title: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Name of Human Resources Supervisor/Title: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

OPT Application Checklist

Instructions: Incomplete OPT applications will not be accepted. To ensure that you have included all the required components of your application, please complete this checklist and ATTACH IT TO THE FRONT OF YOUR OPT APPLICATION before you submit your application.

Date: _____

- _____ OPT Information Sheet (PLEASE provide an alternate email address in case your AU account expires)
- _____ Form 1-765
- _____ Form 1-765 filing fee payable to USCIS
- _____ 2 passport style photos with name, birthdate and SEVIS no. on back
- _____ Copy of most recent SEVIS I-20
- _____ Copy of 1-94 card – front and back
- _____ Copy of passport info pages, including any extensions
- _____ Copy of U.S. visa
- _____ Advisor's letter of recommendation for OPT
- _____ Copy of previous EAD card (if applicable)

DO NOT STAPLE DOCUMENTS TOGETHER