

Interested in PRE-Completion OPT (Optional Practical Training)?

What is Pre-Completion OPT?

- Pre-Completion OPT is for students who still have coursework remaining to complete their degree program and who want to work part-time.
- OPT employment must relate to your field of study (your major).
- Pre-Completion OPT authorizes students to be able to work a maximum of 20 hours per week.
- OPT can be authorized with or without an offer of employment. In other words, you can apply for OPT before finding a job.
- You must apply for OPT for any type of work, even unpaid jobs, often called volunteering or internships.
- Employment can be for multiple employers.
- You cannot work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session. You can work up to 40 hours per week during breaks.

FYI: SEVIS/USCIS considers 20+ hours of work in a week to be full-time. Fewer than 20 hours per week is part-time.

Who is Eligible? And How Does Pre-Completion OPT Affect Post-Completion OPT?

- You must be on an F-1 visa and be in status in SEVIS.
- You cannot be on Academic Probation or Disqualified.
- You must keep insurance coverage at all times.
- You must have completed one academic year in current program to be eligible to apply for OPT.
- **Post**-Completion OPT allows a maximum of 12 months of full-time employment. **Pre**-completion OPT reduces **post**-completion OPT by one-half, i.e. 6 months of PRE reduces POST by 3 months; 10 months of PRE reduces POST by 5 months.

Things to Know Before Applying for Pre-Completion OPT

- You can apply up to 90 days prior to the time you will be eligible to work.
- Be careful when requesting the start and end dates for POST-Completion OPT because you cannot apply for POST-Completion OPT until PRE-Completion OPT ends.
- It is OK to apply for OPT before you have a job offer, but if you already have an offer, supply employment description, hours, location, contact information, etc. when you request OPT.
- It takes a long time for OPT applications to be processed. 8 – 12 weeks is common.
- You can check processing times and your case status at the USCIS website:
<https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do> You need your receipt number to check your case status.
- You cannot start working prior to the authorized start date.

Steps to Apply for Pre-Completion OPT

1. Your first step to apply is to submit the form “Request OPT – PRE-Completion OPT” to ARC.

- If you are eligible, you will receive an updated I-20 with OPT information printed on page 2. Sign and date page 1. Send a copy of this I-20 to USCIS as part of the application packet (see below), and keep the original with you to use as your official I-20.
- USCIS must receive your application within 30 days after the OPT recommendation is entered into SEVIS. See page 2 of your printed Form I-20 for the date it was entered.

2. Go to <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> to fill out ‘Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization.’

Form I-765 is the application for Post-Completion OPT. Make sure you use the most current edition of Form I-765.

- Fill it out on line, print it, and then sign it, or you can print a blank form and fill it out by hand. Use black ink only.
- Be careful when signing the form. Keep your signature completely within the box! Use black ink.
- Answer Item 10 and Item 11 to receive a Social Security number.
 - Answering 10 and 11 is also used to request a replacement Social Security card.
- If you have ever received a social security number, do NOT answer Items 10 and 11.
- If any question could apply to you, don’t leave it blank, write ‘none,’ or “n/a” for “not applicable.”
- Use **(c)(3)(A)** on Item Number 20, on Form I-765.
- Make sure Form I-765 is completely filled out and signed.
- Send in Original Form I-765.

3. Prepare the application packet for mailing. Assemble it in this order:

- \$410 Filing Fee. (Most current fees can be found at <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/our-fees>.)
Credit Card payment – use form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions
<https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450>. They accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover
Check or Money Order – pay to “Department of Homeland Security.” Spell it out; do not abbreviate.
Suggestion: Write your name and SEVIS number in the Memo section.
- 2 Identical U.S. Passport-Style Photos – In pencil, lightly write your name and SEVIS # along the back edge of the photos.
- Completed Form G-1145, e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance, available at www.uscis.gov/g-1145.
- Original Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
- Your recently issued I-20 that shows OPT dates on page 2. Send a copy of your I-20 and keep the original.
- Copies from your Passport:
 - Identity pages (with your name, picture, expiration and/or renewal dates, etc.),
 - Visa, and
 - The most recent entry stamp in your passport, or a copy of your electronic I-94, available at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>
- Copies of available previous I-20s, especially if you have had CPT or OPT authorization.
- If applicable, a copy of any previous EAD (Employment Authorization Document) cards.

4. Send all of the above in one big envelope to one of the addresses below. Use a mailing service that gives you a receipt and a way to track your package.

If using an Express Mail Service, such as UPS, FedEx, or DHL, use this address:

USCIS
Attn: AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034
(800) 375-5283

If using the United States Postal Service (USPS), use this address:

USCIS
P.O. Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

What are my Responsibilities While on Pre-Completion OPT?

- Students on OPT must report any change of name or contact information, and any change of employment to P/DSO in ARC within 10 days of a change.
- DSOs (Designated School Officials) to contact in The Tseng College
 - Danielle Keesee 818.677.7482 danielle.g.keesee@csun.edu
 - Lesa Green 818.677.3404 lesa.green@csun.edu
 - Lauren Jarvis 818.677.3272 lauren.jarvis@csun.edu
- You must maintain international student health/medical insurance while on OPT.
- It is highly recommended that you keep documentation of each job, name of position held, proof of the duration of each position, contact information for supervisor or manager, and a description of the work. (This is recommended for any type of job, paid or unpaid, and for any type of OPT or work authorization.)
- This rarely happens with students on PRE-Completion OPT, but you should be aware that anytime a student on any type of OPT transfers to a new school (or changes to a new level of study), current OPT authorization ceases as of the day of the SEVIS transfer. You must not work past the day of the transfer to avoid unauthorized employment.
- You can read EVERYTHING about OPT at these sites:
 - <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/employment>
 - <https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/optional-practical-training>
 - https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub/student-records/fm-student-employment/f-1-optional-practical-training-opt#general_information