
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (“OPT”)

General Information

OPT is an opportunity for you to have temporary employment to gain practical experience in your field of study. Generally, an F-1 student is eligible for a **MAXIMUM OF 12 MONTHS** of this type of employment for each educational level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, etc.).

While on OPT, you are still considered to be in F-1 status. This type of training is available to students who have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis in F-1 status for at least one full academic year (9 months) in a degree/certificate program. OPT is not available to ESL students.

Three types of OPT

- 1) Pre-completion OPT (before graduation)
 - a) Part-time (reduces total allowance at rate of 50%)
 - b) Full-time
- 2) **Standard post-completion OPT (after graduation)**
 - a) Full-time OPT only
 - i) You may apply as early as **90 days before graduation**
 - ii) You may apply as late as **60 days after graduation**
 - iii) You must mail in the application within 30 days after getting your new OPT I-20 from the International Office
- 3) STEM extension OPT
 - a) only for students who graduate in specific **Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)** majors
 - b) at Capital, only the following majors qualify:
 - i) Biology
 - ii) Biochemistry
 - iii) Chemistry
 - iv) Chemistry (ACS certified)
 - v) Computer Science
 - vi) Mathematics
 - vii) Engineering 3+2 Dual Degree (Chemistry, Mathematics, Computer Science)
 - c) adds 17 more months to the pre+post 12 months of OPT for a total OPT period of 29 months. After extension, unemployment limit lengthened to 120 days within the 29-month period.

PRE + POST OPT
cannot total more than
12 months

Unemployment After OPT Begins

The purpose of OPT is to be employed. A person is not allowed to be unemployed more than 90 days of the 12-month OPT period. If you are unemployed over 90, then you fall out of status.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Go to: <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765> for information
 - a) download Form I-765, fill it in (Question 16 is (c)(3)(B)), print it
 - b) download Form G-1145, fill it in, print it
- 2) Make an appointment to meet with the advisor in Capital's International Office and **bring the following to the meeting:**
 - a) The completed I-765 and G-1145
 - b) Check or money order payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"
 - i) See the I-765 website to confirm the correct fee amount
 - c) 2 Passport Photos
 - i) get them at Wal-Mart, Meijer, Walgreen's or CVS, etc.
 - ii) print your name with a Sharpie®-style marker on the back of the photos
 - iii) put the photos in a clear, Ziploc®-style bag
 - d) Current passport (and old passport if it was renewed while you were a student)
 - e) I-94 card
 - f) Previous EAD cards (if any)
 - g) Previous I-20's (especially ones showing entry stamps and prior CPT/OPT)
- 3) We will make all necessary photocopies at the meeting and assemble the application packet. The completed packet will include (from top to bottom):
 - a) Plastic bag with photos
 - b) Check to DHS (go to www.uscis.gov for the updated fee)
 - c) Original I-765
 - d) Original G-1145
 - e) Photocopy of current I-20 with OPT recommendation (created at the meeting)
 - f) Photocopy of I-94 card (front & back)
 - g) Photocopies of prior EAD cards (if any, front & back)
 - h) Photocopy of passport (picture & bio page)
 - i) Photocopy of F-1 visa page and entry stamps
 - j) Photocopies of other documents (if any, explaining name changes, renewed passports, changes of status, other irregularities, etc.)
 - k) Photocopies of prior I-20's
- 4) Mail your application packet within in 30 days of getting the new I-20 from the Capital International Advisor to:

(if your address is in Ohio)	
U.S. mail <small>(ask post office to send as "Certified Mail")</small>	FedEx or UPS
USCIS PO Box 21281 Phoenix, AZ 85036-1281	USCIS Attn: AOS 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034-4850

- 5) Wait to receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
 - a) **DO NOT START WORKING UNTIL YOU GET THE EAD!**
 - b) **DO NOT TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE U.S. WITHOUT THE EAD!**
 - c) **DO NOT TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE U.S. WITHOUT A JOB!**
 - d) It may take the USCIS up to 90 days to issue your EAD, and possibly longer.
 - e) Make sure you provide the USCIS with an accurate address. The Post Office will not forward EAD cards!
- 6) Scan, fax, or mail a copy of your EAD Card to Capital's International Office. We must have a copy for your file.

Extremely Important!

For post-graduation OPT, when you travel outside the U.S., you will NOT be allowed to re-enter the U.S. unless you have all of the following:

- 1) a job that you are coming back to
- 2) a letter from your employer
- 3) an I-20 with a “fresh” signature (less than 6 months old) from Capital’s International Office
- 4) your EAD card

Requirement to Keep In Contact with the University

When you are on OPT, you are required by immigration law to inform the University within 21 days of any of the following:

1. Any change of your U.S. address
2. Any change of employer (including if you become unemployed)
3. The termination date of your OPT
4. Start of a new educational program. This will cancel the OPT immediately.
5. Any change in your immigration status.
6. Your departure from the U.S.

Health Insurance

You may continue your Capital University Student Health Insurance while you are on OPT. You must specifically request this extension from the Capital’s International Office or else your insurance will be automatically discontinued at the end of the month you graduate. If you find employment with health insurance benefits, you may cancel the student insurance with Capital University. Once you cancel the insurance, you may apply for a refund on any months remaining on your current coverage. We recommend that you continue to have medical insurance while you are on OPT.