

Will you graduate in Fall 2024?

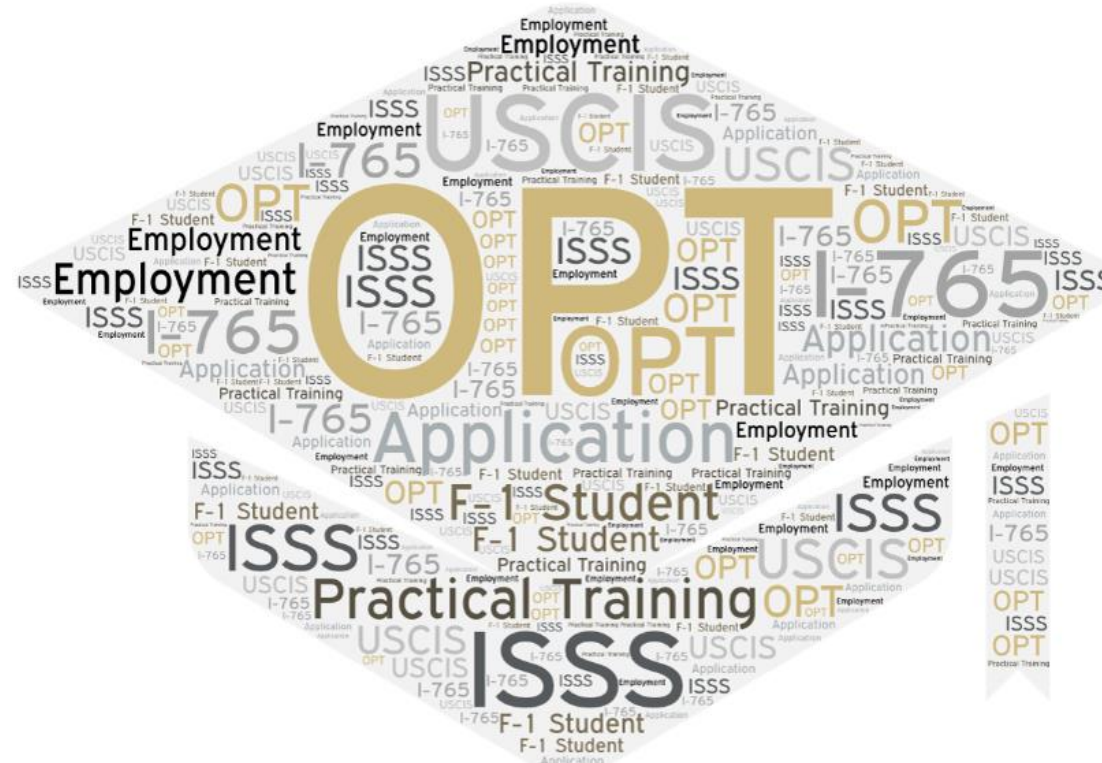
ISSS is hosting an international student recognition ceremony.

Enjoy an afternoon reception with refreshments, photo opportunities, and spend time with your fellow graduates and families.

- Thursday, December 19
- 1:30 to 3:30pm
- Center for Community, JD Abrams Lounge

Graduating students can pick up a gold cord during office hours from the ISSS front desk from November 1 through November 29. A Buff One card is required.





Preparing Your Post-Completion Optional Practical Training Application

Gold underlined text is hyperlinked – click on links for more information



International Student & Scholar Services
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

9/5/2024

What is OPT?

Employment authorization that allows you to have a job, internship or volunteer work that directly relates to your **major field of study**. You can use Optional Practical Training (OPT) to work anywhere inside the U.S.

Training is:

Temporary: OPT authorization up to 12 months

Optional: It is a benefit associated with F-1 status.

Authorized by USCIS ([U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services](#))

ISSS **only recommends** that your post-completion OPT application be approved; the final decision is made by USCIS.

A job offer is not necessary for employment authorization approval!



What is Post-Completion OPT?

- Practical Training in your major field of study that comes ***after*** the completion of all degree requirements or after completion of all coursework (excluding thesis or dissertation credits)



Am I eligible?

- ✓ **Enrolled for at least 1 academic year in valid non-immigrant status in the U.S.** (Fall & Spring semester)
- ✓ **Enrolled full-time (or authorized RCL)** in semester you apply for OPT
- ✓ Have not completed more than **364 days of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT)** at your current degree level;
- ✓ Have not utilized an equivalent of **12 months of OPT work authorization** for the same degree level or higher degree level;



When should I apply?

- **Earliest:** 90 days before your last day of **required** enrollment in your final semester
- **Latest:** 60 days after your last day of **required** enrollment in your final semester

APPLY AS EARLY AS YOU CAN!



What is Required Enrollment?

- **Required Enrollment:** enrollment in coursework that is required for degree completion
- **Enrollment for Administrative Purposes:** Continued enrollment after completion of program requirements or after successful thesis or dissertation defense
 - This type of enrollment is not allowed!
- ISSS wants to discuss your I-20 program end date & OPT timeline with you.
 - Master's thesis students and Ph.D. students: reach out to ISSS the semester prior to the semester in which you plan to defend your thesis/dissertation.



When can I apply?

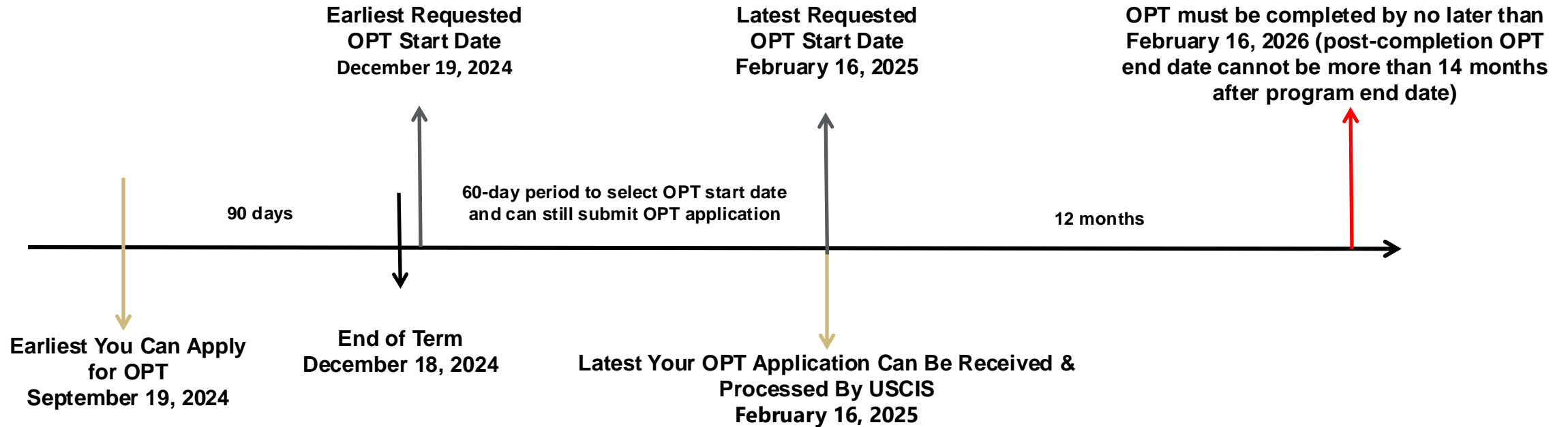
Final Semester: **Fall 2024**

Last date of enrollment is December 18

- Apply between September 19, 2024 – February 16, 2025



Post-Completion OPT Request Timeline Example (Fall 2024)





Applying for Post- Completion OPT

How do I apply for post-completion OPT?

1. Complete the ISSS Post-Completion OPT Essentials Canvas Course.
 - [Instructions](#) are available on our website.
2. Complete the [Post-Completion OPT I-20 Request](#) and upload your OPT Canvas Course grade to the DocuSign
3. Request Form will automatically be **emailed to your academic advisor** based on the name and email you have provided
4. Once signed by your academic advisor, request form will automatically be emailed to ISSS for processing. Please allow 2-5 business days for ISSS processing
5. Once ISSS has reviewed your materials, **an I-20 recommending post-completion OPT will be issued to you, and sent via email**
6. Print your new I-20, **sign under "Student Attestation"**!
7. Submit your complete application to USCIS by [electronically filing](#) the Form I-765 with USCIS online. Pay the [I-765 filing fee](#).



What happens if I apply to USCIS without an OPT recommendation I-20?

- The post-completion OPT application will be **denied**, as the regulations require the recommendation be entered into SEVIS prior to the post-completion OPT filing. You will **not** be refunded the filing fee if your application is denied.



What happens while ISSS is reviewing my Post-Completion OPT I-20 Request Form and attached materials?

- ISSS will email you if any questions arise.
- ISSS will **shorten your I-20 program end date** based on your last date of required enrollment (if necessary).
- ISSS will issue an I-20 recommending post-completion OPT to you.
- You must print, **sign the I-20 by hand with an ink pen**, and include a copy of the I-20 in your application that you submit to USCIS.





The Form I-765: Application for Employment Authorization

When should I fill out the Form I-765?

- When electronically filing the Form I-765 with USCIS online, **WAIT** to fill out the I-765 until you have your new I-20. You will not be required to submit a copy of your I-765 to ISSS for review.
- The ISSS advisor who issues the I-20 recommending post-completion OPT welcomes the opportunity to review your draft I-765 before you make payment and submit your complete application to USCIS.



What resources should I reference while filling out my Form I-765?

- Please review the [I-765 instructions on the USCIS website](#) and prepare a complete OPT application.
- Written instructions can also be found on the [ISSS Post-Completion OPT website](#).



ISSS issued me an I-20 recommending OPT. Now what do I do?

- Make any **edits** that ISSS has recommended to your post-completion OPT application materials and review all your materials for completion and accuracy.
- **Compile** and upload all the USCIS requested application materials. Ensure they are complete and accurate.
- **Submit** your materials to USCIS by electronically filing the Form I-765 with USCIS online.





Submitting Your Post- Completion OPT Application

When do I need to submit the I-765 and supporting documentation to USCIS?

USCIS must receive your post-completion OPT application **within 30 days** of the date ISSS enters the recommendation for post-completion OPT into your SEVIS record.



Timely Filing Consideration!

- ISSS has noticed that I-765 applications submitted through the USCIS online filing system are often **receipted the day *after*** the student submits the application.
- To be safe, ISSS recommends you **submit your I-765 application no later than 27 days** after receiving the recommending I-20 from ISSS.

Pay.gov Payment Confirmation: USCIS I-765

1 message

ELISdonotreply@uscis.dhs.gov <ELISdonotreply@uscis.dhs.gov>

Tue, Apr 11, 2023 at 9:17 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Your payment has been submitted to Pay.gov and the details are below. If you have a question about this notification or need technical support, please contact us online at <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/contactus> and reference the receipt number(s) shown below.

Application Name: USCIS I-765

Pay.gov Tracking ID: [REDACTED]

Agency Tracking ID: [REDACTED]

Transaction Type: Credit Card

Transaction Amount: \$410.00

Payment Date: Apr 12, 2023

Transaction Date: Apr 12, 2023 03:17:50 AM

Your payment was applied to the following case(s):

[REDACTED]



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How do I electronically file my complete Post-Completion OPT application materials?

Create a USCIS online account at myaccount.uscis.gov.



Is there anything else I should be aware of while I work on submitting my application to USCIS?

- You **MUST** submit your application to USCIS while you are **inside of the United States**.
 - You are not eligible to apply for post-completion OPT if you have already graduated and have left the United States.
 - You are not eligible to apply for post-completion OPT if you are completing your degree from outside of the U.S.



Premium Processing Option for e-filed I-765s!

- Online filing of Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service, is now also available to F-1 students
- Premium Processing- Expedited Processing for a fee
 - Fees are subject to change
 - Premium Processing fee is *in addition* to the I-765 application fee
- Guarantees some sort of adjudicative action within 30 business days of receipt
 - Does not include time for printing and mailing EAD



Case Was Changed To A Premium Processing Case

We changed your case, Receipt Number IOE9605064368, from a standard case to a premium-processing case. The premium-processing clock started on April 14, 2023. Your premium-processing receipt notice contains contact information for direct inquiries on your case. Please follow the instructions in the notice. If you move, contact the premium-processing unit directly to update your address.



**While Your Post-Completion
OPT Application is Pending**

How long will it take USCIS to process my OPT application?

- Check this processing times website

- Select *I-765 Application for Employment Authorization*
- Select *Potomac Service Center*
- Scroll down until you see *Based on a request by a qualified F-1 academic student [(c)(3)]*

Example (subject to change):

Processing time for Application for Employment Authorization (I-765) at Potomac Service Center

80% of cases are completed within

2.5
Months



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What should I do while I wait?

Pay attention to receipt notices, mail, and notifications from USCIS

- Contact ISSS if your OPT application is rejected, denied, or if you receive a Request for Evidence (RFE).
- Use USCIS online tools or call the National Customer Service Number (800-375-5283) to submit an online case inquiry or service request.
- Check your case status online.

Case Inquiry

 Case outside normal processing time <i>Think a case is taking longer than expected?</i>	 Did not receive notice by mail <i>Think a notice is lost or missing?</i>	 Did not receive card by mail <i>Think a card is lost or missing?</i>	 Did not receive document by mail <i>Think a document is lost or missing?</i>
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Service Request

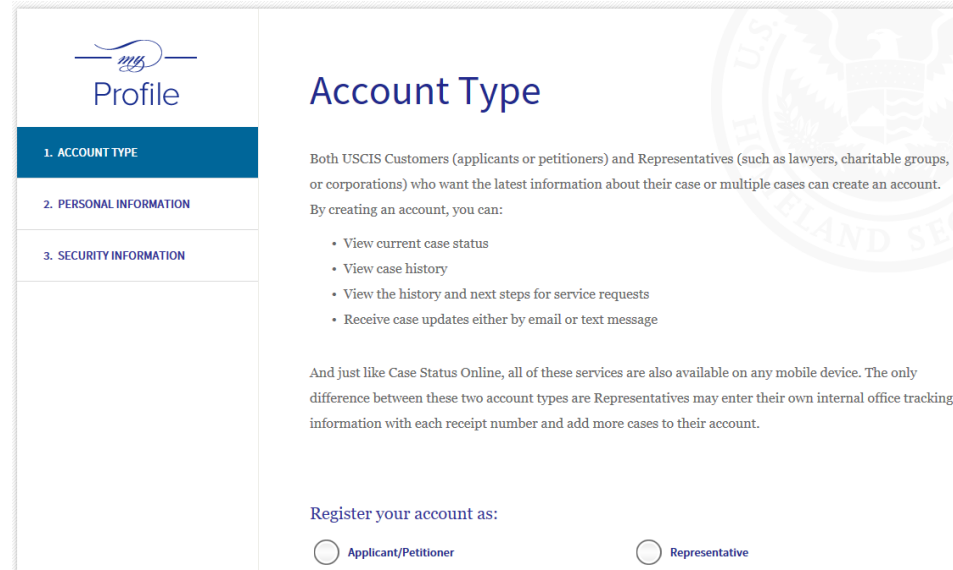
 Appointment Accommodations <i>Request accommodations for an interview appointment</i>	 Typographic Error <i>Make typographic corrections for a case</i>	
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USCIS Process

Your USCIS case status will likely remain in initial review up until card production or a Request for Evidence is made.

- If you filed online, you will already have a USCIS account and may check your case status there.



The screenshot shows the USCIS Account Type registration page. On the left is a sidebar with a 'Profile' header and three menu items: '1. ACCOUNT TYPE' (highlighted in blue), '2. PERSONAL INFORMATION', and '3. SECURITY INFORMATION'. The main content area is titled 'Account Type' and explains that both USCIS Customers and Representatives can create an account. It lists benefits of creating an account, such as viewing case status and history. At the bottom, there are two radio buttons for registration: 'Applicant/Petitioner' (selected) and 'Representative'. A faint USCIS seal is visible in the background.

Profile

- 1. ACCOUNT TYPE
- 2. PERSONAL INFORMATION
- 3. SECURITY INFORMATION

Account Type

Both USCIS Customers (applicants or petitioners) and Representatives (such as lawyers, charitable groups, or corporations) who want the latest information about their case or multiple cases can create an account. By creating an account, you can:

- View current case status
- View case history
- View the history and next steps for service requests
- Receive case updates either by email or text message

And just like Case Status Online, all of these services are also available on any mobile device. The only difference between these two account types are Representatives may enter their own internal office tracking information with each receipt number and add more cases to their account.

Register your account as:

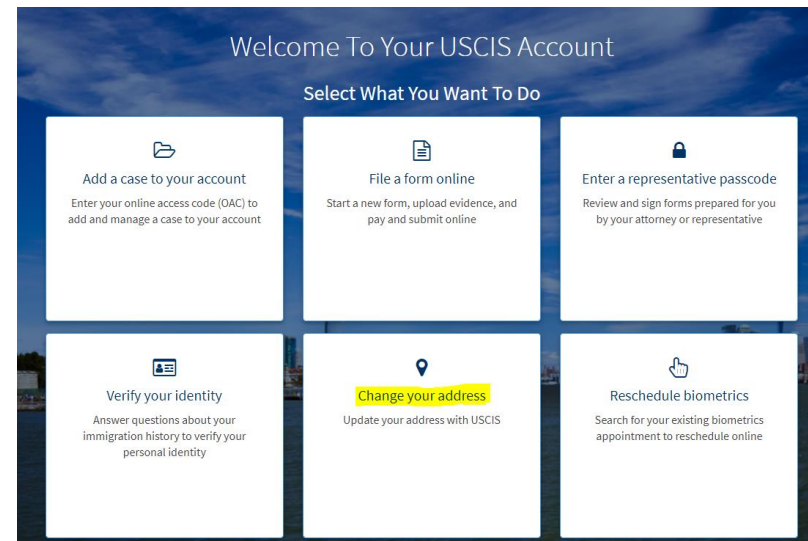
☒ Applicant/Petitioner ☐ Representative



Updating Your Delivery Address

If you **move** from or are no longer receiving mail at the address you entered in item 5 of the I-765:

- You must **immediately** update your address information in your personal **USCIS Account**.



Helping to Ensure USPS Delivery

Make sure your name is listed on your mailbox.

- A student's address must be able to accept mail categorized as "first class or higher";
- Student must be listed as physically residing there with USPS or have indicated the person living at the residence in the c/o mailing address on the I-765.

Register for Informed Delivery

- A Free service from USPS that shows you preview images of incoming mail.
- This will let you see when your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card from USCIS should be arriving.



Quick Tools

Send

Receive

Informed Delivery by USPS

See Photos of Your Mail Before It Arrives, Free

Start your mornings with a preview of your day's USPS® mail and packages with Informed Delivery® notifications:



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Can I leave the United States while my post-completion OPT application is pending?

Answer: Part 1: If you choose to leave the country, travel with:

- your post-completion OPT I-20
- a valid travel signature
- active visa
- receipt notice from USCIS that shows you have applied for post-completion OPT.



Can I leave the United States while my post-completion OPT application is pending?

Answer: Part 2: Travel with a pending application is risky for these reasons:

- If additional information is needed for your post-completion OPT application, USCIS would mail you a **request for evidence** (RFE). If you receive an RFE you would need to respond in a certain amount of time and you may have difficulty responding to any request(s) for evidence from USCIS while you are outside of the U.S. which could result in a post-completion OPT denial.
- If your post-completion OPT is approved while you're abroad, you should have your **EAD** card with you on your return. Please review the [International Student Travel FAQ for students on OPT](#).



Can I leave the United States while my post-completion OPT application is pending?

Answer: Part 2 Continued: Travel with a pending application is risky for these reasons:

- If your post-completion OPT application is **denied** while you are outside of the U.S. and **after** your I-20 program end date you cannot re-enter the US in F-1 status to re-apply for post-completion OPT.
 - It may be possible to re-enter the US in another visa category (for example, ESTA or tourist visa), but you would no longer be eligible for post-completion OPT.
- Future **travel restrictions** could impede your ability to return to the U.S.; travel restrictions may change at a moment's notice. You will need to carefully consult both the airline and the travel restrictions for the country from which you will be returning to the U.S.



When can I start working?

- Take note of your new OPT request I-20 program **end date** (see “Program of Study” section on p. 1 of your I-20).
- You are **NOT eligible to work on-campus** (e.g., assistantship, hourly job) or off-campus (e.g., CPT, economic hardship) after the I-20 program end date on your OPT request I-20 unless you meet ALL of the following criteria:
 - You have received your Employment Authorization Document (EAD/OPT card)—it is in your hands;
 - It is within the OPT employment authorization period noted on the EAD card; and
 - You are working in a job directly related to your major field of study as noted on your OPT request I-20.

Please note: If you do not complete your degree coursework by your I-20 end date as expected, please contact ISSS immediately to discuss your options.



EAD: Employment Authorization Document

OPT work authorization is granted in the form of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

Dates of employment authorization
You CANNOT work outside of
these dates



What else do I need to
know about Post-
completion OPT?

ISSS Workshops & Resources

Attend our **‘So You’ve Applied for OPT... Now What?’**
Workshop

- November 19, 2024
- Workshops are available on the [ISSS Programs & Events](#) page

Review our Post-completion OPT [web page!](#)



Reporting Requirements - SEVP Portal

- The [SEVP Portal](#) allows students in F-1 status to update their address, telephone, and employer information. You must report your job within 10-days from your employment start date
- You will receive an email from do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov with information on creating your SEVP Portal account on the first day of your authorized OPT start date.
 - If you do not receive the SEVP email and are in an approved period of post-completion OPT, please submit the *SEVP Portal Account Help: Email Address Update/Account Reset* e-form (available in [MyISSS portal](#) under “Training/Employment-Related Forms”).



Reporting Requirements – Relevance Statement

After you complete your employment entry into the SEVP Portal, please submit the *Post-Completion OPT Information Update and Relevance Statement* e-form (available in [MyISSS portal](#) under “Training/Employment-Related Forms”).

- ISSS will email you an updated I-20 that includes your employer.

MyISSS

Home
Arrival & Immigration Check-In
[Departmental Services](#)
General Forms
Immigration & Academic-Related Forms
Insurance and Finances
[Training/Employment-Related Forms](#)

Training/Employment

Tasks



Cap-Gap I-20 Request



EAD Card Submission



Post-Completion OPT
Information Update and
Relevance Statement



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Sample Explanations of a Direct Relationship

- *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 I gained in my credit analysis, sales and marketing classes that I took as part of my major program of study.
- *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.
- *Master's degree in Kinesiology:* I am working 25 hours a week in a health food store as a consultant for Self-Made Inc., designing and teaching exercise classes that are incorporated into a customer's overall nutrition and exercise plan. My designs and customer instruction draw upon my studies and classwork in exercise therapy and physical reconditioning.

* For more information on your OPT reporting requirements, please attend the ISSS **So You've Applied for OPT... Now What?** workshop



How many unemployment days can I use?

90 days total

- To stop the unemployment days from accruing, you need to enter your employment information into the SEVP Portal.



Employment

Training/employment can be:

- Full-time or part-time (you must work at least 20 hours/week total to stop using your unemployment days)

You may have **multiple jobs** and **change jobs** as long as:

- 1) Training is always within the **authorization period** indicated on the EAD;
- 2) Each job is directly **related to your major field of study** indicated on the I-20;
- 3) You **report all new employment** and changes within 10 days via the SEVP Portal



Acceptable Training During OPT

Payment by Multiple Short-Term Employers

Obtain offer letter and maintain a list of all short-term employment including the employer's contact information and the dates and duration of employment.

Work for Hire (1099 employment)

An individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. Must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods (hours worked per week) and the name and address of the contracting company.

Self-Employed Business Owner

You may start a business and be self-employed. Must work full-time and be able to prove you have a proper business licenses and that work is degree-related.

Employment through an Agency

Must be able to provide evidence showing you worked an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.



What should I be aware of if I choose to volunteer while on post-completion OPT?

- SEVP OPT Policy Guidance states that, "Students **may work as volunteers or unpaid interns**, where this practice **does not violate any labor laws**. The work should be **at least 20 hours per week** for students on post-completion OPT. A student should be able to **provide evidence**, acquired from the student's employer, to verify that he or she worked more than 20 hours per week during the period of employment."
- Students should **exercise caution** when undertaking volunteer activity as a form of OPT employment. Should the volunteer activity be seen as a violation of [U.S. labor law](#), then the activity will not stop the accrual of unemployment days and the activity could result in loss of status.
- If you would like to participate in volunteer work at CU Boulder, then the opportunity needs to be a **formally established volunteer activity**. If a CU Boulder department wishes to create a formal volunteer position, then ISSS recommends the CU Boulder department consult [University Risk Management](#) website for guidance in establishing a volunteer program. The volunteer guidelines will help ensure the project is formally recognized by the university as a volunteer work opportunity. Questions can be directed to: urmucbdirs@cu.edu



Unable to Work in Marijuana (Cannabis) Related Industries

A legal permanent resident or anyone on immigrant or non-immigrant visas should **stay away from marijuana use or anything associated with it** as it may have a negative immigration consequences. This includes working in industries associated with marijuana and cannabidiol (CBD) (e.g. working in a lab extracting CBD oils for medical purposes).



Travel Considerations

If you do not have a job, travel outside of the U.S. is **not recommended** as the regulations allow re-entry to the U.S. to **resume training**.

A temporary absence from the U.S. should be less than 5 months.

- Even with a job offer and valid EAD, an absence greater than 5 months will not be considered temporary and you could be denied re-entry to the U.S.

If you seek a renewal of your F-1 visa during your post-completion OPT authorization, you must:

- Present your post-completion OPT I-20 signed within the last 6 months, passport, valid EAD, official job offer letter, SEVIS fee receipt, and financial support documents
- Prove your eligibility for F-1 non-immigrant status and that you do not have immigrant intent

Do NOT leave the U.S. if you have a change of status application pending as it will likely be considered abandoned.



Potential Issues

If your I-765 is pending outside of USCIS's posted processing time and no Request for Evidence has been issued, it is possible to contact USCIS.

- Call USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283 to ask that they create a service request.
- Have your receipt notice number ready when contacting the USCIS Contact Center
- Note the day and time of the call, the representative's name, and the referral ID number.

Please consult an ISSS advisor immediately if:

- You **do not complete your course work** prior to the end date on your OPT I-20.
- You want to **cancel** an OPT request prior to submitting the application to USCIS.
- You want to **withdraw** your OPT application after submitting it to USCIS.
- You qualify for cap-gap relief and require a **cap-gap extension I-20**.



Do I get a grace period when I finish Post-Completion OPT?

- Yes, there is a **60-day grace period following the completion** of your post-completion OPT (starting from the EAD end date) for students who maintained status and did not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment.
 - You are not eligible for employment or to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status during the 60-day grace period.
 - Students in F-1 status in the 60-day grace period can request that their SEVIS record be transferred to another institution if they have been admitted and will begin the program within 5 months.
 - Students in F-1 status can also apply for a change of status during the grace period.



What happens if I begin a new degree level or need a SEVIS transfer while I am on OPT?

- During post-completion OPT, **employment** in your major field of study is the basis for maintenance of F-1 status.
 - If you choose to **enroll** in courses while participating in OPT, it may impact your OPT work authorization. Consult ISSS if you are considering beginning a new course of study or will seek to transfer your SEVIS record to another institution.
- OPT work authorization is **terminated** when your **SEVIS record is transferred** to a new school and/or you begin a program at a new degree level.



I-9, Social Security, & Taxes

I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Process

All employees in the U.S. must complete the I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form with their employers within **3 days of starting a job**.

Social Security: Employment in the U.S. requires a Social Security Number (SSN).

Taxes:

Social Security and Medicare Taxes

- Typically, non-resident students in F-1 status with authorized CPT or OPT are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A) and Medicare taxes as long as you are considered a non-resident status for tax purposes.

Federal, State, and Local Taxes

- Federal, state, and local taxes will be withheld from your paycheck by employers unless you qualify for a tax treaty exemption.
 - More information is available at the [IRS website](#) and [ISSS website](#)

ISSS does not provide tax information or advice. Please use the resources above or contact a tax attorney or specialist with questions or concerns.



Career Services

CU Boulder Career Services empowers students and alumni to become more employable and find meaningful work.

- Some Features of Career Services:
 - Mock Interviews
Practice and perfect your interview skills before the real deal.
 - Resume & Cover Letter Help
Our career development advisors can help you create and edit these essential documents for applying to jobs and internships.
 - Career Fairs
Large events where you can meet with a variety of employers all at once to find jobs and internships.



Applying for post-completion OPT can be a complicated process.

If you have questions after reviewing our [Post-completion OPT website](#)

- Email your questions to iss@colorado.edu
- Speak to an advisor during [ISSS Advising](#)



Congratulations on completing your degree program at CU Boulder!

Feedback Requested

ISSS is reviewing our presentation policy.

We would appreciate feedback from our students about our presentations, including:

- Suggestions to the format
- Timing of the workshops
- Alternate means of sharing information

