



F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Apply early!

Earliest time to apply for:

Pre-completion OPT

- If a student has not completed a full academic year: 90 days before completion of full academic year
- If student has completed a full academic year: 120 days before OPT start date

Post-completion OPT

- Up to 90 days before program end date

Deadline for Application (I-765) to be Received by USCIS:

- Up to 60 days after program end date
- Within 30 days of date DSO recommends OPT in SEVIS

STEP 1: Complete an OPT Request Form

Complete Student Information section.

STEP 2: Complete Form I-765 application Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Application. We strongly advise students to submit a paper application.

- Check the box indicating that you are requesting "Permission to accept employment."
- On Form I-765 #16, indicate appropriate eligibility codes for OPT:
 - **Pre-completion OPT** request, use eligibility code (c) (3) (A)
 - **Post-completion OPT** request, use eligibility code (c) (3) (B)

Important note: When signing the bottom of the Form I-765, your signature must fit between the lines on the form. If your signature is too big, your application will be returned and delay your work permission.

STEP 3: Make an appointment with your International Student Advisor by calling (540) 654-1870 or via e-mail iss@umw.edu

Bring the following documents to the appointment:

- Completed OPT Request Form
- Completed Form I-765 (EAD application)
- Current SEVIS I-20
- Cop of I-94 record - Download from U.S. Customs & Border Protection website

STEP 4: Your International Student Advisor will print an updated I-20 during your appointment.

STEP 5: Review all the required documents (see checklist below) and mail them to the address below.

If the mailing address you provided on your I-765 application is not in Virginia, see your CIE Advisor.

Your OPT application must be sent to USCIS no later than 30 days after the date of I-20 issuance (see #10 on I-20). If your I-20 is more than 30 days old, see your CIE Advisor for an updated I-20.

Quick Checklist:

- [Form I-765](#) (EAD application)
- Check or money order for *\$380 payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- 2 identical photos taken within the past 30 day, white background, 2" x 2" ---see Photo guidelines) <http://travel.state.gov/pdf/Photo-Quality-Requirements.pdf>
Print lightly in pencil on back of photos SEVIS ID#, full name, and date of birth and place in envelope.
- Attach (do not staple) photo envelope and check to upper left-hand corner of application
- Photocopy of new I-20 with OPT recommendation (NOT original)
- Photocopies of each of your previous I-20s
- Photocopy of I-94
- Photocopy of your passport photopage and F-1 visa page
- Job offer letter (optional)
- USCIS E-notification (optional) ---receive an e-mail and/or text message that your application has been accepted, if you file Form G-1145, available at www.uscis.gov and clip it to the first page of your application.
- Make copies of application materials submitted to USCIS and keep for your records

Mail your application materials via U.S. Postal Service to:

(Certified Mail/Return Receipt recommended)

USCIS
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

For express mail and courier deliveries:

USCIS
Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

After you mail your OPT application you will receive an OPT receipt called "Notice of Action" or form I-797, which will include a case number or WAC #. You can check the status of your application online at <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do> using your WAC #

If You Change Your Mind

If after requesting an OPT I-20 from CIE, you decide not to send your application to USCIS, you must notify us. Please send an email to cie@umw.edu telling us that you plan to not apply for OPT and indicating the date you intend to leave the U.S. (must be within 60 days of I-20 completion date). If you do not notify us, we will be unable to adjust your SEVIS record to accurately reflect your situation.

Travel Outside the U.S. and Reentry

As a general rule, travel outside the U.S. before the EAD is issued is not advised. That said, if travel is necessary, please read the [Travel During Post-Completion OPT Advisory](#).