Optional Practical Training Tutorial

• It is your responsibility to understand all of the details and requirements of your immigration status.

• Read this entire tutorial carefully in order to completely understand the timelines, eligibility, procedures, and requirements.

• If, after reading this tutorial, you have questions, ask an ISSS Advisor by emailing isss@kent.edu or during walk in advising.

• Do NOT send multiple emails to multiple advisors regarding the same question.
What is Employment

- Employment is any type of work performed or service provided in exchange for money, tuition, or other benefits.
- Remuneration is not required when you are employed on OPT.
- Unpaid internships and volunteer work count as employment for OPT.
What is OPT

• Optional Practical Training is a benefit of F-1 status, for which international students may apply.

• U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) authorizes OPT for 12 months of employment, so that F-1 students have the opportunity to gain practical experience directly related to a completed program of study.
Types of OPT

• **Pre-Completion OPT:** Takes place during your program

• **Post-Completion OPT:** Takes place after you complete your course work
  - This is the most popular option for F-1 international students

• **STEM Extension:** An extension of 24 months is available for certain STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) degree recipients
Post Completion OPT

• This permits you to engage in a practical work experience AFTER you complete your course work

• You must work full time
  • Full time is 21 hours and more per week

• You may apply for one 12-month OPT Authorization per level (Bachelors, Masters, PhD)
  • STEM Extensions may be granted for certain STEM degrees for an additional 24 months
Post-Completion OPT Eligibility

You are eligible for OPT if you:

• Maintained F-1 Status for at least 1 academic year (two academic semesters – Fall & Spring or Spring & Fall)
• Are a degree seeking student (non Language Training)
• Completed ALL required coursework for your program
• Completed fewer than 365 days of Full Time CPT if you participated in CPT
• You do NOT need a job offer prior to OPT application
APPLICATION
PROCESS & TIMELINE
Understanding the OPT Application Window

• You have a **150 day window** to apply for OPT
• You can start to apply **90 days before your program end date** and up to **60 days after your program end date** on your I-20.
Understanding the OPT Application Window

• Dates for May/Spring graduates
  • First date to apply for OPT: February 20th
  • I-20 end date: May 20th
  • End of grace period: July 18th

• Dates for December/Fall graduates
  • First date to apply for OPT: September 22nd
  • I-20 end date: December 20th
  • End of grace period: February 17th

• Dates for August/Summer graduates
  • First date to apply for OPT: May 23rd
  • I-20 end date: August 20th
  • End of grace period: October 18th
Doctorate and Master’s level students do not need to graduate in order to apply for OPT.

You can apply for OPT while working on Dissertation or Thesis as long as you have completed your required course work.

Graduate students are encouraged to speak to an ISSS advisor to decide OPT application timeline.

Once your OPT is approved, you will only have until the expiration of your OPT period to remain in the United States.
2 Step Process

• **STEP 1:** You must first request a new I-20 with OPT recommendation from ISSS

  **THEN**

• **STEP 2:** You must submit your application including your new OPT I-20 to USCIS
Application Step 1 – Selecting a Start Date

• When you request your I-20 from ISSS, you will need to identify a valid OPT Start Date.

• Your start date MUST fall within the 60 day grace period following your program end date.
  • Once you have selected your OPT start date, it is very difficult to change and impossible to switch once you have submitted your application to USCIS.
  • If USCIS cannot process your request by the start date, a later date may be issued.

• Waiting to submit your application later in your grace period, may result in less than a full year of OPT.
Application Step 1 – Selecting a Start Date

- **Students on Thesis or Dissertation:**
  - You have more flexibility of when you apply for OPT
  - As long as you have completed all program requirements excluding thesis or dissertation, you may apply for OPT
  - Once you apply for OPT, your program end date will be adjusted to reflect the end of your program
  - We will not be able to extend your program after this happens; therefore, you must prepare to complete all work related to your thesis or dissertation by the end of your authorized OPT period
Application Step 1 – Preparing Your Documents

• In order to submit your request through ISSS, you will need the following documents:
  • Copy of Passport page
  • Copy of most recent U.S. Visa
  • Copy of your most recent I-94
  • Completed Form I-765
  • 2 passport photos taken within last 30 days (with I-94 number written in pencil on the back)
  • An original check or money order for $410 made out to U.S. Department of Homeland Security
  • Any previous EAD cards
Application Step 1 – Getting Your I-94

• Please use the link below to get your most recent I-94

  • https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home
  • You can find this link by googling “get my most recent I-94”

• Please note– Your travel history is not your I-94
Application Step 1 – Completing Form I-765

Please consider the following when completing the Form I-765:

Any views or suggestions expressed or contained herein are not the official views of Kent State University or legal advice. This PowerPoint tutorial is an educational benefit provided to you by ISSS, but for more in depth questions we recommend consulting an immigration attorney.
Application Step 1 – Completing Form I-765

Part 1. Select “Initial permission to accept employment” if this is the first time you are applying for employment through USCIS.

Part 2.
1.a. Place your Family Name (Last Name)
1.b. Place your Given Name (First Name)
1.c. Place your Middle Name
2.a. – 4.c. Place any other names you have ever used
Part 2. Continued

5.a. Place your name

5.b.-5.e. 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 “625 Loop Road” for the street number and name. Then select the Apt. box and write “OGE” in the box next to it. Then type “Kent, OH 44242” in the appropriate fields.

6.a. Select the appropriate box. If you are using OGE’s mailing address, you should select “No.”

7.a.-7.d. Only fill this out if your physical address is different than your mailing address.
Application Step 1 – Completing Form I-765

Part 2. Continued

8. Select the appropriate answer. Most students will not have an Alien Registration number unless you have been issued an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card from a previous OPT or TPS approval. It is a 9-digit number as shown in the example below.
Application Step 1 – Completing Form I-765

Part 2. Continued

9. Select the appropriate answer. Most students will not have a USCIS Online Account number.

10. Select the appropriate answer. Select your gender.

11. Select the appropriate answer. Select your marital status.

12. Select the appropriate answer. Most students will select “No.”

13.a. If you have a SSN, select “Yes,” and complete 13.b. Then skip to 18.a.

If you do not have a SSN, select “No,” and complete 14.-17.b.
Application Step 1 – Completing Form I-765

Part 2. Continued

18.a. List all countries where you are currently a citizen, or national.

19.a.-20. Complete all information as it relates to where you were born.

21.a.-21.e. This information relates to your I-94.

22. Enter the date of your most recent entry into the U.S.

23. Provide the location where you last entered the U.S.

24. Provide the letter and number that correlates with your status when you last entered the United States. For example, “F-1 Student.”

25. Provide your current immigration status. For example, “F-1 Student.”
Part 2. Continued

26. Provide your SEVIS number as it appears on the top of your most recent I-20. It begins with “N00…….” Provide all of the numbers following the “N.” If you have previous SEVIS numbers, include them in Part 6 on page 7. If you had OPT or CPT on those previous SEVIS numbers, please include the dates.

27. Enter (c)(3)(B) exactly as it appears. Lowercase ‘c’ and uppercase ‘B.’

28.-31.b. Leave blank.

Part 3

1.a.-2. If you completed your application, select the first box.

3.-5. Provide your contact information.

6. Only select if it applies to you.

7.a.-7.b. **SIGN** your I-765 in pen and date
Application Step 1 – Completing Form I-765

Part 4 and Part 5.
Only use these sections if you used an interpreter or preparer.

Part 6.
This page can be used for an additional information.
• Provide all previously used SEVIS numbers and evidence of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.
START HERE - Type or print in black ink.

Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):

1.a.  ✔ Initial permission to accept employment.

1.b.  ☐ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.

   NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to Replacement for Card Error in the What is the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.

1.c.  ☐ Renewal of my permission to accept employment. (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)  Brooker
1.b. Given Name (First Name)  Meggie
1.c. Middle Name

Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in Part 6.

Additional Information.

2.a. Family Name (Last Name)
2.b. Given Name (First Name)
2.c. Middle Name

3.a. Family Name (Last Name)
3.b. Given Name (First Name)
3.c. Middle Name

4.a. Family Name (Last Name)
4.b. Given Name (First Name)
4.c. Middle Name
Part 2. Information About You (continued)

Your U.S. Mailing Address

5.a. In Care Of Name (if any)
    Meggie Brooker

5.b. Street Number and Name
    625 Loop Rd


5.d. City or Town
    Kent

5.e. State [OH] 5.f. ZIP Code 44242

USPS ZIP Code Lookup

6. Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?
    □ Yes  ☑ No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 6, provide your physical address below.

U.S. Physical Address

7.a. Street Number and Name
    1480 Rhodes Rd


7.c. City or Town
    Kent

7.d. State [OH] 7.e. ZIP Code 44240

Other Information

8. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any)
    ▶ A-

9. USCIS Online Account Number (if any)
    ▶

10. Gender
    □ Male  ☑ Female

11. Marital Status
    ☑ Single  □ Married  □ Divorced  □ Widowed

12. Have you previously filed Form I-765?
    □ Yes  ☑ No

13.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?
    ☑ Yes  □ No

13.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known)
    ▶ 111 111 1111

14. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? (You must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15. Consent for Disclosure, to receive a card.)
    □ Yes  ☑ No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 14, skip to Part 2, Item Number 18.a. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 14, you must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15.

15. Consent for Disclosure: I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.
    □ Yes  ☑ No

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Numbers 14 - 15, provide the information requested in Item Numbers 16.a. - 17.b.

Father’s Name

Provide your father’s birth name.

16.a. Family Name (Last Name)

16.b. Given Name (First Name)

Mother’s Name

Provide your mother’s birth name.

17.a. Family Name (Last Name)

17.b. Given Name (First Name)

Your Country or Countries of Citizenship or Nationality

List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national. If you need extra space to complete this item, use the space provided in Part 6. Additional Information.

18.a. Country
    Canada

18.b. Country
Part 2. Information About You (continued)

Place of Birth

List the city/town/village, state/province, and country where you were born.

19.a. City/Town/Village of Birth

Kent

19.b. State/Province of Birth

Ohio

19.c. Country of Birth

United States

20. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) 01/01/1991

Information About Your Last Arrival in the United States

21.a. Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)

21.b. Passport Number of Your Most Recently Issued Passport

RU123456

21.c. Travel Document Number (if any)

21.d. Country That Issued Your Passport or Travel Document

United States

21.e. Expiration Date for Passport or Travel Document (mm/dd/yyyy) 01/01/2021

Date of Your Last Arrival Into the United States, On or About (mm/dd/yyyy) 08/14/2018

23. Place of Your Last Arrival Into the United States

Cleveland Ohio

24. Immigration Status at Your Last Arrival (for example, B-2 visitor, F-1 student, or no status)

F-1 Student

25. Your Current Immigration Status or Category (for example, B-2 visitor, F-1 student, parolee, deferred action, or no status or category)

F-1 Student

26. Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)

N-0012345678

Information About Your Eligibility Category

27. Eligibility Category. Refer to the Who May File Form I-765 section of the Form I-765 Instructions to determine the appropriate eligibility category for this application. Enter the appropriate letter and number for your eligibility category below (for example, (a)(9), (c)(17)(iii)).

28. (c)(3)(C) STEM OPT Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(3)(C) in Item Number 27., provide the information requested in Item Numbers 28.a - 28.e.

28.a. Degree

28.b. Employer’s Name as Listed in E-Verify

28.c. Employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number

29. (c)(26) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(26) in Item Number 27., provide the receipt number of your H-1B spouse’s most recent Form I-797 Notice for Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker.

30. (c)(8) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(8) in Item Number 27., have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime?

Yes No

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 30., refer to Special Filing Instructions for Those With Pending Asylum Applications (c)(8) in the Required Documentation section of the Form I-765 Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.

31.b. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) or (c)(36) in Item Number 27., have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime?

Yes No

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 31.b., refer to Employment-Based Nonimmigrant Categories, Items 8-9, in the Who May File Form I-765 section.
Applicant's Statement

NOTE: Select the box for either Item Number 1.a. or 1.b. If applicable, select the box for Item Number 2.

1.a. ☒ I can read and understand English, and I have read and understand every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question.

1.b. ☐ The interpreter named in Part 4, read to me every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question in a language in which I am fluent, and I understood everything.

2. ☐ At my request, the preparer named in Part 5, prepared this application for me based only upon information I provided or authorized.

Applicant's Contact Information

3. Applicant's Daytime Telephone Number 3306727980

4. Applicant's Mobile Telephone Number (if any) 3306727980

5. Applicant's Email Address (if any) mbrooker@kent.edu

6. ☐ Select this box if you are a Salvadoran or Guatemalan national eligible for benefits under the ABC settlement agreement.

Applicant's Declaration and Certification

Copies of any documents I have submitted are exact photocopies of unaltered, original documents, and I understand that USCIS may require that I submit original documents to USCIS at a later date. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information from any and all of my records that USCIS may need to determine my eligibility for the immigration benefit that I seek.

I furthermore authorize release of information contained in this application, in supporting documents, and in my USCIS records, to other entities and persons where necessary for the administration and enforcement of U.S. immigration law.

I understand that USCIS may require me to appear for an appointment to take my biometrics (fingerprints, photograph, and/or signature) and, at that time, if I am required to provide biometrics, I will be required to sign an oath reaffirming that:

1) I reviewed and understood all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application; and

2) All of this information was complete, true, and correct at the time of filing.

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that all of the information in my application and any document submitted with it were provided or authorized by me, that I reviewed and understand all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application and that all of this information is complete, true, and correct.

Applicant's Signature

7.a. Applicant's Signature

7.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy) 09/01/2018

NOTE TO ALL APPLICANTS: If you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents listed in the Instructions, USCIS may deny your application.

Part 4. Interpreter's Contact Information, Certification, and Signature

Provide the following information about the interpreter.

Interpreter's Full Name

1.a. Interpreter's Family Name (Last Name)

1.b. Interpreter's Given Name (First Name)

2. Interpreter's Business or Organization Name (if any)
Application Step 1– Writing the Check

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

```
US Department of Homeland Security

DATE 12/20/2016

PAY TO THE ORDER OF: Four hundred ten dollars and 00/100

$410.00

DOLLARS

Your Signature
```

• **DO NOT** WRITE OR SIGN ON BACK OF CHECK
Application Step 1– Money Orders

- Money Orders are just as effective as checks
- Be sure to keep your receipt—just in case
Application Step 1– Passport Photos

• These can be taken at a local business such as CVS, Walgreens, or other businesses with photo centers. Let them know that you need 2 passport photos

• The photos must be identical and taken within the past 30 days

• We do not recommend taking your own photos to submit as part of your application.

• Write your I-94 number on the back of each photo in pencil
Application Step 1– Submit your Request to ISSS

- You **MUST** have your new I-20 with OPT recommendation from the ISSS office to submit as part of your application to USCIS.

- Submit the OPT I-20 Request Form
  - Found under the Guides and Forms section of the ISSS website ([www.kent.edu/isss](http://www.kent.edu/isss))
  - Please scan all documents into 1 pdf document
    - The library can assist you with this if you need help
Application Step 1

• Once you have submitted your request through the ISSS website, an advisor will review your application.

• Please allow up to 10 business days for processing your request. Do NOT email or call prior to 10 business days—this will delay your processing.

• An advisor will send an email to communicate:
  • If more information is required OR
  • When your new I-20 is ready for pick up
Application Step 2– Submitting Your OPT Application

• Once you have picked up your new I-20 from the OGE, REVIEW the information on your I-20

• In most cases, it should be as below:
  • On page 2 of your I-20 in the Employment Authorization Box check for the following:
    • Type = “Post-Completion OPT”
    • Full/Part Time = “Full Time”
    • Status = “Requested”
    • Start Date = Your Requested Start Date
    • End Date = 1 Year After Your Requested Start Date

• Remember! You are 100% responsible for your OPT application
**Employment Authorizations**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authorization Type</th>
<th>Full/Part-Time</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-completion OPT</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>Requested</td>
<td>16 May 2016</td>
<td>16 May 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change of Status/Cap-Gap Extension**

**Authorized Drop Below Full Course of Study**

**Travel Endorsement**

This page when properly endorsed, may be used for reentry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each certification signature is valid for one year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designated School Official</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date Issued</th>
<th>Place Issued</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
Application Step 2– Submitting Your OPT Application

• You will receive an OPT Checklist with your new I-20 for your convenience

• Ensure that all required materials are in your packet/envelope and all forms completed accurately

• USCIS **MUST** receive your application within **30 days** of your new I-20 being created

• Mailing instructions are included on your OPT Checklist
  • We highly recommend you select the tracking option for your packages
Application Step 2—Submitting Your OPT Application

- USCIS has a low tolerance for application mistakes

- Please double check all of the documents that you are sending in your application

- Your application is 100% your responsibility
  - We will do our best to assist you as much as possible
Understanding USCIS and Processing Times

• Once USCIS has received your application— it will take at least **90 days** for your application to be processed. Processing times can be longer.

• Currently, there is no process in place to have your application expedited prior to **90 days** (even if you have a job offer already)

• Checking the status of your application— use the following website with your receipt number
  • https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do
Understanding USCIS and Processing Times

After 90 days

• If you have not received a response from USCIS after 90 days, please email isss@kent.edu for further assistance

• Be prepared to include your receipt number and information in the email (Form I-797C)
Understanding USCIS and Processing Times

Travelling with Pending OPT Application:

We do **NOT** recommend that you travel outside of the U.S. with a pending OPT application.

- When your OPT application is PENDING (meaning you have mailed your application but have not received an EAD card), you may travel outside the United States and you may return **before** the program end date on your I-20.

- 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.
Next Steps
Finding a Job

- Your next step is to find a job.

- Unpaid internships and volunteer work count as employment for OPT

- There are many places that you can search for jobs that will hire international students.

- We recommend that you begin with the Career Exploration and Development Office
  - [https://www.kent.edu/career](https://www.kent.edu/career)
  - Look for career fairs and online tools for job searches
  - Did you know the Career Exploration and Development Office is in OGE on Thursday 10:00 am. – 12:00 p.m.
    - [https://www.kent.edu/career/appointmentsdrop-ins](https://www.kent.edu/career/appointmentsdrop-ins)
Finding a Job

Remember your job must meet the following requirements for Post-Completion 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.

• You must work Full Time (21 hours/week or more) if you are on Post-Completion OPT
  • You can have more than 1 job that adds up to 21 hours/week or more. Both must be directly related to your major.
Authorized Unemployment

• You are not required to have a job at the time of application for OPT

• All F-1 students granted OPT, are authorized to have 90 days of unemployment during the entire length of approved OPT.
  • Day 1 is the start day on your EAD card
  • This includes any period between jobs
  • Avoid using all 90 days at the beginning of your OPT period

• You are responsible for calculating and tracking your authorized unemployment days.
Starting Work

• **You may not start working** until you have physically received your EAD card **AND** the start date has arrived or passed.

• 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.

• Your EAD card will be sent to the mailing address indicated on your Form I-765.
Employment Reporting & SEVP Portal
Responsibilities on OPT – Reporting Work

• Once your OPT application has been approved, you will receive:

  • Email from do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov
    • You MUST register your SEVP Student Portal account within 14 days of receiving this email or it will expire
    • If you do not receive an email by your OPT Start Date, please contact isss@kent.edu and provide a scan of your EAD card front and back letting us know you didn’t receive the setup email

  • EAD card
    • This will be mailed to your mailing address indicated on your I-765
Responsibilities on OPT – Employment Updates

• Report employment updates through your SEVIS portal including—
  • Change of Employer
  • Employer Name Change
  • Employer Address Change
  • Your physical address (where you live)
  • Switch from part time to full time
  • Or any other significant changes
Responsibilities on OPT – Employment Updates

- Troubleshooting the SEVP Portal

- Please view our webpage which has the following:
  - SEVP Portal User Guide
  - SEVP Portal Videos
  - Reference Sheet

https://www.kent.edu/globaleducation/opt-employer-information-form
Responsibilities on OPT – Travelling on OPT

• After your OPT has been approved AND you have begun working you will need the following with you when travelling:
  • Passport
  • Visa
  • I-20 with travel signature— travel signatures on OPT are valid for up to 6 months
  • EAD Card
  • Offer Letter from Employer
  • Any recent pay stubs (optional but highly recommended)
Troubleshooting
I didn’t Graduate. Now What?

• **Contact ISSS immediately** – you may come to the next walk-in advising OR email isss@kent.edu

• If your application was approved by USCIS and you received your EAD, you can begin OPT part-time (max 20 hours per week) until you complete the course or capstone.

• If your application is still pending, you need to contact USCIS and withdraw your application. You can reapply **90 days** before your new program end date.
Driver’s Licenses

• Your driver’s license is typically tied to the end date on your I-20.

• You should be aware of when your driver’s license expires.

• The BMV may not issue or renew your license until you receive your EAD card.
  • For more information, visit the Ohio BMV
    • http://www.bmv.ohio.gov/
  • Please plan accordingly
Thank you for completing the OPT Tutorial!