

# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING APPLICATION

To receive OPT, ISSS must recommend OPT for you in SEVIS and issue a new I-20. ISSS requires one week to issue your OPT I-20. After receiving your OPT I-20, you must mail all application materials, including fee and copy of OPT I-20 to the USCIS. It can take 90 days to receive OPT approval from USCIS; therefore, please use a mailing address that will be current for the next 90 days when applying. **DO NOT apply for OPT online or without your OPT I-20 from ISSS.**

## Include in your application all of the following items:

- Completed and signed Form I-765, using the appropriate code at item 16
  - (c)(3)(A) for pre-completion OPT,
  - (c)(3)(B) for post-completion OPT, and
  - (c)(3)(C) for a 17-month STEM OPT extension
- Download the form at [www.uscis.gov/I-765](http://www.uscis.gov/I-765) & read detailed instructions at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765instr.pdf>
- Photocopies of:
  - BOTH sides of your I-94 card.
  - Your passport – include all biographical information, the photograph, passport expiration date, and your current F1 visa.
  - Your last EAD/OPT card (if applicable) and photocopy of I-20(s) with OPT notation from previous OPT authorization
- 2 recent U.S. passport-style photographs, white background, 2"x2", head height 1"-1 3/8", with your name clearly printed on the back, (photo reqs in I-765 instructions)
- Personal check** made out to Department of Homeland Security for \$380.00 (*no money order/cashier check*)
- Form G-1145 for E-notification of acceptance of application: download at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov), click "FORMS."
- Photocopy of your new I-20 (with the OPT noted on page 3).

To receive your new I-20 recommending you for OPT, submit the *attached Student Request for Optional Practical Training form (completed and signed by you and your Advisor)* along with all of the above items to ISSS.

## You will mail your application to USCIS Phoenix Lockbox at one of the following addresses:

*For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries:*  
**USCIS**  
**PO Box 21281**  
**Phoenix, AZ 85036**

*For Express mail and courier deliveries (use your own phone number on the form):*  
**USCIS**  
**Attn: AOS**  
**1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S**  
**Suite 100**  
**Phoenix, AZ 85034**

*Note:* if you are having your OPT card mailed to you in a state other than Wisconsin, consult with your Immigration Coordinator about mailing to the appropriate USCIS service center. Details available in the I-765 instructions.



## Student Request for Optional Practical Training

The date for beginning Optional Practical Training (OPT) is determined by the date when requirements for the degree program have been met. This is called the date of completion. It is not necessarily the date of graduation. The completion date for graduate students can be the date by which coursework is complete or the date the thesis/dissertation is defended and submitted to the Graduate School. The completion date for undergraduate students is the last day of the semester in which all course requirements are completed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Family (last)                      First                      UWM ID

Expected date of completion: \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have an assistantship? ( ) yes ( ) no

OPT start date: \_\_\_\_\_ OPT end date: \_\_\_\_\_ Full-time \_\_\_\_\_ Part-time \_\_\_\_\_  
*Note: OPT start date must be within 60 days of program completion date*

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Academic Advisor's** signature confirming expected completion date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Academic Advisor/Major Professor Name                      Signature                      Date

Additional Comments:

*Reminder: Students are NOT eligible for on-campus employment during the time between the expected completion date and the OPT approval date. The Payroll office will be notified by the ISSS office regarding the last date of on-campus employment eligibility.*

Dear F-1 international students,

Below is a general summary and resources for additional information. **We anticipate that more changes will come in 2011.** We will update the website with any new information we receive. If you are on OPT now or are planning to apply soon, please do not hesitate to contact us at [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu) or to see us at ISSS for walk-in advising.

There are 6 main changes in the new OPT rule. *The following is an abbreviated version of the changes.* Please contact [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu) with specific questions.

**1. OPT application deadline changes**

- a. May apply for OPT up to 90 days before completion of academic program
- b. May apply for OPT up to 60 days after completion of academic program

**2. Employment authorization for period between OPT expiration date and cap-subject H1B start date of October 1st**

- a. Applies to all fields of study
- b. H1B must be filed in a timely manner and while a student is currently working on OPT
- c. Students with H1B applications submitted during OPT grace period are not eligible for this benefit
- d. ISSS must be notified in order to process an I-20 extension for this period. Please send an email to [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu)

**3. Potential 17 month extension of OPT for students in STEM fields**

- a. Most recent degree must be in STEM field (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), as determined by Department of Homeland Security. For a complete STEM field list see [www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm)
- b. Employment must be in student's field of study
- c. File a timely extension for a new EAD during initial 12 month period of post-completion OPT
- d. Employer must participate in E-verify. For more information, visit [www.dhs.gov/e-verify](http://www.dhs.gov/e-verify). (Sorry, there is no list of E-verify employers.)

**4. Limit on Periods of Unemployment**

- a. Students may not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment during their 12 months of post-completion OPT. Students with more than 90 days unemployment will lose F-1 status and OPT
- b. STEM extension OPT students may not accrue more than 120 days of unemployment during their 29 month period of OPT (12 + 17 = 29). STEM extension OPT students with more than 120 days unemployment will lose F-1 status and OPT
- c. Less than 20 hours a week of employment is considered by Department of Homeland Security to be unemployment
- d. Students are required to keep records of hours worked
- e. Contact ISSS at [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu) if you anticipate unemployment to discuss your options

**5. OPT Reporting Requirements—failure to comply will result in loss of F-1 status and OPT**

- a. All students on OPT must report their addresses (mailing and residential), preferred e-mail, and any legal name changes to [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu)
- b. All students on OPT must report when they are unemployed to [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu)

**6. STEM Extension OPT Reporting Requirements—failure to comply will result in loss of F-1 status and OPT**

- a. STEM extension OPT students must report employer's name and address to [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu)
- b. STEM extension OPT students must report their addresses (mailing and residential), preferred e-mail, and any name changes to [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu)
- c. STEM extension OPT students must report when they are unemployed – [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu)
- d. Additionally, STEM extension OPT students must make a report every six months from the date of STEM extension (including legal name, residential/mailing address, employer's name & address, and any loss of employment) to [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu)
- e. Employers must report to [opt@uwm.edu](mailto:opt@uwm.edu) within 48 hours the completion or termination of a employment, student's legal name, and student's SEVIS ID number for student working on a STEM extension OPT

Additional Resources

[http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr\\_1207334008610.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1207334008610.shtm)

[http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/OPT\\_4Apr08.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/OPT_4Apr08.pdf)

[http://nafsa.org/regulatory\\_information.sec/29\\_month\\_opt\\_rule\\_updates](http://nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/29_month_opt_rule_updates)

<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/E8-7427.htm>