

## OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

### *Definition*

Practical training is an opportunity for hands-on experience related to one's field of study. Optional practical training (OPT) must 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 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.

At the Associate Degree level, 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 (STEM) may be eligible for an additional twenty-four 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.)

You do not need an offer of employment to apply for optional practical training. Immigration 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. For the start date, you can choose any date between your date of completion and 60 days after completing your studies. You may also apply for OPT prior to completing your studies.

1. Complete the **Request for I-20 form** found on [www.brookdalecc.edu/international](http://www.brookdalecc.edu/international)
2. An IEC staff member will
  - a. Verify your eligibility to apply for optional practical training.



- b. If eligible, update your SEVIS record and issue an I-20 with an OPT recommendation.
  - c. Return to you the I-20 form showing recommendation for OPT.
3. Prepare your application and supporting documents for review by an IEC staff before you submit your application.
4. **File the I-765 form**, \$470 application fee, and supporting documents **within 30 days of receiving the I-20 form with the OPT recommendation.**

*If you want to expedite the processing time of your application, you may pay the premium processing fee of \$1,685.*

### ***Filing Instructions***

You can file form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization online. Follow all USCIS instructions found at: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>.

You will create your online account with USCIS or sign into your account if you already have one. If you do not yet have a Social Security Number (SSN), you can apply for an SSN as part of your application.

**Pre-completion OPT eligibility code:** (c) (3) (A)  
**Post-completion OPT eligibility code:** (c) (3) (B)

In **Part 6 - Additional Information**, provide all previously used SEVIS ID numbers, any previously authorized CPT or OPT, and the academic level in which it was authorized (if applicable.)

Documents to upload with the I-765 application are:

1. A passport style photograph taken in the last 30 days. Check the passport photo specification: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply/photos.html>
2. A scan of your passport
3. Your I-94 arrival/departure record available at [www.cbp.gov/i-94](http://www.cbp.gov/i-94) or I-797 approval notice for F-1 status
4. A scan of the latest I-20 form with OPT recommendation signed by you and an IEC staff member
5. A scan of all previous I-20 forms showing different SEVIS number(s) and previous periods of OPT and CPT (if applicable)
6. A scan of any previous EAD cards (if applicable)

*(Acceptable file formats are: jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, tif, tiff)*



Review your form and create a draft PDF of your I-765 form. Before submitting your form, contact an IEC staff member to review your application.

After you pay the \$470 application fee, your application will be submitted, and you will not be able to make any corrections.

You will receive your receipt immediately after filing the form. You will find it in the document tab in your online account. You can check your case status online at <https://www.uscis.gov/>

Upload a copy of your completed application securely to the International Center at <https://contentportal.brookdalecc.edu/xfp/form/19>

### ***Your Obligations During Optional Practical Training***

You are required to immediately (within 10 days) report the name and address of your employer, any change of name, address and employer, or disruption of employment to the immigration service. You will be provided with access to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) Portal.

SEVP will automatically email you with a unique link to create a Portal account when the status of your request for OPT in SEVIS changes to 'Approved' and is active. The email will be from **do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov**, with the subject line, "Optional Practical Training Approval - the next step. Create an SEVP Portal account." The only way to get to the Portal registration pages is to use the link in the email.

**During the OPT you may not be unemployed for an aggregate of 90 days or else, you violate your F-1 status.**

### ***IEC Obligations During Optional Practical Training***

The IEC is responsible for advising you and helping you to comply with your reporting obligations while you are on OPT.

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

Your I-20 must be signed for re-entry to the U.S. on page 2 by an IEC staff member. At the port of entry, you will be required to show 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.