12 Month Optional Practical Training Tutorial

Congratulations on graduating from UC Santa Barbara!
What is OPT?

- Authorization given by USCIS to work up to 12 months in a field directly related to your degree.
- Employment must be full-time (more than 20 hours a week).
- Employment must be commensurate with degree level.
  - For example, if you received a Master’s degree, then you should apply for a job where a Master’s is strongly desired.
- During OPT, you are still an F-1 student and your status is monitored by OISS.
Am I Eligible to Apply?

- Must be in valid F-1 status at the time of application
- Completed 1 full academic year (3 consecutive quarters at UCSB).
- Have not been approved for OPT at current education level
- Have not completed one year (365 days) of full time Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
Timeline

• Allowed to apply 90 days before the end of your program

• It takes 10 business days for OISS to process your application

• On average, USCIS takes 90-120 days to review and approve your application. OISS cannot request expedited review of your application.
  
  • It is possible that it will take USCIS less than or more than 90-120 days to approve your OPT application.

• OPT start date must fall within the 60 day grace period following completion of program.

• 60 day grace period allowed after successful completion of OPT.
Timeline

OPT Application Timeline

Degree completion date or graduation date

Students may apply for OPT

90 days

Students may start OPT

60 days

Questions? Visit oiss.ucsb.edu or email oiss@sa.ucsb.edu
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
- Most recent I-94
  - https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home
- G-1145
  - https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145
- OISS Processing Fee Receipt
  - http://oiss.sa.ucsb.edu/payment/OPT/OPT_Payment
OPT Request Form
How do I fill it in?
Requested OPT Start Date

Your program end date is your expected graduation date. You **cannot work** beyond the expected graduation date. You must wait until you receive your EAD card.

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 within 60 days of that date.
Who Should Sign the OPT Request Form?

Undergraduate
- Must be signed by an advisor in the College of Letters and Science, Engineering, or Creative Studies

Graduate
- Must be signed by a graduate student advisor or faculty member
Who Should Sign the OPT Request Form?

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.

Advisor Signature
Undergraduates: College Advisor
Graduates: Academic Department
Form I-765
How do I fill it in?
Note About the Form I-765

Please note that the guidance provided within this tutorial is an interpretation of the instructions published within the USCIS Instructions for Form I-765. The information provided in this tutorial is a supplement that we have created to answer any questions that may arise while completing the Form I-765. We urge all students to also review the guidance provided by USCIS: https://www.uscis.gov/i-765.
Page 1 : Reason for Applying and Legal Name

All information must be typed on a computer!

The I-765 must be printed single sided!

START HERE - Type or print in black ink.

Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):

1.a. □ Initial permission to accept employment.
1.b. □ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.

NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to Replacement for Card Error in the What is the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.

1.c. □ Renewal of my permission to accept employment. (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)
1.b. Given Name (First Name)
1.c. Middle Name

Enter your name exactly as it appears on the biographical page of your passport.

Questions? Visit oiss.ucsb.edu or email oiss@sa.ucsb.edu
Page 2: Mailing & Physical Address

Use a mailing address where you know you can receive mail for at least 6 months after submitting your application. If you are using a friend or family address, you will type their name in the "In Care of Name" field.

Your mailing address may not be the same as your physical address (if you are using a friend or family mailing address). Physical address is where you live in the U.S.

### Your U.S. Mailing Address

<table>
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<th>5.a. In Care Of Name (if any)</th>
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<th>5.b. Street Number and Name</th>
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<th>5.d. City or Town</th>
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<th>5.e. State ☐ 5.f. ZIP Code</th>
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<tr>
<th>6. Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?</th>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
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NOTE: If you answered "No" to Item Number 6, provide your physical address below.

### U.S. Physical Address

<table>
<thead>
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<th>7.a. Street Number and Name</th>
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<th>7.c. City or Town</th>
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<th>7.d. State ☐ 7.e. ZIP Code</th>
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Important Information About Mailing Address

It is important to note that the mailing address you indicate on this application is where all your important documents will be mailed. This includes your Employment Authorization Document (EAD Card) and Social Security Card (if you chose to receive one). If you are using your current mailing address, please make sure that you are staying in that home for at least 6 months after submitting your application to USCIS.

If you are using a friend or family member’s mailing address, you will want a trusted individual who will look out for your important mail! They should write your name on a card taped to the inside of the mailbox so the mail carrier sees you can receive mail at their home.

Not sure about your future mailing address? You may want to look at a Post Office (PO) Box. For example, you can reserve a PO Box through USPS: https://www.usps.com/manage/po-boxes.htm
8. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any)

9. USCIS Online Account Number (if any)

10. Gender  □ Male  □ Female

11. Marital Status  □ Single  □ Married  □ Divorced  □ Widowed

12. Have you previously filed Form I-765?  □ Yes  □ No

13.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security Card and enter your SSN number in 13b.  □ Yes  □ No

8./9. If you do NOT have an alien registration number or a USCIS Online Account Number, leave these blank.

12. Only select yes if you have done OPT or applied for an EAD card in the past.

13.a. Only select “Yes” if you have ever been issued a Social Security Card and enter your SSN number in 13b.

14. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? (You must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15., Consent for Disclosure, to receive a card.)  □ Yes  □ No

13.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known).

14. □ Yes  □ No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 13a., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 13a., provide the information requested in Item Number 13b.

15. Consent for Disclosure: I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.  □ Yes  □ No

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Numbers 14. - 15., provide the information requested in Item Numbers 16.a. - 17.b.
Page 2: Parent Information

Father's Name
Provide your father's birth name.
16.a. Family Name (Last Name) __________
16.b. Given Name (First Name) __________

Mother's Name
Provide your mother's birth name.
17.a. Family Name (Last Name) __________
17.b. Given Name (First Name) __________

Your Country or Countries of Citizenship or Nationality
List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national. If you need extra space to complete this item, use the space provided in Part 6, Additional Information.
18.a. Country __________
18.b. Country __________

Fill this out only if you need a Social Security Number
List all countries of which you are a citizen

Questions? Visit oiss.ucsb.edu or email oiss@sa.ucsb.edu
Page 3: Information About Last Arrival

21.a. Enter your I-94 Admission Record Number. Your most recent I-94 can be obtained at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home

21.b. Enter your most recently issued passport number. If you last entered the U.S. using an older passport, you should still enter your newest passport number.

21.e./22. Please enter the dates in a mm/dd/yyyy format

23. Your place of last arrival can be found in your I-94 Travel Record. For example: Los Angeles (LAX)
   - If you received pre-clearance at an international airport such as Calgary, Vancouver, Dublin, Bahamas, or Abu Dhabi, you should list the International Airport you entered from. For example: Calgary International Airport (CLG)

26. Your SEVIS Number can be found on the top left of your I-20

Questions? Visit oiss.ucsb.edu or email oiss@sa.ucsb.edu
Page 3: Information About Your Eligibility Category

The Eligibility Category for all 12-Month OPT Applicants is (c) (3) (B)

Leave these fields blank!
**Applicant's Statement**

NOTE: Select the box for either Item Number 1.a. or 1.b. If applicable, select the box for Item Number 2.

1.a. [ ] I can read and understand English, and I have read and understand every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question.

1.b. [ ] The interpreter named in Part 4, read to me every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question in a language in which I am fluent, and I understood everything.

2. [ ] At my request, the preparer named in Part 5, prepared this application for me based only upon information I provided or authorized.

**Applicant's Contact Information**

3. Applicant's Daytime Telephone Number

4. Applicant's Mobile Telephone Number (if any)

5. Applicant's Email Address (if any)

6. [ ] Select this box if you are a Salvadoran or Guatemalan national eligible for benefits under the ABC settlement agreement.

**Applicant's Signature**

7.a. Applicant's Signature

7.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

**NOTE TO ALL APPLICANTS:** If you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents listed in the Instructions, USCIS may deny your application.

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**Do not use your UCSB email. Enter a personal email.**

**Your signature must not touch any part of the box outline. The signature must be in black ink and cannot be an electronic signature.**
Page 7; Part 6. Additional Information

Page 7, Part 6 is used to provide additional information to USCIS. You will use this section to:

- Provide all previously used SEVIS numbers
  - UCSB only has access to SEVIS ID’s for UCSB students. If you attended another school under a different SEVIS ID and do not know the number, you may need to contact your previous school for information or documents.

- Provide evidence of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.
  - State whether the CPT was full or part time
  - You will attach copies of the corresponding I-20’s / EAD cards to your application. If you no longer have a copy, you may contact OISS or your previous school to request information or documents.
What Should I Mail to USCIS:
Preparing your OPT Application
What Should Your Application to USCIS Include?

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

- Application fee ($410 check/money order or G-1145 if paying by credit card)
- Two U.S. Style Passport Photos
- Original Form I-765
- Form G-1145
- Copy of updated I-20 with OPT
- Copy of all previous CPT/OPT I-20s and EAD cards if applicable
- Copy of most recent I-94
- Copy of passport information page
- Copy of U.S. F-1 Visa
Check or Money Order

- Be sure to make check out to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security.”
- Your name should be written on the top of the check
- Don’t forget to sign the bottom right of the check!

Write your SEVIS ID number in the memo portion of the check!
Credit Card Payment

• If you would rather pay with a credit card, USCIS does offer that option. Please note that they may only try to charge your card one time. If they are unsuccessful they may reject your application.

• It is important that you know your card can be processed in the United States and you have enough money to cover the full $410.

• You must include a G-1450 in your application. Make sure you read the instructions carefully. Do NOT send your physical card in your application.

• [https://www.uscis.gov/forms/fingerprints/pay-a-credit-card](https://www.uscis.gov/forms/fingerprints/pay-a-credit-card)
U.S. Style Passport Photographs

- 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!
- May not wear glasses in the photo
- VERY lightly print your name on the back of each (damaged photos will not be accepted by USCIS)
The **G-1145** is used to request electronic notifications about your OPT application to your email and phone number.

Be sure to use your personal email address, not your UCSB school email address.
After Mailing Your OPT Application to USCIS
What Should I Do?
Pending EAD Approval

• Patience is your best friend!
• You are still in F-1 student status.
• You are allowed (and strongly recommended) to stay in the United States while your OPT application is pending.
• It may take 90 – 120 days for USCIS to approve your EAD.
• You may check the status of your application at https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do
• You cannot work while you wait for approval; you are on a 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

- The I-797 receipt notice indicates that USCIS has received your OPT application.
- Make note of your receipt number. You can use this to track your application's status at [https://www.uscis.gov/](https://www.uscis.gov/)
- Receipt number will usually start with YSC.
Withdrawing From OPT

• If you want to withdraw your OPT application after submission to USCIS, you must withdraw with a written letter to USCIS.

• Once your EAD has been approved it is not possible to withdraw from OPT. You will have used OPT at your applied education level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate).

• If you are thinking of withdrawing 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. Any classes taken while under OPT cannot be applied towards a degree.

• 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.

• If you have not used all 90 days of unemployment, you have a 60 day grace period after your EAD card expires to prepare to go home, transfer to a new school, or apply for a change of visa status.
EAD Card

- Check your EAD card for accuracy!
- Please remember to send a copy of your EAD card to the OISS email!
OPT Reporting Requirements, Employment Regulations, & Applying for the STEM OPT Extension
Requirements for Reporting Employment and Address Updates

• In order to report updates to your address and employment, you will utilize the SEVP Portal. Access to the SEVP Portal is granted upon approval of your OPT application by USCIS. All reporting is required within 10 days of the change.

• You will receive an email with instruction on creating a portal account. The email will come from do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov. If you do not see the email, email OISS to have the email sent again. You must your SEVP Portal within 15 days.

• Please note SEVP will never request payment for using the OPT portal. Please report any suspicious activity to OISS.

• Once you have entered your employment information in the SEVP Portal, please send an email to OISS at oiss@sa.ucsb.edu to let us know. We will review the information and issue a new I-20 showing your new OPT employment.

• Additional information regarding the OPT Portal can be found at: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help
Reporting Requirements

You are required to report any of the following directly to OISS:

• Change in name
• Early Completion of OPT
• Enrolling in a new degree program or transfer to another academic program
• Deciding to return home early
Employment Regulations

- Full-time employment is required while on OPT, which is defined as over 20 hours per week.
- Employment can be paid or unpaid.
- You may work for multiple employers but all employment must related to your UCSB degree.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Employer</td>
<td>Most common employment where you work for one company for 40 hours a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Employers</td>
<td>Student allowed to work for multiple employers but all employment must relate to UCSB degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple short-term employers (gigs for performing artists)</td>
<td>You should maintain a list of all gigs including dates and duration of gig (gigs should add up to over 20 hours per week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Strongly recommended student work with a lawyer when setting up their own business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temp agency</td>
<td>Allowed but need to ensure working over 20 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid/Internships</td>
<td>Check with the Human Resources department at company before accepting unpaid positions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of Direct Relationship Between Degree and Employment

• Your OPT Employment must be directly related to the degree you received at UC Santa Barbara.
• It is up to you to explain how your employment is directly related to your degree.
• You can refer to the program learning outcomes for your degree to help explain the relation
  • [https://www.assessment.ucsb.edu/learning-outcomes](https://www.assessment.ucsb.edu/learning-outcomes)
Examples of Direct Relationship Between Degree and Employment

- The following examples are drawn from the Student Exchange Visitor Program’s (SEVP) Policy guidance that was published by USCIS.

Bachelor’s Degree in Electrical Engineering

- I work full time as an Electrical Engineer at ABC Corp., a government contractor. In my job, I analyze client requirements for electrical systems and provide them with cost estimates of such systems. My work requires understanding of electrical circuit theory, which I studied in-depth at the University of ABC.

Bachelor’s Degree in Business

- I work full time as a Loan Officer at a mortgage company, Happy Homes, where I meet with clients and evaluate, authorize and recommend approval of loan applications. On a daily basis, I use the knowledge gained in my credit analysis, sales and marketing classes that I took as part of my major program of study.
Examples of Direct Relationship Between Degree and Employment

**Master’s Degree in Music**
- I am working at a hospital playing the harp in patient rooms. I also conduct hands-on harp beginner workshops for long-term patients. On average, I work at the hospital 35 hours a week. My duties directly utilize the skills and knowledge I acquired from my coursework and degree in music therapy.

**PhD in Computer Science**
- I am employed as a Computer and Information Research Scientist at ABC Research Institute. I work as part of a team of scientists and engineers that designs experiments to test the operation of various software systems. My work builds on research in complex algorithms and machine learning, which I studied as part of my dissertation.
STEM Extension

- A 24-month OPT extension is possible for graduates with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees as long as the following are met:
  - Degree must be on the current STEM Designated Degree Program List (available at https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension)
  - Student’s employer must be registered in the E-Verify program (http://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.
Traveling Under OPT
What Documents Do I Need to Carry?
Travel Outside of the United States

- Traveling outside of 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:
  - Passport valid for at least 6 months after the re-entry date
  - Valid F-1 Visa
  - Valid OPT I-20 with employer information and travel signature on page 2
  - Valid EAD card
  - Job offer or employer verification letter
Stay Connected!

Social Media
✓ Facebook
✓ Instagram
✓ Twitter

Walk-In Advising
• Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday
  • 10 AM – 12 PM and 1 PM – 4 PM

Email: oiss@sa.ucsb.edu

Questions? Visit oiss.ucsb.edu or email oiss@sa.ucsb.edu