



Optional Practical Training (OPT) Informational Packet

What is Optional Practical Training?

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is available to F-1 students who have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis in an SEVP approved university for one full academic year. 12 months of OPT is available for each degree level attained. OPT applications do not require a job offer; however, any job accepted must be directly related to your degree program field of study.

Interested F-1 students must apply for and receive an EAD from USCIS. An EAD card with approved OPT authorization dates is required before eligible to begin work.

Students can ONLY work during the dates listed on the approved EAD card - not before and not after!

Check USCIS processing time for OPT applications [here](#)!

Eligibility Criteria

- Enrollment for one academic year (two consecutive academic terms)
- Maintain active F-1 status
- Apply for OPT within the required time frame: up to 90 days before, but no later than 60 days after, the program end date indicated in student's I-20.
OPT may begin within the 60 days following the program end date indicated in the student's I-20. Eligible students request their selected OPT start and end dates in the [OPT Agreement Form](#).

Application Procedure

1. Attend a GGU OPT Application Lab.
2. Review OPT Information Packet & additional resource links.
3. Fill out USCIS I-765 application and upload required documents
4. Apply for OPT I-20:
 - a. Submit an online GGU [OPT Agreement Form](#).
 - b. Pay the \$150 GGU post-graduation administrative fee. [Payment Options](#).A GGU DSO will issue your OPT I-20. USCIS must receive your OPT Application within 30 days from OPT I-20 issuance date.
5. Meet with a GGU DSO to review your OPT application materials. Schedule an appointment at international@ggu.edu.
6. Submit OPT Application to USCIS.
7. Track your case online.
8. Receive a USCIS decision and your EAD if your OPT application is approved.

Application Filing Formats

- ☐ File Online - through a [USCIS Online Account](#)

Please review the [USCIS File Online](#) website for Additional Information about the online submission process.

- ☐ File by the Mail - paper application packet mailed to USCIS

If you plan to submit a paper application, schedule a virtual appointment with a GGU DSO at international@ggu.edu for assistance.



Online Application Checklist

- ☐ **Form I-765**, [filled out online](#) and marked with Eligibility Category code for post-completion OPT: (c)(3)(B)
- ☐ **Evidence** to be uploaded:
 - 2 x 2 photo of you: one (1) full front facing/ US passport style photograph. Use [USCIS online photo tool](#) to make sure about photograph parameters.
 - Form I-94: download copy of your [I-94 Admission Document here](#)
 - Employment Authorization Document or Government ID:
 - Copy of Passport Biographical Information page
 - Copy of F-1 Visa sticker page
 - Copy of any previous EADs - if this is the first application for work authorization, there will be no previous EADs
 - Previously authorized CPT or OPT: Copy of any CPT I-20 received at GGU
 - Form I-20: Copy of OPT I-20 with OPT Requested Dates - issued by a GGU DSO within 30 days BEFORE submitting I-765 online application.
- ☐ **Additional Information:** to provide notes if you have been previously authorized for CPT/OPT, have most recently entered the US on a passport that is no longer valid and you now have a renewed passport, or have had other SEVIS IDs.
- ☐ **USCIS Fee:** the online form will automatically calculate the correct fee and you will pay online by ACH withdrawal, or debit/credit card. Do not pay the USCIS fee until a GGU DSO has reviewed your application, you have received your OPT I-20, and your application is complete.

Important Information & Resources

Note: It is your responsibility to understand the immigration rules and regulations while on OPT. Please contact international@ggu.edu if you have any questions.

- Information related to government regulations for F1 students and OPT application: www.uscis.gov
- Information about travel guidelines, visa application and renewals: www.travel.state.gov/
- Information about maintaining status, benefits and responsibilities while on OPT: <http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/working-in-the-united-states>
- SEVP Portal User Guide: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/assets/sevp_portal_student_user_guide.pdf

International Travel During OPT

You should have the following documents with you when you re-enter the US from an international travel:

- Passport valid at least 6 months beyond the date of re-entry to the US
- Valid F-1 visa
- Most recent OPT I-20 with travel endorsement signature on page 2 (no more than 6 months old). To receive a travel signature you should submit an online request [here](#).
- Unexpired OPT EAD card
- Evidence of OPT employment (official letter of U.S. employment, job offer letter, pay stubs, etc)

For more information about travel, visit <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel>