Optional Practical Training (OPT) gives F-1 students 12 months of “temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major area of study.” [8 CFR § 214.2(f)(10)(ii)] OPT is available to F-1 students who have been in full-time student status for at least one academic year in the U.S. OPT does not require a job offer. A student may be eligible for a new 12-month period after completing a new degree program at a higher education level.

**STEPS TO APPLY FOR OPT**

**STEP 1:** Attend one of the many OPT workshops held by OISS each semester. Review OPT Tutorial and current schedule at [http://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork](http://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork)

**STEP 2:** Make an appointment to see an OISS advisor if you have follow-up questions or if there are no workshops before you would like to apply for OPT. You may contact OISS by phone at 713-348-6095, by email at oiss@rice.edu or stop by the office in Lovett Hall.

**STEP 3:** Complete these three forms and return them to OISS:

- **Student Form:** Includes requested OPT dates and a Statement of Understanding to initial and sign. Form is found in this packet.
- **Faculty Advisor Form:** Student fills in the top section; Rice faculty member / advisor completes the bottom section to verify when degree requirements are expected to be met. Form is found in this packet.
- **Form I-765:** On [http://www.uscis.gov/i-765](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765), click “Download Form I-765”, fill in the PDF (do not handwrite answers), and print a hard copy. Please refer to the attached sample I-765 with notes how to fill in properly. **Note:** DO NOT click “File My Application Online (E-Filing)”. Filing your application and paying online may result in an unnecessary delay in your application.

**STEP 4:** An OISS advisor will create your new OPT I-20, print your SEVIS CPT history, and email you when everything is ready (usually within 1 week). At that point, you may schedule your final OPT appointment.

Please bring the following with you to the final OPT appointment:

- A check or money order for $410.00 to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” OR Form G-1450 authorizing a credit card payment [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1450.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1450.pdf)
- Two passport-style photographs taken within the past 30 days with your name and I-94 number written in pencil on the back of each photo (see [http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/photos.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/photos.html))
- Photocopies of your passport, visa, and I-94 card or printout: [http://www.cbp.gov/](http://www.cbp.gov/)
- Photocopy of previous EAD card(s), if any
- **Recommended** Cover letter (see attached template)

If you bring all of these documents to your final appointment, you will be able to mail your OPT application immediately to USCIS. OISS recommends applying for OPT as early as possible since USCIS averages 90 days to process applications. Students can start applying 90 days before their program end date and must apply no later than 30 days after their program end date. Students do not need a job offer to apply for OPT.
F-1 Optional Practical Training  
STUDENT FORM

OISS recommends applying for OPT as early as possible since USCIS averages 90 days to process applications. Students can start applying 90 days before their program end date and must apply no later than 30 days after their program end date. Students do not need a job offer to apply for OPT. Please print clearly.

Name: ____________________________ Student ID: ____________________________ Phone: ____________________________

Applying For (check one): Pre-Completion OPT Post-Completion OPT

Requested OPT Start Date*: End Date**:

* Start date for Post-Completion OPT can be 1 - 60 days after I-20 completion date.

** End date for Post-Completion OPT is typically 12 months after start date (1 year later, 1 day less).

Your OPT start and end dates are locked-in once your application is received by USCIS.

Preferred Email while on OPT (non-Rice email): ____________________________ Major(s): ____________________________

Degree Level (check one): □ Bachelor’s □ Master’s (Non-Thesis) □ Master’s (Thesis) □ Doctorate*

*Important Note for Doctoral Students

If you are a Doctoral student, are you on an RA or TA? (check one): □Yes □No

If yes, please note that your I-20 end date will be updated to match the completion date indicated on this form. This change will impact your student status and on-campus work eligibility. To maintain your RA/TA stipend, you may need to use the semester end date as your completion date.

Student F-1 OPT Statement of Understanding

As a condition of your F-1 OPT status, please read carefully, initial each statement, and sign at the bottom.

_____ 1. I have attended an OPT workshop or reviewed the online OPT Tutorial PowerPoint.

_____ 2. I understand I must bring or scan a copy (oiss@rice.edu) of my EAD card to OISS within 10 days of its arrival.

_____ 3. I understand that I must report any personal address changes through OISS’ OPT reporting site within 10 days. If I do not comply with this requirement, I could lose my F-1 status. 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(12)(i)(A)

_____ 4. I understand that I must report any employment changes through OISS’ OPT reporting site within 10 days. This would include starting a job, leaving a job, or any periods of unemployment. If I do not comply with this requirement, I could lose my F-1 status. 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(12)(ii)(A)

_____ 5. I understand that I must report any changes in visa status through OISS’ OPT reporting site within 10 days of the approved status change. I understand that it may also be a good idea to contact an OISS advisor regarding the change as well. If I do not comply with this requirement, I could lose my F-1 status. 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(12)(ii)(A)

_____ 6. I understand that I cannot get paid for an on-campus student work position after my program end date. 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(11)(i)(D)

_____ 7. I understand that once I mail the OPT application; it may not be possible to edit or cancel it.

_____ 8. I understand the practical training I receive while on OPT must be directly related to my major field of study as well as commensurate with my degree level. 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(12)(ii)(A)

_____ 9. I understand that if I transfer to another university, my OPT will terminate and I must stop working immediately. 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(B)

_____ 10. I understand that I cannot have more than 90 days of unemployment while on OPT. 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(E)

_____ 11. I understand that I must work at least 20 hours per week to not accrue days of unemployment. (http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt_policy_guidance_042010.pdf)

_____ 12. I understand that I have a 60-day grace period at the end of my OPT in which I cannot work but I may travel within the U.S., transfer to another institution, pursue another degree level at Rice, or change my status. 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(D)

_____ 13. I understand that although OISS will not require me to have health insurance while on OPT it is strongly recommended.

_____ 14. I understand that although technically I can apply within my 60-day grace period, it is not advisable due to potential processing complications. I understand that the best time to apply is as close to 90 days before the end of my program as possible for the best chance of having my application approved by my requested OPT start date. 8 CFR § 214.2(f)(11)(i)(B)(2)

By signing below, I understand and have read the F-1 OPT Statement of Understanding and agree to comply with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) immigration regulations throughout my time in F-1 status. I will adhere to these guidelines and contact OISS if I have any questions.

Printed Name: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
This part is filled out by the STUDENT:

Name: ________________________________ Date: ________________________________

Applying For (check one):  

- Pre-Completion OPT
- Post-Completion OPT

Degree Level (check one):  

- Bachelor’s
- Master’s (Non-Thesis)
- Master’s (Thesis)
- Doctorate*

*Important Note for Doctoral Students

If you are a Doctoral student, are you on an RA or TA? (check one):  

- Yes
- No

If yes, please note that your I-20 end date will be updated to match the completion date indicated on this form. This change will impact your student status and on-campus work eligibility. To maintain your RA/TA stipend, you may need to use the semester end date as your completion date.

This part is filled out by the RICE FACULTY ADVISOR:

The above student is planning to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) authorization from the Department of Homeland Security. OPT allows international students in F-1 visa status to work and gain practical experience for up to one year in a field related to their Rice degree. In order to process immigration paperwork and recommend this student for OPT authorization, we need to know his/her completion date.

What should the completion date be? Please check one of the following and fill in the appropriate date:

☐ POST-COMPLETION OPT

For 1) all undergraduate students and 2) graduate students in a non-thesis degree program, the I-20 completion date will be the end of semester/commencement date.

Please check the appropriate box.

☐ End of semester/commencement for Spring 2018
☐ End of term/degree conferral for Summer 2018
☐ End of semester/degree conferral for Fall 2018

For thesis/dissertation graduate students, please identify your student’s completion date (check only one):

☐ Thesis/dissertation defense date (specify date here)* ________________________________
☐ Thesis/dissertation submission date (specify date here)* ________________________________
☐ Commencement/Degree Conferral/Last day of final semester ☐ Spring 2018 ☐ Summer 2018 ☐ Fall 2018

(Please see statement above in student section regarding TA/RA stipends for doctoral students.)

*Students who wish to have a completion date during the semester after oral defense or while completing their thesis, will be required to register for full-time research hours. Since the selection of a completion date can depend on a variety of factors, students are encouraged to meet one-on-one with an OISS advisor, in addition to their faculty advisor, to develop an OPT timeline and strategy.

☐ PRE-COMPLETION OPT (only for exceptional circumstances when students start optional practical training before completing studies at Rice)

The student will complete all coursework on ________________________________ and will be enrolled until that date. I have no objection to the student beginning OPT employment before the date of graduation.

I have reviewed the degree requirements for this student and certify that the student is expected to meet said requirements on the date indicated above. In addition, I understand this information will be used to update the program dates in the student’s immigration record.

Faculty Advisor: ________________________________

Printed Name ________________________________ Signature ________________________________ Date ________________________________