

International Students & Scholars Office	888 Commonwealth Avenue, Second Floor	Boston, Massachusetts	02215
Telephone: 617/353-3565	isso@bu.edu	www.bu.edu/isso	Facsimile: 617/358-1170

Below is a checklist of the items you need to complete your Optional Practical Training (OPT) application. A full description of eligibility for OPT and the steps needed to complete the application process can be found on the ISSO web site:
<http://www.bu.edu/isso/employment-internships/student-off-campus-work-and-training/optional/>

To apply for Optional Practical Training you will need to make an appointment with your ISSO advisor and bring the following documents to your appointment to request an OPT recommendation.

During your appointment, your ISSO advisor will evaluate your OPT application materials. If you meet all eligibility requirements, your advisor will issue a new I-20 with an OPT recommendation and provide instructions for you to mail your OPT application directly to USCIS. The ISSO recommendation is a required part of your OPT application.

OPT Application Checklist:

- Student Acknowledgment for Post-Completion OPT** (attached), completed and signed.
- USCIS Form I-765** – typed and printed out
 - It is *strongly recommended* that you fill out the PDF version of the form, then print and sign it.
 - If you choose to complete it by hand, print neatly in BLOCK letters using blue ink.
 - Use an address in section three (3) that will be valid for at least three (3) months.
 - In Section 16, enter the correct employment code as follows:
 - **(c)(3)(A)** – for Pre-Completion OPT (OPT that will occur *during* your program of study)
 - **(c)(3)(B)** – for Post-Completion OPT (OPT that will begin after graduation)
- Completed **Form G-1145** – typed and printed out
- Original immigration documents**, including:
 - All original I-20s ever issued to you, including I-20s from other schools
 - Printed I-94 record or original paper I-94 stapled in passport
 - Valid passport with most recent entry stamp
 - Any previous Employment Authorization Documents (EADs), if applicable
- Personal Check or Money Order for **\$410.00**, payable to "**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**."
- Two (2) photographs** – size 2x2 inches and meeting USCIS/DOS passport photograph specifications. See: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/photos/photos.html>.
- Academic Documentation, as applicable:
 - **Proof of Expected Graduation** – If you are applying for OPT to begin after completion of your program of study, you must be registered for graduation in the university information system (UIS), OR must provide a letter from your academic department verifying the date on which you are expected to complete your program of study.
 - **Verification of Thesis/Dissertation Requirement** – If you are a graduate student and have completed all course requirements, but are still finishing your thesis/dissertation or equivalent, you must provide a letter from your academic department (1) to verify that you have completed all required coursework, and (2) to specify the date(s) on which you are expected to complete your thesis or defend and submit your dissertation. This letter is required of all students in a doctoral program unless your thesis has already been accepted by the library and a notation indicating this can be seen on your electronic transcript.

Please bring **original** immigration documents for your OPT appointment for ISSO review.

In addition, please bring **one photocopy** of these documents to include by mail with your OPT application to USCIS.

Student Acknowledgment for Post-Completion OPT
(F-1 Students)

International Students & Scholars Office	♦	888 Commonwealth Avenue, Second Floor	♦	Boston, Massachusetts	♦	02215
Telephone: 617/353-3565	♦	isso@bu.edu	♦	www.bu.edu/isso	♦	Facsimile: 617/358-1170

NAME: _____ BU ID: _____

There are several important rules and procedures that must be followed after applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment authorization. Complying with these rules and procedures is necessary to maintain lawful F-1 immigration status. This form includes a summary of key responsibilities only for OPT students and does not include all rules related to F-1 immigration status and OPT employment authorization.

- **SUMMARY OF OPT RESPONSIBILITIES:** More detailed information about maintaining your F-1 status during OPT can be found on the ISSO website: <http://www.bu.edu/isso/employment-internships/student-off-campus-work-and-training/optional/>
- **ADDRESS REPORTING:** Report your “Immigration-U.S.” and “OPT Employer” addresses through the BU Student Link (under the purple “Personal” tab, select Address and Phone): <http://www.bu.edu/link/>
- **OPT WEB PORTAL:** To pay your ISSO OPT Processing Fee or submit copies of your EAD, change of status notifications, and end of employment notifications, go to the BU ISSO OPT Web Portal: <http://www.bu.edu/isso/optwebportal>

1. **Boston University as my F-1 sponsor:** During my OPT, I will still be in F-1 immigration status, under the sponsorship of Boston University.
 - a. BU ISSO will continue to maintain my SEVIS immigration record and to advise me on travel and status questions.
 - b. It is my responsibility to inform the ISSO of any updates to my OPT application (including USCIS requests for information, approval or denial decision), and to maintain up-to-date address and OPT employer information in BU systems, and to comply with all other responsibilities and reporting requirements, including those summarized in this document.
2. **Filing my OPT Application:** My OPT application must be mailed and arrive at the USCIS within a specific timeframe. If my application is received before or after this timeframe, my application may be denied:
 - a. Filed up to 90 days prior to program completion: My application must arrive at USCIS no sooner than 90 days prior to the expiration of my current OPT authorization.
 - b. Filed no more than 30 days after DSO recommendation: My application must arrive at USCIS no later than 30 days after my ISSO advisor signs the OPT recommendation on my new Form I-20. If my I-20 will not arrive within 30 days I must request a new recommendation from the ISSO.
 - c. Cancelling my application: If extraordinary circumstances warrant it, I can attempt to cancel my OPT application only if the application has not yet been adjudicated (approved) by the USCIS Service Center. I will work with my ISSO advisor if cancellation becomes necessary.
3. **Failure to complete program requirements:** If I fail to complete all the requirements of my program, I must request an extension of my Form I-20 prior to the program end date found on my latest I-20. If I fail to request extension of my I-20 before its expiration this may lead to termination of my immigration status, and loss of my OPT benefit. If I do extend my I-20 before its expiration, this may also impact my OPT, as my dates of OPT eligibility may change.
4. **Working in my major field of study:** My OPT employment/training must be directly related to my major field of study and must be commensurate with my current level of education. I must keep up-to-date records to verify my OPT employment and must report each employer to the ISSO through the [BU Student Link](#).

5. **Reporting requirements:** In order to maintain my F-1 immigration status while on OPT, I must meet the following reporting requirements:

- Maintain up-to-date U.S. address: I must maintain an up-to-date U.S residential address on record. This must be updated within 10 days of any move. This information must be reported in [BU Student Link](#), under **“Immigration-U.S.” Address**.
- Report EAD Approval to the ISSO: I must provide the ISSO with a copy of my new OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD) as soon as it is approved by the USCIS in order to update my ISSO record, and to amend my I-20, if needed. This report can be made through the [OPT Web Portal](#).
- OPT Employer Name, Address and Dates: I must maintain up-to-date OPT employer information in the BU Student Link for each OPT employer. This information must be reported in [BU Student Link](#) under **“OPT Employer” Address**.
 - The OPT Employer address requires the name and address of each OPT employer, my first day of work at that employer, the number of hours per week worked, and a brief description of how each job is related to my major field of study.
 - I may work for multiple employers. In order to count as an “active” period of OPT, I must work at least 20 hours per week between all qualifying employers.
 - If I stop working at any employer, I must update the information to reflect my last day of employment at that job.

6. **Unemployment during OPT:** I must keep complete and accurate records of my dates of active employment and periods of unemployment.

- Maximum Period of Unemployment: I may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during my approved period of OPT.
- Reporting dates of employment through BU Student Link: I must report my start and end date for each OPT employer through the “OPT Employer” address in the [BU Student Link](#).
- Termination of SEVIS Record after exceeding maximum unemployment: If I pass the 90-day mark for unemployment, or if I do not report corrected dates of employment in the “OPT Employer” address, my SEVIS record may be terminated by U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Termination of my SEVIS record ends my lawful F-1 immigration status and OPT employment authorization.

7. **Traveling outside the U.S.** If I travel outside the U.S. *after my program completion date*, I may need the following items to apply for a new F-1 visa and re-enter the U.S. Without these items, I may experience difficulty when returning and could be prohibited from re-entering the U.S. in F-1 status:

- Valid passport
- F-1 visa in my passport that will be valid on the day I plan to return to the U.S. If I do not have a visa that will be valid for my return, I will obtain one at a U.S. consulate or embassy while outside the U.S.
- Travel signature on my Form I-20 that is less than six months old.
- OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD, also known as “OPT Card”)
- Proof of OPT Employment, such as a letter from my employer to show that I have a job or OPT activity to resume when I return to the U.S., or that I will begin a job/activity upon my return to the U.S.

8. **Ending OPT:**

- Invalidating OPT: My OPT will be cancelled or invalidated if I:
 - Enter the U.S. in another immigration status or change status in the U.S. (including as a visitor);
 - Begin a new program of study or transfer my SEVIS record to a new school;
 - Engage in unauthorized employment; or
 - Otherwise violate my F-1 immigration status.
- Sixty-day “grace” period after OPT: Following the end date on my OPT, I am permitted a period of up to 60 days to remain the U.S. I may **not** work during this period unless my immigration status is changed to a classification that permits employment, or unless I qualify for “Cap-Gap” extension (described below). I can use this 60-day grace period to transfer my F-1 status to another school, apply for a change of immigration status, process a level change to begin a new program of study, or to depart the U.S. Once I depart the U.S. during my grace period, I am not longer eligible to return in F-1 status unless I have a new I-20 for a new program of study.

c. **“Cap-Gap” Extension:** If, during my OPT, my employer files a timely-filed petition to change my status to H-1B to begin on October 1st, I may be eligible for an extension of F-1 status (and OPT work permission, if applicable) through October 1st.

I will need to provide the ISSO with a copy of my USCIS receipt or approval notice through the [OPT Web Portal](#) in order to request a “Cap-Gap” I-20. Cap-gap extension for shorter dates may also be available if I have an H-1B petition that was filed (but not received) or waitlisted by USCIS.

9. **Eligibility for future periods of OPT:** I may be eligible for an additional 12-month period of OPT if I move to a higher level of education in the U.S. (for instance, if I move from a bachelor’s to a master’s, or from a master’s to Ph.D., etc.).

I may be eligible to apply for a 24-month extension of my OPT authorization if my major is in an eligible Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) field, and I am employed for a qualifying employer. Further information about applying for a STEM OPT extension can be found on the [ISSO website](#). In order to be eligible for a STEM OPT extension, I should begin to prepare my application up to 90 days before the expiration of my current OPT. My completed application must arrive at USCIS no later than the end date of my initial OPT.

10. Selecting an OPT Start Date and beginning employment:

- a. **Recommended OPT Start Date:** The ISSO will recommend me for an OPT start date based on my request below. The start date I select must be within 60 days of my program completion date.
- b. **Actual OPT Start/End Dates approved by USCIS:** The Actual Start and End Date of OPT approved by USCIS may differ slightly from the recommended dates. OPT applications may take approximately 90 days (and sometimes longer) for USCIS review and adjudication. The USCIS may slightly change the dates of authorization when they adjudicate my application.
- c. **Changing OPT Dates:** I know that I will not be able to request a different OPT start date or end date should the dates become incompatible with a future offer of employment.
- d. **Beginning employment:** I may not begin work until I have the OPT EAD (card) in my possession and the start date of the EAD has been reached. Beginning employment prior to my date of authorization constitutes unauthorized employment and is a violation of my F-1 status.

What OPT Dates are you requesting?

OPT Start Date: _____ OPT End Date: _____

Have you attended an OPT Workshop?

Yes – Date of Workshop: _____

No – Please make certain to carefully review all information above and on our website to make certain you understand your reporting responsibilities.

Acknowledgement:

- ✓ *I have read and understand the above rules and procedures and will abide by them.*
- ✓ *I verify that I have not used any period of OPT at my current educational level or a higher educational level that would disqualify me from the OPT authorization I now seek.*
- ✓ *I understand that I must maintain accurate and current employment information on record with ISSO to ensure that my SEVIS record remains up-to-date during OPT.*

Signature of Student

Date

Original to file / Copy to Student

#17. Complete this question only if you are applying for a 24-month extension of OPT for STEM majors. "Degree" should be entered as:

- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctorate

17. (c)(3)(C) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(3)(C) in Question 16 above, list your degree, your employer's name as listed in E-Verify, and your employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in the space below.

Degree _____ Employer's Name as listed in E-Verify _____

Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number _____

18. (c)(26) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(26) in Question 16 above, please provide the receipt number of your H-1B principal spouse's most recent Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-129.

19. (c)(35) and (c)(36) Eligibility Category

a. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) or (c)(36) in Question 16 above, please provide the receipt number of the Form I-140 beneficiary's Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-140.

b. Have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime? Yes No

NOTE: If you answered "Yes" to Item Numbers 19.b., refer to Item Number 5., Item H. or Item I. in the Who May File Form I-765 section of these Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.

#18-19. These questions don't apply to applications for F-1 student employment

Certification

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the "Who May File Form I-765?" section of the instructions and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in Question 16.

Applicant's Signature _____

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy) _____

Telephone Number _____

6171234567

Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Applicant

I declare that this document was prepared by me at the request of the applicant and is based on all information of which I have any knowledge.

Preparer's Signature _____

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy) _____

Printed Name _____

Address _____

Don't forget to sign (in blue ink!)

Date of signature should be on or after ISSO recommendation

Enter your U.S. phone number

International Students & Scholars Office Telephone: 617/353-3565	888 Commonwealth Avenue, Second Floor isso@bu.edu	Boston, Massachusetts www.bu.edu/isso	02215 Facsimile: 617/358-1170
---	--	--	----------------------------------

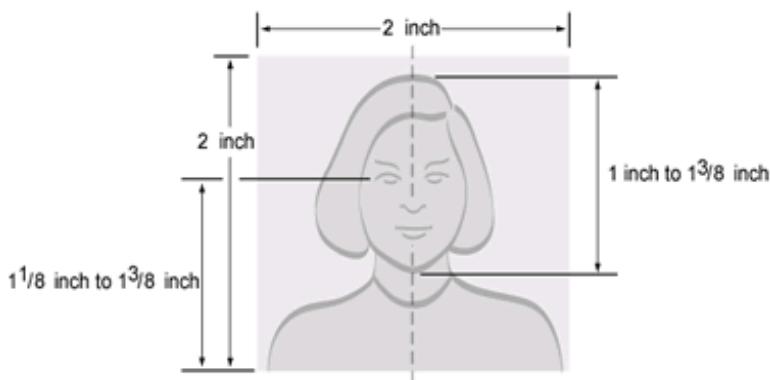
Use the following specifications when obtaining pictures to be submitted to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). For more information on photo specifications, go to:

www.travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html

(See "Step 7")

- The photo must be in color
- The picture must show your full face, front view, eyes open
- Make sure photo presents your full head from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1-3/8 inches (25 mm to 35 mm)
- Your head must be in the center of the frame
- Make sure eye height is between 1-1/8 inches to 1-3/8 inches (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
- Must be against a plain white or off-white background
- There can be no distracting shadows on the face or background
- Do your best to have a natural expression

Photo Dimensions and Sample



**The entire image must fit inside this box
(do not cut photos)**