

## OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

### Definition

Practical training is an opportunity for hands-on experience related to one's field of study. Optional practical training (OPT) may be authorized by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) during the following times:

1. during your annual vacation and at other times when school is not in session, if you are currently enrolled, are eligible for registration and intend to register for the next semester;
2. while school is in session (not to exceed more than 20 hours per week);
3. after completion of all course requirements for the degree, excluding the thesis or dissertation;
4. after completion of degree requirements.

You may be eligible for optional practical training in your field of study if you have been maintaining F-1 status at the time of the request and you have been a full-time student for one academic year. This also includes students who, during their course of study were enrolled in a study abroad program, provided they were enrolled for one full academic term in the U.S. prior to studying abroad.

You may be authorized for up to twelve months of optional practical training. Additionally, you may become eligible for another twelve months of practical training when you change to a higher educational level. Students who transfer and complete a bachelor's, master's or Ph.D. in certain science, technology, engineering and math fields may be eligible for additional seventeen months of OPT.

Part-time optional practical training, 20 hours per week or less, will be deducted from the available twelve month period at one-half the full-time rate. (i.e. six months of part-time practical training will equal three months deducted from the total twelve month period.)

It is not necessary to have an offer of employment in order to apply for optional practical training. USCIS currently has no formal provision for revoking practical training authorization once it has been approved.

### Application Procedures

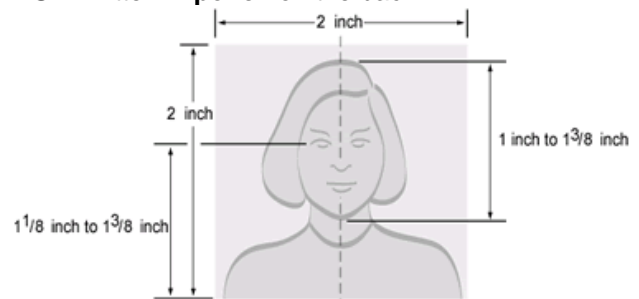
If you plan to use optional practical training after completing your degree, you may apply up to 90 days before completion of your studies and no later than 60 days after your completion of studies. You must choose the dates you wish to be on OPT. You can choose any date between your date of completion, and 60 days after as your OPT start date.

You may also apply for OPT prior to completing your studies.

**STEP I.** You must provide the International Center (IEC) with the following documents:

1. *Application for Optional Practical Training*. You must complete the top portion of the form and if applicable, an advisor or counselor must complete the bottom portion, and;
2. completed and signed form I-765 (note: you may download form I-765 and instructions from [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov))
3. your passport;
4. your I-94 arrival/departure card;
5. two passport style photographs, with your name and SEVIS # written in **pencil** on the back:

*Photo is not drawn to scale. However, please ensure that it meets specified measurements*



6. A personal check or money order for **\$380.00** made payable to **Department of Homeland Security**.

**STEP II.** An IEC staff member will:

1. verify your eligibility to apply for optional practical training;
2. if eligible, update the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and make the appropriate recommendation on the I-20;
3. return to you form I-20 showing recommendation for OPT;
4. put the following materials into the following order for mailing:
  - a. Original I-765
  - b. Check or money order stapled halfway up the I-765
  - c. Two photos placed back-to-back in plastic bag, stapled to bottom left of I-765
  - d. Photocopy of the OPT-endorsed I-20, pages 1 and 3
  - e. Photocopy of all previous I-20 forms
  - f. Photocopies of any previous EAD cards
  - g. Photocopy of the front and back of your I-94
  - h. Photocopy of the pages of your passport that have your photo and expiration date.

**STEP III.** You should mail the application to the *UCIS Service Center* having jurisdiction over your place of residence if you reside in New Jersey, the application is mailed to:

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

**USCIS**  
**PO Box 660867**  
**Dallas, TX 75266**

For Express mail and courier service deliveries:

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

It is suggested that you keep a copy of these materials for yourself. You may send the application 1) via certified & return receipt mail, 2) via overnight U.S. Post express mail or 3) via regular mail. You may not accept employment until optional practical training has been authorized by the USCIS (you have received your EAD card).

If you have used the IEC as your mailing address, we will notify you via telephone or e-mail when we have received a receipt notice indicating your application has been filed and when your EAD card arrives. Processing time varies from 2-4 months. You can check the status of your application on-line at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov). Please do not call the IEC to check on the status of your application unless it has been pending longer than 90 days.

***Your Obligations During Optional Practical Training after Completing your Degree***

You are required to immediately report name and address of your employer, any change of name, address and employer, or disruption of employment to the IEC for the duration of the authorized training. You may do so by e-mailing the IEC at [international@brookdalecc.edu](mailto:international@brookdalecc.edu).

Please note that you may not be unemployed for an aggregate of 90 days or else you violate F-1 status.

***IEC Obligations During Optional Practical Training after Completing your Degree***

The IEC is responsible for updating your records in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to reflect name and address of your employer, changes in your name, address, or disruption of employment for the length of time practical training is authorized.

***Travel Outside of and Re-entry to the U.S. During Optional Practical Training after Completing your Degree***

While you are engaged in optional practical training, you are still in F-1 status and you must have your form I-20 endorsed for re-entry to the United States. At the port of entry, you will be required to present your form I-20 your EAD card, a valid passport and visa and proof of employment in the U.S. You will not be permitted entry unless you are entering to begin or continue OPT employment. Also, while engaged in optional practical training after completion of your degree, the re-entry signature is only valid for 6 months.

## OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING APPLICATION

Please Print

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student #: \_\_\_\_\_ SEVIS #: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Physical Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

You are generally eligible for up to 12 months of Optional Practical Training (OPT). Your practical training must be completed within 14 months of your graduation. Please indicate the dates during which you would like your OPT to be authorized.

I request that my OPT begin \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ and end on \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  PT  FT

Please indicate an address, telephone and E-mail where you wish to be notified when your receipt and EAD card arrives. Keep in mind that the USCIS often takes longer than four months to process OPT applications.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

During your authorized OPT, you are required to notify the IEC of 1) name and address or your employer, and 2) any changes in your address, employer, your name or disruption of employment within 10 days of such change. You may not be unemployed for an aggregate of 90 days or else you violate F-1 status. By your signature below you certify that you understand and agree to comply with your reporting obligations.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

## COUNSELOR'S VERIFICATION OF GRADUATION

(For Post Completion Optional Practical Training Only)

*Note: In lieu of this verification, you may submit a Candidacy for Graduation Form Signed by a Counselor*

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ is expected to  
(first name) (last name)  
graduate on \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ with a \_\_\_\_ degree in \_\_\_\_  
(date) (name of degree) (major)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: **Counselor (Student Development Specialist) OR Advisor**

Department: **Counseling**

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ **Keep a Copy of this Document for your Records**