

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.

IMPORTANT: OPT is not an entitlement, but a benefit that is granted at the discretion of USCIS after a thorough review of your application.

STEPS TO APPLY FOR OPT

STEP 1: WORKSHOP

Attend one of the many OPT workshops held by OISS each semester. Review OPT Tutorial and current schedule at <http://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork>

STEP 2: APPOINTMENT

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: DOCUMENT SUBMISSION

Complete and submit these four forms to OISS at <http://bit.ly/optrequest>:

- Student Form (attached): Includes requested OPT dates and a Statement of Understanding to initial and sign.
- Faculty Advisor Form (attached): Student completes the top section and Rice faculty member/advisor completes the bottom section to verify when degree requirements are expected to be met.
- Form I-765: Visit <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765> and download the “Form I-765”. Make sure to also read the “Instructions for Form I-765”, in particular the information under Foreign Student Categories that applies to Optional Practical Training, and the General Instructions. Please also read the OISS tips online at <http://oiss.rice.edu/OPTtips>. We strongly recommend that the form is typed on a computer and only printed for an original signature.
- Photocopy of your current/most recent I-94 card or printout (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>)

STEP 4: PICK-UP & MAIL

An OISS advisor will email you when everything is ready (usually within 1 week). At that point, you may schedule your final OPT appointment. The advisor will provide you with the new OPT I-20 and your SEVIS CPT History during the 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>)
- 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>)
- Photocopies of your passport, visa, and I-94 card or printout (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>)
- Photocopy of previous EAD card(s)
- Photocopies of all previous I-20(s)
- Recommended* G-1145 E-notification (<http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf>)
- Recommended* Cover letter (Word document available for download at <http://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork/>)

Attention Transfers and Change of Level Students – It is the recommended best practice for all, but in the following cases it is particularly important to include copies of all previous I-20s

- If your current I-20 is for less than 1 year.
- If you were authorized for CPT during your previous educational level or at your previous school.
- If you have previously received OPT authorization.



Please download the Word document file of this cover letter, edit it with your information (see all highlighted sections), and bring it to the OPT pick-up appointment along with the rest of your documents!

[Your Full Name]

[SEVIS ID: Nxxxxxxxxxxxxxx]

[I-94: xxxxxxxxxxxxx]

RE: FORM I-765 APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION FOR POST-COMPLETION OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (C)(3)(B), F-1 STUDENT

[Date used on I-765]

Dear USCIS Officer:

Post-Completion OPT Requested Dates [xx/xx/xxxx – xx/xx/xxxx]

This Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (c)(3)(B) application includes the following:

- Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
- Check/money order of \$410 made out to U.S. Department of Homeland Security *OR* Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions (only include the option you are using for payment and remove the others)
- 2 passport-style photographs taken within the last 30 days with my name and I-94 on the back of the photo in pencil
- Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
- Copy of OPT I-20
- CPT History printout from SEVIS
- Copy of passport
- Copy of visa (remove this line if you do not have an F-1 visa stamp [e.g. if you are a Canadian citizen])
- Copy of most recent Form I-94
- Copies of all previous I-20s

(Use only if you have had a previous SEVIS number and/or previous practical training. Examples include: transferring your status at the same academic level; changing levels — e.g. Bachelor's to Master's; leave of absence)

In addition, I would like to explain the following:

- Statement explaining previous history. Be as detailed as possible.
- Documentation verifying statement above. Items include: EADs, letters from previous school(s) verifying practical training authorizations, etc.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

[Your Signature]

[Your Full Name]

OISS recommends applying for OPT as early as possible since USCIS averages 90+ days to process applications. Students can start applying up to 90 days *before* their program end date and up to 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 Dates (Your requested OPT start and end dates are locked-in once your application is mailed to USCIS.)

OPT Start Date*: _____ **OPT End Date**:** _____
** Start date for Post-Completion OPT can be 1 - 60 days after I-20 end date ** End date for Post-Completion OPT is 1 year later, 1 day less*

Preferred Email while on OPT (non-Rice email): _____ **Major(s):** _____
SEVP will send an email to provided address explaining how to create an SEVP Portal account in order to fulfill OPT reporting requirements.

Degree Level (check one): **Bachelor's** **Master's (Non-Thesis)** **Master's (Thesis)** **Artist Diploma** **Doctorate***

***Important Note for Doctoral Students:** If you are a Doctoral student, are you on an RA or TA? (check one): **Yes** **No**
Please note that your I-20 end date will be updated to match the completion date indicated on the Faculty Advisor form. This 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.

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| <p>____ 1. I have attended an OPT workshop and/or reviewed the online OPT Tutorial PowerPoint.</p> <p>____ 2. I have made sure my physical address is accurate in ESTHER before starting the OPT application process.</p> <p>____ 3. I have read the USCIS (https://www.uscis.gov/i-765) and OISS (http://oiss.rice.edu/OPTtips) I-765 Instructions before completing and submitting my Form I-765 to OISS.</p> <p>____ 4. I understand that I must report any previous SEVIS ID numbers to USCIS on my Form I-765.</p> <p>____ 5. I understand that I must report any previous CPT or OPT authorizations to USCIS on my Form I-765, including any CPT or OPT that was granted during a previous academic level or at a previous school.</p> <p>____ 6. I understand I must bring or scan a copy (oiss@rice.edu) of my EAD to OISS within 10 days of receipt.</p> <p>____ 7. I understand that I must report any changes in personal information (address or phone number) and any employment changes (starting a job, leaving a job, periods of unemployment, etc.) through the SEVP Portal within 10 days. If I do not comply with this requirement, I could lose my F-1 status. <i>8 CFR § 214.2(f)(12)(ii)(A)</i></p> <p>____ 8. I understand that I must notify OISS (oiss@rice.edu) of any changes in visa status and provide a copy of supporting document(s) within 10 days of the approved status change.</p> <p>____ 9. I understand that I cannot get paid for an on-campus student work position after my program end date. <i>8 CFR § 214.2(f)(11)(i)(D)</i></p> | <p>____ 10. I understand that once I mail the OPT application to USCIS it may not be possible to edit or cancel it.</p> <p>____ 11. I understand that all training/work while on OPT must be directly related to my major field(s) of study and commensurate with my degree level. <i>8 CFR § 214.2(f)(12)(ii)(A)</i></p> <p>____ 12. I understand that if I transfer to another university, my OPT will terminate and I must stop working immediately. <i>8 CFR § 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(B)</i></p> <p>____ 13. I understand that I cannot have more than 90 days of unemployment while on OPT. <i>8 CFR § 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(E)</i></p> <p>____ 14. I understand that I must work over 20 hours per week to avoid accrual of unemployment. (http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt_policy_guidance_042010.pdf)</p> <p>____ 15. I understand that I have a 60-day grace period at the end of my OPT during which I cannot work, but I may travel within the U.S., transfer to another institution, or pursue another degree level at Rice. <i>8 CFR § 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(D)</i></p> <p>____ 16. I understand that while OISS will not require me to have health insurance while on OPT, it is strongly advised.</p> <p>____ 17. I understand that although I can apply for OPT 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. <i>8 CFR § 214.2(f)(11)(i)(B)(2)</i></p> |
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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 _____



STUDENT completes this section:

Name: _____ Student ID: _____ Date: _____
Degree Level (*check one*): Bachelor's Master's (Non-Thesis) Master's (Thesis) Artist Diploma Doctorate
Applying For (*check one*): Pre-Completion OPT Post-Completion OPT

RICE FACULTY ADVISOR completes this section:

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(s) related to their Rice degree. In order to process immigration paperwork and recommend this student for OPT authorization, we need to know their completion date.

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 _____ (mm/dd/yyyy) and will be enrolled until that date. I have no objection to the student beginning OPT employment before the date of graduation.

POST-COMPLETION OPT

The end date indicated on the student's OPT I-20 will be a university-approved date for the *final registered semester*. Please check the appropriate box to confirm the last semester the student is expected to be registered.

- Summer 2020 (I-20 end date will be 08/31/2020)
- Fall 2020 (I-20 end date will be 12/30/2020)
- Spring 2021 (I-20 end date will be 05/15/2021)

If necessary, the student's I-20 end date will be updated to match the completion date indicated above. This will impact the student's RA/TA/other on-campus work eligibility, as the I-20 end date is the last date when students are authorized to work and/or receive a stipend.

Warning: If student does not complete studies by the completion date indicated above, they will lose their immigration status.

NOTE for Thesis students: In order to keep the F-1 immigration record active, students will be required to register for full-time research hours until the end of their final semester, even if they have already defended their thesis/dissertation.

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
