



Optional Practical Training (OPT) Request Packet

General Information

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is temporary employment that is directly related to an F-1 student's major area of study. At PCC, eligible students can apply to receive up to 12 months of OPT employment authorization after completing their academic studies (post-completion).

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to apply for OPT, you must have maintained valid F-1 status, have a GPA of 2.0 or above, and have completed one full academic year as a full-time student.

When to Apply

Students may apply up to 90 days before your degree completion date, but no later than 60 days after you complete your degree. NOTE: If you depart the U.S. during your 60-day grace period before USCIS receives your OPT application, you will lose your OPT eligibility.

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 June 15th, then the last day that you may request to start your period of OPT will be August 14th. The date that you request as the start date does not necessarily mean that is the start date that will be approved. Therefore, 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 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 ISC informed of any changes in your name, address, or any other pertinent information about your stay in the United States. Failure to report any changes to ISC may jeopardize your legal status in the United States. If you travel outside the U.S., you must obtain a travel signature from an ISC advisor in the International Student Center. Travel signature is valid only for 6 months during OPT. Regulations only permit you to re-enter the U.S to resume OPT employment. It is not advisable to travel if you have not secured employment. If you change your status you must submit a copy of the approval Notice (Form I-797) to the ISC.

You will have a 60 day 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.

If you begin a new degree program full-time, whether at PCC 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 PCC to the new institution or upon issuance of a new Form I-20 for a different program. Once you are transferred out, your OPT will automatically cancel.

*Please note that there is no option to extend the OPT based upon an Associate degree. When the 12 months have been completed, you must seek another visa status if you wish to remain in the United States to continue employment. **Also, once OPT has been granted it is extremely difficult to cancel it. You may have to use it or lose it.**

OPT Request Instructions

STEP 1 To apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT), complete the attached forms and make an appointment to meet with an ISC advisor in the International Student Center.

1. Optional Practical Training (OPT) Request form (signed by Academic Counselor in L- 104)
2. Photocopy of Petition for Graduation (signed by Academic Counselor in L- 104)
3. Form I-765: download at www.uscis.gov/i-765 (Use Black Ink only)

During your appointment, the ISC advisor will review your application materials to ensure they are completed correctly. If everything is in order and the ISC advisor determines that you meet all eligibility requirements for OPT, you will receive an updated SEVIS Form I-20 with an OPT recommendation from ISC.

STEP 2 Pick up the new I-20 with OPT recommendation at ISC. Processing time of your OPT Request at ISC is 10 business days.

STEP 3 Assemble the OPT application materials.

1. A check or money order for \$410 payable to “**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**”.
2. Two identical U. S. passport-style color photos taken within 30 days of application. Write down your name and I-94 number in pencil on back of the photos. Put the photos in an envelope or plastic bag.
3. Original Form I-765.
4. Print-out of the most recent I-94 Admission Record at www.cbp.gov/i94 OR a photocopy of paper I-94 (front and back).
5. Photocopies of all the I-20s (page 1 and 3 of previous I-20s issued before June 2015 and page 1 and 2 of I-20s issued after June 2015) you have ever had at Associate degree level. You must sign every single I-20 before making a copy.
6. Photocopy of passport picture page.
7. Photocopy of F- 1 visa or I-797 Approval Notice for F-1 if you changed status in the U.S.
8. Photocopy of previously issued EAD (if any).
9. Form G-1145: download at www.uscis.gov/g-1145.

Staple the materials together in the above order. Paperclip Form G-1145 on top of the stapled application materials.

STEP 4 Mail your OPT application to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox. Your application must be received by USCIS no later than 30 days after the “date issued” on your OPT I-20 and also by the end of your 60-day grace period. **Be sure to make a photocopy of your application materials for your records before mailing.**

If your address on I-765 is in **California**, mail your application to USCIS Phoenix Lockbox.

For USPS Certified and Express Mail:
USCIS Phoenix Lockbox
PO Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

For overnight/courier deliveries (non-USPS):
USCIS
Attn: AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

For other states, go to <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-information/uscis-phoenix-and-dallas-lockbox-facilities>.

Processing time at USCIS may range from 2-3 months. You will receive I-797 Receipt Notice via mail in about a month after you submit your application to USCIS. You can check your application status online at uscis.gov and go to “Check your Case Status”.

If your OPT is approved, you will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) mailed directly to you at the address on Form I-765.

If you change your address while your OPT application is pending, submit the changes to USCIS at <https://egov.uscis.gov/coa/displayCOAForm.do> as soon as possible. You must also update your address on your LancerPoint account and report the changes to ISC within 10 days of the change via email.

If you have any questions please contact the ISC at (626) 585-7808.

After you receive an Employment Authorization Card (EAD)

- Employment must be a minimum of 20 hours per week in your major field of study.
- Student may not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment during the 12-month period of post-completion OPT.
- Employment during post-completion OPT may include paid employment, multiple employers, short-term multiple employers (performing artists), work for hire, self-employed business owner, employment through an agency or consulting firm, and unpaid employment. For more information about types of employment allowed while on OPT, refer to section 7.2.1 on [SEVP Policy Guidance](#).
- Provide a photocopy of your EAD to ISC via mail, scan & email, or in-person.
- Once you obtain a job offer, report the following information to ISC via email:
 1. SEVIS ID #
 2. PCC ID #
 3. Employer's name
 4. Employer's address including city, state, and zip code
 5. Start date of employment
 6. If your employment is full-time (20 hours or more per week) or part-time (less than 20 hours per week)
 7. Explain how the employment is related to your major(s)

Travel during OPT

- You must have a valid passport, valid F-1 visa, OPT I-20 with a travel signature (signature is valid for 6 months during OPT), proof of funding, I-901 SEVIS fee receipt (obtain at fmjfee.com), unofficial transcript, a job offer letter from an employer, and EAD or I-797 Receipt Notice.
- If your F-1 visa has expired, you must apply for a new visa before reentering the U.S.



Optional Practical Training (OPT) Request

Student to complete:

Student Name: _____
Family Name First Name MI

PCC ID#: _____ SEVIS ID#: **N** _____ Date of Birth: _____
(last 8 digits) Month/Day/Year

PCC Email Address: _____@go.pasadena.edu Phone#: _____

Major: _____ First Semester at PCC: _____ Expected Graduation: _____
semester/year semester/year

Program End Date on I-20: _____ Passport Expiration Date: _____ Visa Expiration Date: _____
Month/Day/Year Month/Day/Year Month/Day/Year

Your OPT Request:

Date of Degree Completion: _____ (the last day of your final semester)
Month/Day/Year

Your Requested OPT Start Date: _____ End Date: _____
Month/Day/Year Month/Day/Year

Describe your proposed employment: _____

- Have you been authorized Curricular Practical Training (CPT) before? Yes No
- Have you been authorized for OPT before? Yes No If yes, at what degree level? _____
- Are you currently working on-campus? Yes No

It is a violation of U.S. law to give false information to the college. I state that the information I provided on this form is true. I have read the information regarding OPT on the attached pages and understand the responsibilities required for maintaining F-1 status after my program of study and during my period of OPT authorization.

 Student Signature _____
Month/Day/Year

Academic Counselor Recommendation:

The above student is currently enrolled _____ units with an accumulative GPA of _____.

The student is recommended for **OPT**. The expected date of degree completion is _____.
Month/Day/Year

*Date of degree completion is the date when the above student completes his/her associate degree requirements. It may be different from graduation date.

 Academic Counselor Signature _____ _____
Printed Name Month/Day/Year

ISC staff to complete:

unit # ____ Completed one academic year? Current CPT end date? Previous OPT at Associate level?
 Travel discussed? SEVIS SARS Case log Email student Initial: _____ Date: _____