

**Auburn University**  
**Office of International Programs**

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

*Revised: 11/3/2011 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);

**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 OIP 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 OIP.

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

An advisor will produce a new I-20 showing you have been approved for OPT and email you to pick up your new I-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 I-765\*, completed and signed. Leave #3 on I-765 blank; OIP will provide mailing label.  
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 (mm/dd/yyyy) 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 I-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 I-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](http://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 Programs (OIP). 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](mailto: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 Deborah Bledsoe at [insurance@auburn.edu](mailto:insurance@auburn.edu).



**Optional Practical Training (OPT) Information Sheet**  
**Auburn University, Office of International Programs 2011-2012**

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

**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.

**Requested OPT Start Date\*:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Requested OPT End Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Name of Employer/Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone/email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Auburn University, Office of International Programs**  
**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
- \_\_\_\_\_ Form I-765
- \_\_\_\_\_ Form I-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 I-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
- \_\_\_\_\_ Offer Letter of Employment (if available)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of previous EAD card (if applicable)