OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING TUTORIAL

Kent State University

International Student and Scholar Services

330.672.7980

isss@kent.edu

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- 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 emailing isss@kent.edu

- 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).

- 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).

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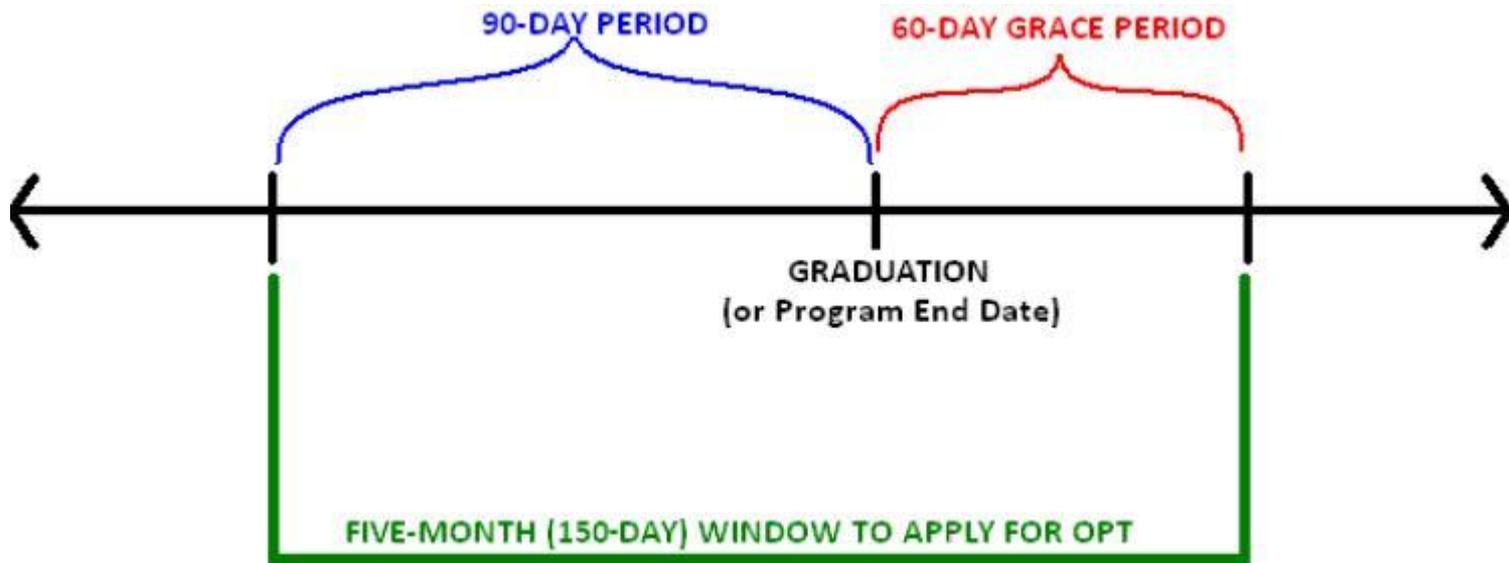
- You must request an OPT start date that is within your 60-day grace period. All OPT must be completed within 14 months of the Program End Date (typically, your graduation date). Therefore, waiting until late in your grace period to apply may result in an OPT authorization period that is less than 12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

- 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 USCIS 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. There is also no guarantee that USCIS will expedite the request.

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

A: 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.

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Q: Can I work without my EAD card?

A: 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.

Q: Can I travel with pending or approved OPT?

A: Yes, but it is not recommended. 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 you may return.

If your OPT is APPROVED, you must present the EAD card and a job offer letter at the U.S. port of entry. If you do not have these documents, there is a greater risk you will be denied re-entry.

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

A: 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. However, if you receive the card and offer while outside of the U.S., we recommend having the items sent to you wherever you are outside of the U.S.

Q: Can I work anywhere I want on OPT?

A: 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.

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

A: 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.

Q: Am I allowed to be unemployed while on OPT?

A: 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.

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

A: You must report your employment or internship details through the OPT Employer Information Form, which is available on the ISSS website (www.kent.edu/isss), on the Guides & Forms page under "Optional Practical Training."

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

1. A copy of your passport biographical page

2. A copy of your most recent U.S. visa

3. A printout of your Form I-94 found at www.cbp.gov/I94

4. An original check or money order, made out to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for $380

5. 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.

6. The completed Form I-765 (http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf)

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

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.

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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."

I am applying for: [X] Permission to accept employment. [ ] Replacement (of lost employment authorization document).
[ ] Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document).

1. **Full Name**
   (Family Name)   (First Name)   (Middle Name)
   Zhang   Xiao

2. **Other Names Used (include Maiden Name)**

3. **U.S. Mailing Address**
   (Street Number and Name)   (Apt. Number)
   106 Van Campen Hall   OGE
   (Town or City)   (State)   (ZIP Code)
   Kent   OH | 44242

4. **Country of Citizenship or Nationality**
   U.S

5. **Place of Birth**
   (Town or City)   (State/Province)   (Country)
   Taiyun, Shanxi, China

6. **Date of Birth** (mm/dd/yyyy) 05/26/1988

7. **Gender** [X] Male [ ] Female

8. **Marital Status**
   [ ] Married [X] Single [ ] Divorced [ ] Widowed

9. **Social Security Number** (Include all numbers you have ever used, if any)

10. **Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or Form I-94 Number** (if any)
    12345678 90

11. **Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?**
    [ ] Yes (Complete the following questions.)
        Which USCIS Office?   Dates

        Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)

    [X] No (Proceed to Question 12.)

12. **Date of Last Entry into the U.S., on or about** (mm/dd/yyyy)
    09/20/2014

13. **Place of Last Entry into the U.S.**
    Chicago

14. **Status at Last Entry** (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)
    F-1 Student

15. **Current Immigration Status** (Visitor, Student, etc.)
    Student

16. **Eligibility Category.** 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.

    (c) (3) (B)

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.

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) 09/25/2015

Telephone Number (330) 672-7980

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

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:
https://du1ux2871uqvu.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/file/How%20to%20Update%20Addresses%20Using%20Flashline%202015.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 emailing isss@kent.edu