

**Office of International Student,
Faculty, and Staff Services**

Reed Hall, 1st Floor
1620 McElderry Street
Baltimore, MD 21205
(410)955-3371/FAX (410)955-0871
www.hopkinsmedicine.org/Inttsvcs/

Optional Practical Training [OPT] Packet

F-1 students wishing to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) should read the material in this packet and follow the instructions carefully. This material will explain conditions of eligibility and what procedures need to be followed.

If you have questions or concerns after reviewing this material, please come to the Office of International Services (OIS) during Walk-In Advising hours or make an appointment with an OIS advisor. Walk-In advising hours are Monday and Wednesdays 1:00 – 4:30 and Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30-12:00. To schedule an appointment please call 410-955-3372.

Please bring the following materials with you when applying for OPT:

- OPT Recommendation Form completed and signed by your faculty advisor or department chair.
- Form I-765 completed and signed by the student <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765.pdf>
- 2 passport-style photographs [USCIS specifications for these photos can be found at: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765instr.pdf> See *Required Documentation, p 6.*]
- Your current I-94 Arrival/Departure card.
- Form I-20s that have been issued to you by **ALL SCHOOLS PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED.**
- Your current unexpired passport.
- A check or money order in the amount of \$340 made payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. [Do not abbreviate]
- Any previous work authorization cards you may have **ever** been issued

We will make copies of these originals and return them to you at the end of the appointment.

IMPORTANT! During your period of OPT work authorization, you are required to keep the OIS informed of the following changes:

Travel outside the U.S. (The OIS must still endorse form I-20 prior to departure)

Change of residential address

Change in Employers Address and **ANY** change to employment status

Change of phone number and/or e-mail address

Change of status (i.e. H1B1, F2, J-1, Permanent Resident, etc...). A copy of the approval notice must be submitted to the OIS.

I understand that it is my responsibility to notify the OIS of any change in the information listed above. I understand that failure to do so may have negative implications on my F1 status.

Signature

Date

GENERAL INFORMATION

Optional Practical Training is defined as “temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major area of study.” An F-1 student who has maintained lawful F-1 visa status for at least one academic year may be eligible to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT may be granted before or after completion of their program, however limitations apply. Students may apply for full-time pre-completion OPT provided all coursework has been completed and they are working full-time on a thesis or dissertation; otherwise, students may only apply for part-time OPT (20 hours or less) at that time (except during normal school breaks when pre-completion OPT may be authorized for full-time). Students applying for post-completion OPT must apply for full-time only. Employment must be directly related to the field of study.

The maximum amount of time for which OPT may be granted is 12 months* full-time per degree level. That means that if you previously completed a Bachelor’s degree and did 12 months of OPT and subsequently went on to complete a Master’s degree, you will receive another 12 months of OPT. If you completed two Master’s degrees you will only receive one 12-month period of OPT. **Students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields may apply for a 17 month OPT extension if certain criteria apply. Please refer to the STEM OPT Extension Packet for further details.*

Part-time OPT counts towards ½ of the 12 month total. For example, if a student engages in 6 months of part-time OPT prior to degree completion, they will have 9 months of full-time OPT remaining. Please be aware, however, that if an F-1 student has engaged in 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT), he/she is ineligible for OPT. On Form I-765, Section 16 should be completed as follows: (C) (3) (A)

Students applying for post-completion OPT must apply and submit their OPT application to U.S. CIS NO LATER THAN 60 days after the completion of all degree requirements. Once a student has completed all degree requirements, regardless of whether the date of graduation is weeks or months later, that student is considered to have finished their program. Completion of degree requirements is considered as the date of the thesis defense or last registered class day. OPT applications must be **received** by USCIS no later than 60 days from this date. Late application will be rejected by USCIS. On form I-765, Section 16 should be completed as follows: (C) (3) (B)

Post-completion OPT may begin at any time up to 60 days after completion of all degree requirements. For example, if you will finish all degree requirements by April 15th, then the last day that you may request to start your period of OPT will be June 15th. The date that you request as the start date does not necessarily mean that is the start date that will be approved. Therefore, please note: You must have the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) in your possession and the start date on the EAD must be reached before you may engage in employment. Also, once you have completed all degree requirements you may not continue to work in any capacity until you have received your EAD. **This includes on-campus employment.**

During your period of Post-Completion OPT, you are still considered to be in F-1 student status. Therefore, you must keep the OIS informed of any changes in your name, address, employer address and employment status as well as any other pertinent information about your stay in the United States. If you travel outside the U.S., you must obtain a travel signature from an OIS advisor. [IMPORTANT NOTE: Regulations only permit you to re-enter the U.S. to *resume* OPT. It is not advisable to travel if you have not secured employment for your OPT.] If you change your status you must submit a copy of the Approval Notice (Form I-797) to OIS. This is a requirement of federal law. Your failure to keep OIS informed may jeopardize your legal status in the United States. OIS has an email account dedicated to students on OPT for ease of reporting these requirements: internationalservices@jhmi.edu

You will have a 60 grace period after the expiration date on your EAD. You may leave the U.S., change your status, or transfer to a new degree program during that time, but you may not continue to work under OPT.

If you choose to begin a new degree program full-time, whether at JHMI or at another institution, during your authorized period of OPT, you will lose any OPT time remaining on your EAD. You will be required to cease employment upon release of your SEVIS record from JHMI to the new institution or upon issuance of a new Form I-20 for a different program. Please note that only students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematical fields may extend OPT. For students in other fields, when the 12 months have been completed, the student must seek another visa status if he/she wishes to remain in the United States to continue employment. **Also, once OPT has been granted you cannot cancel it. You have to use it or lose it.**

OPT RECOMMENDATION FORM
TOP SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Name: _____ E-mail: _____
(first) (middle) (last)

Requested OPT Start Date: _____ End Date: _____ Number of hours per week: _____

I am requesting the following:

- Pre-completion OPT** (OPT will take place prior to completion of all of my degree requirements) Please indicate (c)(3)(A) in #16 of form I-765.
- Post-Completion OPT** (OPT will take place after I have completed all of my degree requirements). Please indicate (c)(3)(B) in #16 of form I-765

TO: Academic Advisors

The student referenced above is applying for permission to engage in Optional Practical Training (OPT), an employment authorization provided by the regulations of the United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). OPT is employment in a job related to the student's major field of study and is intended to enhance and supplement the formal classroom education. Such employment must be officially recommended by a Designated School Official, duly recognized by USCIS, in the Office of International Services (OIS).

Before this authorization can be granted, OIS must have a statement from the student's Academic Advisor indicating the date of completion of the student's degree requirements. **Please note that the date of completion is not necessarily the end of the term or the graduation date, but is the date on which all requirements for the degree have been fulfilled.**

Please complete the form below and return it to OIS so that we may process this student's request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact an OIS Immigration Specialist at 410.955.3372.

THE INFORMATION BELOW MUST BE COMPLETED IN ITS ENTIRETY BY THE FACULTY ADVISOR. THIS CANNOT BE COMPLETED BY THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT.

This is to certify that the above named student will complete all requirements for the

_____ *(Bachelor's, Master's, Ph.D., etc.)*
degree in the department of _____ on _____
(date)

(NOTE: If, after submitting the post-completion OPT application, you discover that you will not be able to complete all requirements for the degree by the date indicated above, you must notify your OIS advisor immediately as this may negatively affect your OPT application)

Advisor's Name (print): _____	Advisor's Signature: _____
Telephone: _____	E-mail: _____
	Date: _____