Optional Practical Training
Student Information, Checklist and Student Responsibility Form

1. What is F-1 Optional Practical Training?

Optional Practical Training is a benefit for F-1 visa status. According to the immigration regulations, OPT is defined as paid employment directly related to your major area of study. OPT applications have a high level of approval from my experience and you will have a better job outlook with completing your degree. Remember, OPT is designed to allow you to practical job experience in your field of study to better develop the skills that you have been learning. OPT allows up to 12 months of full-time work experience. The 12 months of work authorization must be completed within 14 months of your program end date.

2. What are the Eligibility Requirements for F-1 Optional Practical Training?

An F-1 student is eligible for OPT if the following conditions are satisfied:
- Student has been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for a minimum of one full academic year;
- Student is in legal F-1 status;
- Bachelor degree is first earned degree in the U.S.;
- No previous OPT authorization;
- Student is currently in final semester of degree program.

3. How do I apply for OPT?

The authorization for OPT come directly from the Office of International Education and Programs (OIEP). This process takes TWO meetings:
- First Meeting - You and OIEP will review the required documentation needed.
- Second Meeting – OIEP will process the I-20, make needed copies, and prepare the completed application for mailing. All documentation is required for the second meeting. A complete copy of the application is required for your immigration file. Once the application is completed, you must mail it to USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Serviced) for approval.

It is recommended that you use the OIEP address on the I-765 as USCIS does not forward immigration related materials. If you move, this may delay your receipt of your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) and delay your start of work.

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Immigration regulations require that you submit your application within 60 days of completion/program end date. So, it is important to begin this process early in your last semester before your program ends. Application should not be submitted to USCIS more than 90 days before the end of your program or 120 days before the requested start date.

Office of International Education and Programs
We recommend that you apply for OPT 90 days prior to your requested employment “Start Date” to allow sufficient time for USCIS processing and background checks.

4. When can I begin working?

Upon approval of your OPT application, USCIS will mail an approval notice and an EAD. It is the SEVIS I-20 with the OPT authorization on page 3 and the EAD card that maintain your legal F-1 status and work authorization in the United States. You are NOT able to begin working until you receive your EAD card AND the date on the EAD arrived. You may not begin working if you receive the card earlier that the date on the card.

5. How long will it take to process my application for OPT?

USCIS processing times may vary depending on the number of applications the service center has received and the time of the year. In general, applications may take anywhere from one to three months for adjudication. It is recommended to plan three months so that you obtain authorization in time for your requested start date.

6. Can I travel on OPT?

Current guidance states that an F-1 student who has filed an application for OPT may travel outside the U.S., for example, during spring break, while on OPT application is pending, provided the student can present the USCIS Receipt Notice proving the application has been submitted. However, once the EAD card has been issued, the student can only re-enter the U.S. to resume employment. Therefore, you must have the I-20, EAD card, and letter of employment offer on company letterhead. You do not need to begin the job before traveling but the letter should state your start date. There is always a risk that you may not be allowed to re-enter the U.S. without proper documentation. Also, be sure that your visa is valid because it may be unlikely to get a renewal during OPT as your degree program has technically ended. OPT is an additional benefit.

Can I start another degree program while on OPT?

Authorization to engage in OPT is automatically terminated when a student transfers to another school or begins full-time study at a different educational level. Remember your SEVIS record must be transferred to the new school to issue a new I-20, hence you cannot continue the OPT benefit from FSC when transferring to another school. You can transfer to another school before your OPT ends but you will be ending your OPT early and not receive that time back. You can also delay transferring until your OPT ends to gain the full benefit of OPT. Your plans to transfer after OPT are important to discuss with your International Student Advisor as these plans should be considered when selecting the dates of work authorization you are requesting.

Office of International Education and Programs
Office of International Education and Programs
Optional Practical Training (OPT)
Checklist

STEP 1:

- Make an appointment with Office of International Education and Programs (OIEP)

STEP 2:

Mail the following documents, in this order, to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) within 30 days of the issuance of the OPT I-20:

- Form G-1145 (visit to download the most recent form)
- Form I-765 (visit to download the most recent form)
- Check or money order for $380 payable to “Department of Homeland Security,” stapled to the upper left corner of Form I-765
- Photocopy of your most recent I-94 (front and back).
- Photocopies of any previous EAD cards (front and back).
- Photocopy of the newly updated OPT I-20 (all three pages, single-sided).
- Photocopies of ALL previous I-20s (all three pages, singled-sided, most recent on top).
- Photocopy of your passport’s picture and validity/expiration page(s).
- Photocopy of your visa.

For any questions, please contact the Office of International Education and Programs at International@farmingdale.edu
Optional Practical Training (OPT)
Student Acknowledgment of Responsibility

Student’s Name: __________________________ RAM ID#: __________________

Dates requested for OPT: ________________________________________________

Major/Job Field: ________________________________________________________

I understand that I am continuing my F-1 student visa status while on OPT. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to comply with F-1 rules and regulations to maintain my F-1 status, including:

1) Applying for and finding work in the major field of study.
2) Engaging in full-time employment (21+ hours a week) to maintain status.
3) Working only between the start and end dates listed on both OPT EAD Card and “OPT Approved” Form I-20.
4) Using only 90 days of unemployment to find a suitable OPT placement. Students must notify OIEP of any periods of unemployment.
5) Notifying OIEP of employer’s name, address and phone number when employment is found.
6) Notifying OIEP within 10 days if there is a change of employer.
7) Notifying OIEP of my current local address of residence and any changes to this address within 10 days of the change.
8) Notifying OIEP if OPT ends early for any reason; such as departure from the United States, change of status, or school enrollment.
9) Regularly check my Farmingdale student email (as this email is the communication link between myself and OIEP)

*** Starting a new course of study or transferring to a new school terminates OPT***

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read and understand this document, and I understand my F-1 student status responsibilities while I am on OPT.

Signed_________________________________________

Date___________________________________________

Please return completed form to:
The Office of International Education and Programs
Laffin Hall Room 302
International@farmingdale.edu