OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING TUTORIAL
WHAT IS OPT?

- Authorization from USCIS to work up to 12 months in a field directly related to your degree

  U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

- Employment must be full-time (more than 20 hours a week)

- Employment must be commensurate with degree level

- During OPT you are still an F-1 student and your status is monitored by OISS
AM I ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

- Must be in F-1 status at time of application
- Completed 1 full academic year (3 consecutive quarters)
- Have not been approved for OPT at current education level
- Have not completed one year (12 months) of full time Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
TIMELINES

- Allowed to apply 90 days before end of program
- USCIS takes around 90 days to review and approve application
- OPT start date must fall within 60 day grace period following completion of program
- 60 day grace period allowed after successful completion of OPT
OPT Application Timeline

- Degree completion date or graduation date

- Students may apply for OPT

- 90 days

- 60 days

- Students may start OPT
WHAT SHOULD I PROVIDE TO OISS TO APPLY FOR OPT?

- OISS OPT Request Form
  - http://oiss.sa.ucsb.edu/forms
- Form I-765
  - https://www.uscis.gov/i-765
- I-94 print out
  - https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home
- OISS Processing Fee receipt
  - http://oiss.sa.ucsb.edu/payment/OPT/OPT_Payment
Your proposed practical training start date should be within 60 days of your end date. For example, if your program end date is June 30, your start date should be between July 1 and August 30. Your end date would be between June 30 and August 29 of the next year.
If you are applying and have not been studying in the US for one full academic year, you may not be eligible for OPT.

Have you been studying in the U.S. continuously for at least one full academic year?  □ Yes  □ No*

Do you have a pending application at USCIS: (If yes, attach copy of your I-797 Receipt Notice)

For an H1-B visa?  □ No  □ Yes

For an immigrant visa?  □ No  □ Yes

If you are on filing fee, you may not be eligible for on-campus employment. If you are still employed during your last quarter, you should discuss this with your department and an International Student Advisor to make sure you have authorization through your graduation date.
Your advisor must complete the Advisor Certification portion of the request form, including the expected program completion date.

Program completion date: For undergraduates, this is the last day of the quarter you will graduate. For graduates, this is the date you expect to file your thesis or dissertation.

Advisor Signature
Undergraduates: College Advisor
Graduates: Academic Department
In the “I am applying for” section, select “Permission to accept employment.”

Enter your name exactly as it appears on the biographical page of your passport.
Make sure to use the OISS office address:
UCSB, OISS - MC 7150
Santa Barbara, CA
93106
This is the address where your EAD card will be sent.

### U.S. Mailing Address

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Number and Name</th>
<th>Apt. Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UCSB, OISS-MC 7150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town or City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>ZIP Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Barbara</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>93106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you have a Social Security Number, (SSN) please check “Yes” and provide your SSN. If you do not have one, you can indicate in this section you would like to apply for an SSN and give authorization for USCIS to send your information to the Social Security Administration.
FORM I-765 (cont.)

Your I-94 record can be obtained at:
www.cbp.gov/i94

14. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or Form I-94
   Number (if any)
16. Date of Your Last Arrival or Entry Into the U.S., On or About (mm/dd/yyyy)

17. Place of Your Last Arrival or Entry Into the U.S.

18. Status at Last Entry (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)
   F1 Student

19. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.)
   Student

20. Eligibility Category: Go to the Who May File Form I-765? section of the Instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.
   (c) (3) (B)
Your signature must not touch any part of the box outline.
CHECK OR MONEY ORDER

SAMPLE personal check for OPT application

- Be sure to make check out to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”
- Your name should be written on the top of the check
- Write your SEVIS ID number in the memo portion of the check
- Don’t forget to sign the bottom right of the check!
PHOTOS

- Two identical passport photographs
- Meet U.S. standards (2 inches x 2 inches)
- Photo of applicant only
- Taken within 30 days of application - do not use old photos!
- Lightly print your name on the back of each (damaged photos will not be accepted by USCIS)
Be sure to use your personal email address, not your UCSB school email address.
WHAT SHOULD YOUR APPLICATION TO USCIS INCLUDE?

Your application mailed to USCIS should include the following documents in this exact order:

- Paperclip Check and Photos to front of packet
- Form G-1145
- Form I-765
- Copy of passport biographical page
- Copy of I-94 printout
- Photocopy of OPT I-20, signed and dated on bottom of page 1
- Copies of all previous EAD cards, CPT I-20’s and OPT I-20’s if applicable
- 2 U.S. passport size photos taken within 30 days of applying
- Check for $410 made out to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
**PENDING EAD APPROVAL**

- Patience is your best friend!
- You are still in F-1 status
- Allowed (and recommended) to stay in the United States with pending OPT application
- May take around 90 days (possibly more) for USCIS to approve EAD
- You can check status of application at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
- You cannot work while you wait for approval, forced vacation!
- If your expected program completion date is delayed, you may lose time authorized for OPT. Please see OISS immediately if your graduation will be delayed!
I-797 RECEIPT NOTICE

- Make note of your receipt number - you can use this to track your application’s progress at www.uscis.gov

- Receipt number will usually start with PSC
CANCELING OPT

- If you want to cancel your OPT application after submission to USCIS, you must cancel with a written letter to USCIS.
- Once your EAD has been approved it is not possible to cancel OPT and you will have used OPT at this education level.
- If you are thinking of canceling your OPT, please contact OISS immediately!
EAD APPROVAL

- You will receive an EAD card that will include your valid employment start and end dates.
- You are still on F-1 student status.
- You cannot enroll as a full-time student while on OPT except for classes recreational in nature.
- You have an aggregate of 90 days from the start date of the EAD card to find a job. If you do not, you may violate your status.
- You have a 60-day grace period after your EAD card expires to prepare to go home, transfer to a new school, or apply to change your status.
USCIS uses the dates given on page 3 of your I-20 showing OPT authorization to determine the dates used on your EAD card.

Check card for accuracy!
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Must continue to report certain information to OISS regarding your stay in the USA within 10 days of change:

- Change your name
- Change your address
- Complete OPT early
- New Employment
- Loss of employment

NOTE: Students may not have more than 90 aggregate days of unemployment.

- Enroll or transfer to new academic program
- Leave the USA with no plans to continue on OPT
Traveling outside the United States while your OPT application is being reviewed is strongly discouraged.

If you need to renew your visa while on OPT, please consult OISS before applying.

Once approved for OPT, you can travel outside the United States with the following:

- Valid Passport
- Valid F-1 visa
- OPT I-20 with employer information and travel signature on page 2
- Valid EAD card
- Offer letter or employer verification letter
EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS

- Full-time employment is required while on OPT which is defined over 20 hours per week
- Employment can be paid or unpaid
- You may work for multiple employers but all employment must relate to your UCSB degree
## Acceptable Types of Employment While On OPT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Employment</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full-Time Employer</strong></td>
<td>Most common employment where you work for one company for 40 hours a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple Employers</strong></td>
<td>Student allowed to work for multiple employers but all employment must relate to UCSB degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple short-term employers (gigs for performing artists)</strong></td>
<td>You should maintain a list of all gigs including dates and duration of gig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-employed</strong></td>
<td>Strongly recommended student work with a lawyer when setting up their own business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temp agency</strong></td>
<td>Allowed but need to ensure working over 20 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unpaid/Internships</strong></td>
<td>Check with the Human Resources department at company before accepting unpaid positions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
STEM EXTENSION

- 24-month extension possible for graduates with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields as long as the following are met:
  - Degree must be on the current STEM Designated Degree Program List (available at www.ice.gov/sevis)
  - Student’s employer must be registered in E-Verify program (www.uscis.gov/everify).
  - Employer must agree to the terms listed on the Form I-983

- Application for 24-month extension must be filed within 90 days before the expiration date of the current OPT employment authorization.

- Instructions for applying can be found on our website: http://oiss.sa.ucsb.edu/students/opt/stem-extension
STAY CONNECTED!

- Check your Email!
  - OISS Announcements (listserv)
- Join our Facebook page: Office of International Students and Scholars-UCSB
- Website: www.oiss.sa.ucsb.edu
- Phone: (805) 893-2929
- Email: OISS@sa.ucsb.edu
- Walk-In Wednesdays! No appointment needed!
- Come visit us in 3rd floor of SRB!