

Applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT)

The application form: Form I-765 (online at www.uscis.gov/i-765). You will complete the form on-line then print it.

Instructions are rather clear, but the following tips for completion may be helpful:

- Part 1: click “initial permission to accept employment”
- Please pay close attention to the address information. USCIS mail is NOT forwarded to new addresses if you move.
- Under “Other Information:”, you will not have an “Alien Number” or “USCIS Online Account Number”, so leave those blank
- If you do not have a social security card (answered “no” at #13a), complete #14 – 17b, including your parent’s name even though they likely do not have a social security card.
- The code in section #27 is “C 3 B” for post-completion practical training.
- Unless you are in a STEM degree, leave 28 – 31b blank

Do NOT file your application online. You should fill out the application and then print it out. All supporting materials and the fee must be mailed with the application.

Preparing the materials to accompany the application:

- Prepare copies of supporting documentation, including:
 - Photocopy of all I-20s.
 - Copy of passport photo page and F-1 visa page (or Notice of Action of change of status to F-1 visa)
 - Copy of I-94, printed from www.cbp.gov.
 - Copy of any previously issued EAD (employment authorization documents)
 - OPTIONAL, but recommended: recent transcript of courses taken and currently enrolled for
- Obtain 2 passport style photos (available at CVS on Main Street, or PFS in Christiansburg)
- A check or money order for \$410 made payable U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Schedule an appointment with the International Student Advisor in the Center for Global Education and Engagement

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- Determine what date you want your work authorization to begin. It can be as early as the day after your completion of studies (last day of exams), or as late as 60 days after completion of studies. Provide your preferred start date to the International Student Advisor.
- The International Student Advisor will issue a new I-20 in SEVIS indicating recommendation for OPT. Student and advisor must sign the new I-20 and make a copy to include with the application.

Mailing the Application

The Center for Global Education and Engagement suggests putting your OPT application packet together in this order, with the check on the very top in the upper left hand corner, followed by the photos in a protective envelope with your name noted on the envelope, and then the I- 765 form and remaining documents. DO NOT STAPLE the application packet together, rather use a paper clip. Arrange the order of the package as follows:

- Check for \$410 made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- Photos, in protective envelope
- The I-765 application form
- The new I-20 issued in SEVIS with recommendation for OPT, and start/end date requested.
- All previous I-20s issued from any school in the U.S., pages 1 & 2, in reverse chronological order
- Copy of I-94
- Copy of Passport photo page
- Copy of visa
- Copy of any previously issued Employment Authorization Documents (EAD card)

All of the items are then mailed to a lockbox, where they will process the check and forward the application to one of the USCIS service centers. You'll get a paper receipt in the mail with a tracking number in a few weeks. If you do not receive this paper within two months, please notify the Center for Global Education and Engagement.

***IMPORTANT!** Be absolutely sure that your application arrives to the lockbox address no more than 30 days after your OPT I-20 is issued in SEVIS, or your request WILL be DENIED. It is recommended that you keep a copy of your application and that the Center for Global Education and Engagement retain a copy.

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FOR EXPRESS MAIL & COURIER

FOR U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

USCIS

P.O. BOX 660867

DALLAS, TX 75266

or

FOR EXPRESS (UPS, FED-X)

USCIS

ATTN: AOS

2501 S. STATE HWY. 121 BUSINESS SUITE 400

LEWISVILLE, TX 75067

Questions? Contact gloaled@radford.edu or 831-6200.