

# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING TUTORIAL

**Kent State University**  
**International Student and Scholar Services**  
**330.672.7980**  
**[iss@kent.edu](mailto:iss@kent.edu)**

## Optional Practical Training Tutorial

It is your responsibility to understand all of the details and requirements of your immigration status. Only you are responsible for maintaining your status.

Read this entire tutorial carefully in order to completely understand the timelines, eligibility, procedures, and requirements for seeking Optional Practical Training authorization.

If, **after** reading this tutorial, you have questions, ask an international student and scholar advisor by calling 330.672.7980 or emailing [iss@kent.edu](mailto:iss@kent.edu).

# OPT Eligibility and Types of OPT

You may apply for OPT if you have been in valid F-1 student status for at least one academic year (two academic terms), unless:

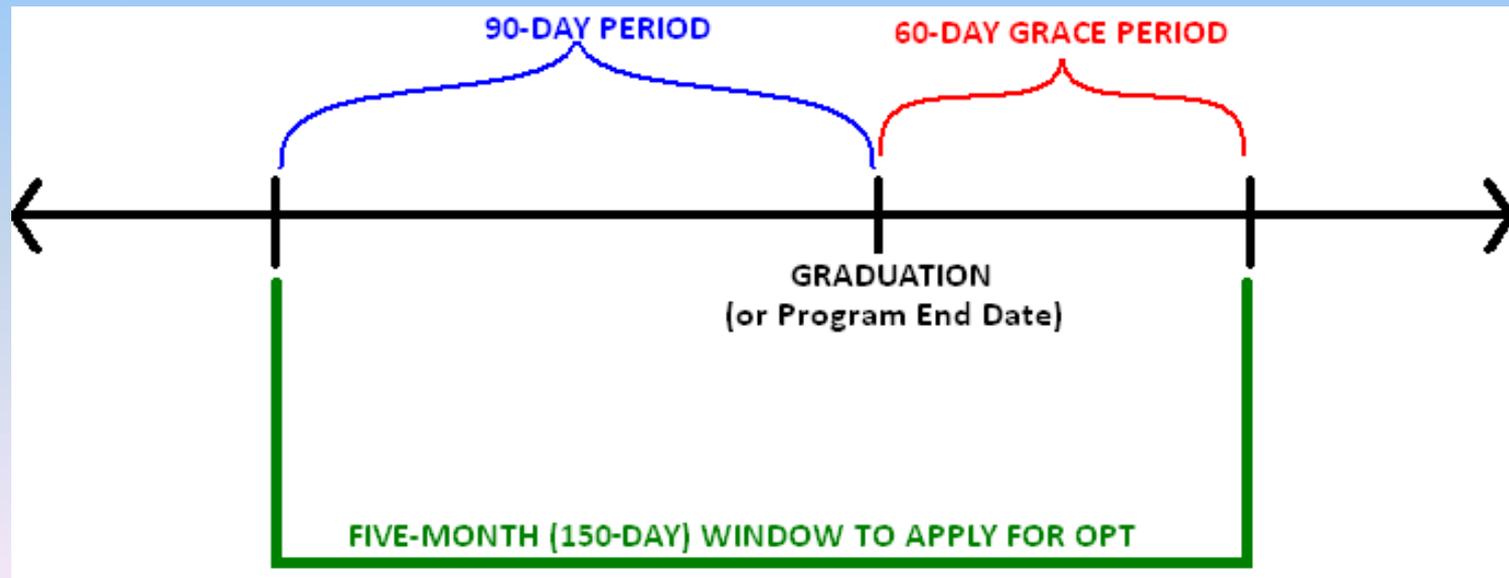
- you have completed 365 days of full-time CPT, or
- you are a non-degree or ESL student.

Students who wish to work prior to graduation or completion of coursework should apply for **pre-completion OPT** (maximum of 20 hours per week when school is in session).

Students who wish to work part- or full-time after graduation or completion of coursework should apply for **post-completion OPT** (most common).

## Understanding the OPT Application Window

You have a five-month (150-day) window in which you may apply for OPT, based on your graduation date or Program End Date (up to 90 days before this date and up to 60 days after).



## Requesting an OPT Start Date

You must request an OPT start date that is within your 60-day grace period. All OPT must be completed within 14 months of the Program End Date (typically, your graduation date). Therefore, waiting until late in your grace period to apply may result in an OPT authorization period that is less than 12 full months.

Once an OPT application is mailed to USCIS, it is not possible to change the requested start date. If a student who graduates in May asks for a start date of July 1 and later receives a job offer for June 15, he still cannot begin working until July 1, and only if he is in physical possession of the EAD card.

# Understanding OPT Processing Times and Expedite Requests

It could take up to 90 days to be approved for OPT and receive your EAD card.

If you have a job offer letter, we can include a copy with your OPT application.

If you receive a job offer letter after you apply, an international student and scholar advisor can send it to the Nebraska Service Center along with an expedite request.

These are the only possible ways to request expedited processing. There is no guaranteed way to expedite an OPT application or make it go faster.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Do I need a job or a job offer to apply for OPT?*

No. You are able to apply for OPT without having any job offer ready. You are given time to look for a job while on OPT, because you are allowed 90 days of unemployment during the 1-year OPT authorization period.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Can I work without my EAD card?*

No. You must physically have your EAD card in your hand in order to report to work. You are allowed to interview, accept a position, and complete any paperwork before you have an EAD card, but you may not actually report to work until you have the EAD card.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Can I travel with pending or approved OPT?*

Yes. When your OPT application is PENDING (meaning we have mailed your application but have not received an approval notice or an EAD card), you may travel outside the United States and return.

If your OPT is APPROVED, you must present the EAD card and a job offer letter at the U.S. port of entry.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*What if I leave the country when my OPT application is pending, and it is approved when I am outside of the United States?*

Since you need to physically show your EAD card and a job offer letter at the U.S. port of entry, and since the EAD card will be mailed to the U.S. address listed on Form I-765, we do not recommend traveling internationally while an OPT application is pending.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Can I work anywhere I want on OPT?*

Any employment, internship, or other practical training experience you accept while on OPT must be directly related to your major field of study. For example, a computer science major must work, volunteer, or intern in a position directly related to computer science.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*What if my grace period ends and my application is still pending?*

A student with a pending OPT application is in valid F-1 status (meaning you are allowed to remain in the United States), even after the end of the grace period.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Am I allowed to be unemployed while on OPT?*

You are allowed 90 days of unemployment during your OPT authorization period (between the dates listed on your EAD card). If you exceed 90 days of unemployment, your OPT authorization ends.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*I just got a job or internship. How do I tell ISSS?*

You must report your employment or internship details through the OPT Employer Information Form, which is available in the ISSS Forms Library ([www.kent.edu/iss/forms](http://www.kent.edu/iss/forms)) under “Optional Practical Training.”

# A Summary of Required Documents

You must bring all of these documents to your OPT filing appointment, or you will have to reschedule.

- A copy of your passport biographical page
- A copy of your most recent U.S. visa
- A printout of your Form I-94 found at [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94)
- An original check or money order, made out to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for \$380
- Two recent 2" x 2" passport-style photos, cut in 2" x 2" squares. Write your I-94 number in PENCIL on the back. Do not use pen.
- The completed Form I-765 (<http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf>).

# Sample Check

This is the correct way to fill out a check to USCIS:

**JOHN DOE**  
123 MAIN STREET  
ANYTOWN, TN 01234  
PHONE 555-1212

2670  
87-823/641

MM/DD/YYYY

Pay to the Order of U.S. Department of Homeland Security \$ 380

Three hundred eighty and 00/100 ----- Dollars  Security details on back.  
6-73

*Bank of Yourtown*  
YOURTOWN, TN

For John Doe MP

⑆0 12345678⑆      ⑆98765432⑆

# Guide to Selected Form I-765 Questions

Check the box marked “Permission to accept employment” above Question 1.

**Question 1.** Write your family name first, in CAPS, followed by your given name. Do not write your entire name in CAPS.

**Question 3.** You must write the address where you would like your EAD card mailed. If you are moving soon or have trouble receiving mail, you may use the Office of Global Education address. Use “106 Van Campen Hall” and write “OGE” in the (Apt. Number) field. Then type “Kent, OH 44242” in the appropriate fields.

**Question 5.** You must write the name of the city where you were born, followed by the state or province, if any, and lastly the name of your birth country.

**Question 10.** Write your entire I-94 number, including the last two digits.

**Question 11.** If you have never filed Form I-765 before, select No. Please note that Question 11 extends into the second column of questions; if you select “No” in the bottom of Column 1, you may leave the next three questions above Question 12 blank.

**Question 12.** This is the date stamped on your Form I-94 – the date you last entered the United States.

# Guide to Selected Form I-765 Questions

**Question 13.** This is the U.S. city where your plane first landed in the United States, even if you had another connecting flight afterward. If you drove across the U.S. border, list the appropriate U.S. port of entry.

**Question 14.** If you entered the U.S. in F-1 status, write “Student.” If not, write the appropriate status in which you entered the country.

**Question 15.** If you are in valid F-1 status, write “Student.”

**Question 16.** If you are filing for post-completion OPT, the code is **(c)(3)(B)**.

If you are filing for pre-completion OPT, the code is **(c)(3)(A)**.

**Question 17.** Leave this blank unless you are filing for the 17-month extension.

Sign your name in the “Certification” area and type your telephone number and the date you completed the form.

If you prepared your own form, do not write anything in the area marked “Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Above.”

# Sample Completed Form I-765 Fields

I am applying for:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permission to accept employment.	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Replacement (of lost employment authorization document).	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach previous employment authorization document).	
1. Name (Family Name in CAPS) (First)	(Middle)	Which USCIS Office?	Date(s)
FLEMING	Ryan		
2. Other Names Used (include Maiden Name)		Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)	
3. Address in the United States (Street Number and Name)	(Apt. Number)	12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S. (mm/dd/yyyy)	
106 Van Campen Hall	OGE	08/15/2012	
(Town or City)	(State/Country)	(ZIP Code)	13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S.
Kent	OH	44242	Detroit
4. Country of Citizenship/Nationality	14. Manner of Last Entry (Visitor, Student, etc.)		
China	Student		
5. Place of Birth (Town or City)	(State/Province)	(Country)	15. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.)
Taiyuan, Shanxi, China			Student
6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	7. Gender	16. Go to the "Who May File Form I-765?" section of the instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. (For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.)	
01/01/1990	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	( c ) ( 3 ) ( B )	
8. Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Married <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced		
9. Social Security Number (include all numbers you have ever used) (if any)		17. 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: _____	
10. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or I-94 Number (if any)		Employer's Name as listed in E-Verify: _____	
12345678 90		Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number: _____	
11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If "Yes," complete below)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

## Certification

**Your Certification:** I certify, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America, 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**.

Signature

Telephone Number

Date

3306727980

06/12/2013

## Communicating with ISSS While on OPT

If you become employed, change employers, or become unemployed, you must notify ISSS by completing the “OPT Employer Information Form” in the ISSS Forms Library.

The OPT Employer Information Form is here:

<http://www.kent.edu/globaleducation/opt-employer-information-form>

If you move to a different city or change your local address, you must update your information in FlashLine: <http://www.kent.edu/iss/forms/upload/how-to-update-your-address-in-flashline.pdf>

Report any change in the above information within 10 days.

**Thank you for completing the OPT Tutorial!**

If you are confused about any of the material presented, you may ask an international student and scholar advisor by calling 330.672.7980 or emailing [iss@kent.edu](mailto:iss@kent.edu).