



# INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

## COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

1024 Campus Delivery Fort Collins, CO 80523-1024 USA ☐ (970) 491-5917 ☐ [international.colostate.edu](http://international.colostate.edu)

## REQUEST FOR OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

This form is used to request authorization to participate in 12 months of post-completion Optional Practical Training for students who have completed or will be completing their degree requirements in the next 90 days.

### What is Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

- Temporary employment for practical training available at each degree level.
- Employment is directly related to the student's major area of study.
- Requires adjudication (approval) from a USCIS Service Center.

### What types of employment are permitted by OPT?

- Regular paid employment.
- Payment by multiple short-term employers.
- Work for hire (a service based on a contractual relationship).
- Self-employed business owner.
- Employment through an agency.
- Volunteers or unpaid interns (REMEMBER THIS OPTION!). Unpaid employment is considered employment on OPT, as long as the unpaid employment is directly related to the academic major listed on the student's I-20 and employment is for at least 20 hours per week. However, please keep in mind that volunteering to do work that other individuals normally get paid to do may be a violation of labor laws. If in doubt, please consult an International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) advisor.

### What must I do to be eligible to apply for OPT?

- Maintain valid F-1 status.
- Make normal progress towards degree requirements.
- Have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year.
- Have not been authorized for 12 months of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT).
- Have not already used 12 months of full-time OPT at the same or higher degree level.
- If you have had any legal issues during your time in the U.S., ISSS recommends you meet with an immigration attorney to discuss the possible impact on your OPT and other immigration benefits. Student Legal Services contracts with immigration attorneys to provide consultations once a month free of charge. More information about scheduling an appointment can be found here: <https://sls.colostate.edu/immigration/>

### When should I apply for OPT?

- Cannot apply earlier than 90 days before, or later than 60 days after, your program completion date.
- Completion date can be your graduation date or date of defense.
- Often takes USCIS up to 3 months to process the application.
- All post-completion OPT must be completed within 14 months from your program end date.
- Cancellation of an OPT application is very complicated. Make sure you are ready to apply and your course work will be completed.
- Consider renewing your driver's license before applying for OPT, if you have additional time on your I-20. You may not be permitted to renew your driver's license while your OPT is pending (but can after it is approved).



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## REQUEST FOR OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) (continued)

### How do I apply for OPT?

- It is strongly recommended that you first meet with an international student advisor to discuss the OPT application process and make sure you are aware of your status maintenance responsibilities during OPT.
- When you are ready to apply for OPT, you will need to gather all the documents outlined in the checklist on page 5 of this packet and submit them to ISSS. Please allow 5-7 business days for processing.
- After ISSS has reviewed your application, we will prepare a new I-20 recommending you for OPT. We will email you when the new I-20 is ready to be picked up. You will be responsible for mailing your application to USCIS.

### What should I do while my application for OPT is pending?

- You can check the status of your OPT application and current processing times through the [USCIS website](http://uscis.gov). You will receive a Receipt Notice/Number from USCIS within 2-3 weeks.
- Please contact your International Student Advisor if your application has been pending for 90 days or more!

### Can I travel while my OPT is pending?

- ISSS does not recommend travelling outside the U.S. while your OPT is pending.
- Once your OPT is approved, make sure you have the following documents to re-enter the U.S. after travelling:
  - Updated I-20 that shows your post-completion OPT as “approved” rather than “pending” with a travel signature less than 6 months old on the second page
  - Passport valid at least 6 months into the future
  - Unexpired visa
  - EAD card
  - Letter from your employer with the dates you will be out of the country
- While out of the country, you can apply for a new visa if your current one is expired, but keep in mind you must still demonstrate non-immigrant intent.

### How can I maintain my status after my OPT has been approved?

- During post-completion OPT, your F-1 status is contingent upon employment. You must be employed for at least 20 hours per week in a job directly related to the major listed on your I-20.
- You must submit an [OPT reporting form](#) to [iss@colostate.edu](mailto:iss@colostate.edu) every 3 months or within 10 days of any changes to your employer or physical address.
- Each day without a job reported to ISSS counts as a day of unemployment.
- You may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during OPT.  
Note: During periods of unemployment, weekends count toward the 90-day unemployment limit. Weekends are not counted toward the 90-day unemployment limit for students who are employed throughout the week.



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### OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) APPLICATION

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ CSU ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

You will not have access to your CSU email address after you graduate.

Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Degree Level: UG GR PhD Current I-20 End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Your graduation date, thesis/dissertation defense date, or last day of classes. If you have met all degree requirements, but your graduation date will be delayed an extra semester because you missed the deadline to apply for graduation, your completion date should be your defense date, last day of classes, or the end date of the semester in which you met all degree requirements).

\*You must stop all employment after your program completion date, until your OPT has been approved.\*

This date is my (check one):      Graduation Date      Defense Date      Last Day of Classes/End Date of Semester

Proposed OPT Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (Can be up to 60 days after your program completion date.)

Please check the mail service you will be using to mail your application to USCIS (ISSS will prepare mailing label):

U.S. Postal Services      Express Courier Service

State where the address listed on your I-765 form is located:      Colorado      Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**I verify that if I am using the ISSS mailing address, I give permission for ISSS staff to open and review any mail in my name delivered to ISSS. Additionally, I verify the following (please check the boxes below):**

I have read and I understand the information outlined on pages 1 and 2 of this packet.

I understand that I (and any F-2 dependents) must maintain health insurance while I am on OPT and that I am not eligible to enroll in the CSU student health insurance plan during OPT (unless I will be enrolled in Continuous Registration during OPT).

I agree to submit an [OPT reporting form](#) to ISSS every 3 months, or within 10 days of any changes, for the duration of my OPT.

The information above is accurate.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To be completed by the Student's Academic Advisor** (Please contact International Student and Scholar Services with questions)

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, the program completion date listed above is accurate.

Comments (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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### **THIS PAGE MUST BE COMPLETED BY:**

- Graduate Students who will be registered for continuous registration (CR) for a term during OPT.

### **DO NOT COMPLETE THIS PAGE IF:**

- You will not be registered for CR during OPT.
  - You are not a Graduate student.
  - You are a Spring Graduate.

### **To be completed by the student, only if you will be registered for Continuous Registration during OPT:**

**Important Information Regarding Health Insurance:** If you are going to be enrolled for Continuous Registration in the upcoming semester, you are eligible to opt into the health insurance plan for CSU students. If you want CSU health insurance, you will only qualify for it if you are still enrolled and continue to maintain a student status. If you choose not to opt in, you will be waived from having the health insurance plan for CSU students with the understanding that you have either purchased your own health insurance plan or have health insurance through your employer. Even if you do not want CSU health insurance, you must maintain it until the start date of your job that offers other insurance.

Full health insurance waivers can only be applied for those students whose OPT start date occurs within 31 days of the start of the semester in question. If you are registering for Continuous Registration, and your OPT start date occurs more than 31 days after the start of the semester, you will be billed for the health insurance plan offered for CSU students regardless of whether you indicate otherwise on this form. If you will not be registered, you will no longer be eligible to carry the health insurance plan for CSU students.

### **Please indicate your preference regarding the health insurance plan for CSU students (check one):**

I do not wish to have the health insurance plan for CSU students, but will maintain acceptable health insurance for myself and my dependents.

I wish to purchase the health insurance plan for CSU students. Please do not waive my coverage.

Not applicable. I am either:

- not registering for CR during OPT
- not a graduate student
- graduating in the spring

**Student's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



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## OPT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

### **Determine your OPT start date (up to 60 days after the program completion date listed on your I-20)**

- Please Note: Employment is only authorized for the dates granted on the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Card, which must be received from USCIS before you begin working.
- Employment authorization will be for a maximum of 12 months.

### **Completed [I-765 Application](#) (available on the USCIS website)**

- The address you list on Part 2 Question #5 of your I-765 application is where USCIS will mail your EAD card. USCIS will not allow EAD cards to be forwarded! If you do not know where you will be living in the next three months, please use a friend or family member's address or the ISSS mailing address listed below:
  - 5a. Colorado State University
  - 5b. 1024 Campus Delivery
  - 5c. (leave blank)
  - 5d. Fort Collins
  - 5e. CO
  - 5f. 80523
- If you choose to use an address other than your own for Part 2 Question #5, select "No" to Part 2 Question #6 and provide your Physical Address in the fields for Part 2 Question #7.
- The I-765 allows you to apply for a social security card from the SSA at the same time you apply for work authorization from USCIS. If you wish to apply for a new or replacement social security card, select "Yes" to Part 2 Question #14. If you already have a social security card, select "No" and skip Part 2 Question #15-17b.
- For Part 2 Question #27, enter (c) (3) (B) for Post-Completion OPT.
- Leave Part 4 blank if you did not use an interpreter to fill out the form. Still include with application.
- Leave Part 5 blank if you did not have another person prepare the form for you. Still include with application.
- Use Part 6 to provide all previously used SEVIS numbers, plus information regarding current and previously authorized CPT or OPT (indicate with which SEVIS number it is associated, whether part-time or full-time, and the level at which each was authorized; for OPT, reference Page 2, Part 2, Question #12). Leave Part 6 blank if you do not have any additional information. Still include with application.
- We recommend typing your responses; any neatly handwritten answers should be in black ink.

### **Payment to DHS**

- Prepare a check or money order for \$410 payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

### **Two Passport Photos**

- Photos must be taken within the last 30 days (USCIS will check this)!
- Lightly print your name and I-94 number on the back of your photos.

### **Copy of Passport Photo ID Page**

### **Copy of F-1 U.S. Visa and most recent arrival stamp**

### **Copy of Current I-94 (available on the [CBP website](#))**

### **Copies of any previously issued EAD cards**

### **(Optional) Form [G-1145 e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance](#)**