



## Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is off-campus employment authorization that allows F-1 students to gain work experience directly related to their major field of study.

### Guidelines:

- Your OPT employment must be directly related to your major field of study.
- You are permitted a maximum of 12 months of full-time employment for each higher educational level you pursue in the U.S. (e.g. bachelor's or master's degree)
- No specific job offer is required to apply for OPT. However, you **MUST** find employment within 90 days of being approved for OPT to maintain legal F-1 status.
- You cannot begin your employment until you have received your approved EAD card.

### Types of OPT:

#### **Pre-completion OPT**

- You may participate in pre-completion OPT during your studies after you have been enrolled at Rowan University for one full academic year.
- You must work part-time when school is in session.
- You may work part-time or full-time during vacation periods for students.
- Part-time pre-completion OPT accrues at a rate of 50%. For example, 6 months of part-time pre-completion OPT counts as 3 months of the total of 12 months of OPT you are allowed.
- **NOTE:** All periods of pre-completion OPT are deducted from the available post-completion OPT.

#### **Post-completion OPT**

- You may participate in post-completion OPT upon completion of your degree.
- You may work part-time or full-time after completion of course work requirements, excluding the thesis or dissertation.
- You must work at least 20 hours per week after completion of ALL requirements for your major program of study.
- If you decide to work all of your available 12 months of OPT time on post-completion OPT, you must request all of it at once. You cannot use it in separate periods of time.

### When to Apply:

- For pre-completion OPT, you may apply up to 90 days before being enrolled full-time at Rowan University for one full academic year as long as the OPT employment will not begin until after you have completed the full academic year. If you have been enrolled full-time at Rowan University for one full academic year, you may apply up to 120 days before your requested OPT employment start date.
- For post-completion OPT, you may apply up to 90 days before the program end date (on your I-20) OR up to 60 days after the program end date.
  - The OPT application must be received and accepted for processing by USCIS no later than 60 days after your program completion date. It is your responsibility to plan accordingly to allow enough time for the International Center to review and submit your application to USCIS.
  - If you leave the U.S. during the 60 day grace period after completing your degree program and did not apply for OPT, your OPT eligibility will end.

## **Application Process:**

Submit the following application materials to the International Center:

- Original OPT Request Form
- Complete the [I-765 form](#). Please read the [I-765 Instructions](#).
  - For pre-completion OPT, enter “c 3 A” under item 16.
  - For post-completion OPT, enter “c 3 B” under item 16.
- Original [Form G-1145](#)
- I-765 application fee: \$410 check or money order payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

If your name and current address are not on the form of payment, write them on the check/money order.

Write “fee for I-765” on the memo line. Also, please write your SEVIS ID number and your phone # on the form of payment.

- Photocopy of current Form I-94 front & back OR a print out of your [electronic I-94](#)
- Photocopy of passport (photo page, visa page, renewal page if original has expired, and pages showing amendments such as name changes, corrections, etc.)
- Photocopies of any previously issued employment authorization documents (EAD cards)
- Two U.S. passport-style photographs (Photograph instructions are on the Form I-765 instructions under Required Documentation. note: Using pencil lightly print your name and SEVIS ID number on the back of the photo.

**Note:** The International advisor will review all your OPT application. If you qualify for OPT, we will issue you an updated I-20 with your OPT recommendation. You must come to the office to sign the updated I-20. If you live in New Jersey Please mail your OPT application to:

### **USCIS Dallas Lockbox**

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries:

USCIS  
PO Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

For Express mail and courier deliveries:

USCIS  
Attn: AOS  
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business  
Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067

For more information about Direct Mailing Addresses of Form I-765 Please visit:

<http://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses>

**NOTE:** It may take about three months for your EAD card to be sent to your address by USCIS. It is important to take USCIS processing time into consideration when planning the date you request to begin OPT employment. Remember, you cannot begin to work until you have your EAD card!

### **Reporting Requirements**

- Within 5 days of receiving a job, report employer information to the International Center.
- You must report the status of your employment to the International Center every 90 days.
- You must report to the International Center within 10 days of change of name, change of address, or any interruption of employment.
- Immediately inform the International Center of any request to change your immigration status.

## Social Security Number

If you are participating in paid OPT, you must obtain a Social Security Number.

## Travel While on OPT

You must meet with an International Center Advisor before leaving the U.S. If you have a job, you may travel and reenter to resume work. Below is a list of travel documents required for reentry into the United States:

### Post-Completion OPT:

- Valid passport (for more than 6 months from date of intended return)
- Valid visa
- Your OPT Form I-20 endorsed for travel by the International Center of Rowan University within the last six months
- Your EAD card
- Evidence of employment such as a job offer or employment verification letter

### Pre-Completion OPT:

- Valid passport (for more than 6 months from date of intended return)
- Valid visa
- Your OPT Form I-20 endorsed for travel by the International Center of Rowan University within the last twelve months

**Warning:** If your OPT has been approved but you do not yet have a written job offer, you cannot travel out of the U.S. If you leave the U.S. prior to receiving a written job offer, your OPT will end and you will not be able to re-enter the U.S.

## Extending OPT

- If you have not used all 12 months of allowed OPT time, you may extend pre-completion OPT by filing another application. You may not continue to work until it has been authorized by USCIS.
- Post-completion OPT cannot be extended unless you qualify for a STEM Extension.
  - Certain government-designated STEM degree-holders (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) may be eligible for an additional 17 months of OPT, for a total of 29 months. (Please visit [http://www.rowan.edu/provost/internationalstudents/working/opt\\_stem.html](http://www.rowan.edu/provost/internationalstudents/working/opt_stem.html).)

## OPT Termination

Your OPT authorization ends when:

- You begin another degree program
- You transfer to another school
- You change to another immigration status
- an OPT extension request is denied
- your EAD expires

## Important Information

F-1 status is dependent upon employment during post-completion OPT. Therefore:

- You may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any authorized period of post-completion OPT.
- When your post-completion OPT ends, you must either
  - Apply for a OPT STEM Extension if eligible, or
  - Change educational level (for example, pursue a graduate degree after receiving an undergraduate degree), or
  - Leave the U.S. within 60 days.



## Optional Practical Training (OPT) Request & Recommendation Form

### Request: To Be Completed by Student

Name:

(last)

(first)

Banner ID:

E-mail:

Phone:

I am applying for:

Pre-Completion OPT

Part-time (no more than 20 hours/week)  Full-time

Proposed OPT Start Date: Month:      Day:      Year:

OPT End Date:      Month:      Day:      Year:

If you are requesting summer employment, are you enrolling in full-time study the following fall semester?

Yes  No

Post-Completion OPT

Proposed OPT Start Date: Month:      Day:      Year:

OPT End Date:      Month:      Day:      Year:

List all periods of previously authorized Practical Training, including Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT). Attach a separate sheet if necessary:

Previous CPT 1:  Part-Time  Full-Time From: Month \_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_ Year\_ To: Month \_ Day Year

Previous CPT 2:  Part-Time  Full-Time From: Month Day Year To: Month Day Year

Previous OPT 1:  Part-Time  Full-Time From: Month Day Year To: Month Day Year

Degree Level:

Previous OPT 2:  Part-Time  Full-Time From: Month Day Year To:Month Day Year

Degree Level:

I have read and understand the Optional Practical Training (OPT) information provided.

Student Signature

Date:



## Optional Practical Training (OPT) Request & Recommendation Form

### Recommendation: To Be Completed by Academic Advisor

Student's Name:

(last)

(first)

Major:

Degree Level:

Is the above-named student in good academic standing?  Yes  No

Has the above-named student been making normal progress towards the completion of his/her degree?  Yes  No

### For Undergraduate Students:

The above-named student is expected to complete, or has completed, all requirements for the Bachelor's degree on

Month:      Day:      Year:

### For Graduate Students:

The above-named student is expected to complete all requirements for the Master's/Doctoral degree, except thesis or equivalent, on Month:      Day:      Year:      , or has/will complete ALL requirements for the degree Including

Thesis on

Month:      Day:      Year:

Advisor's Name:

Phone:

Email:

Advisor Signature:

Date: