

## F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)

### General Information

Optional Practical Training for F-1 students is intended to provide hands-on practical work experience complementary to the academic program. An F-1 student is eligible for a **maximum of 12 months of full-time employment**. However, if a student begins a new academic program at a higher level (e.g. master's after bachelor's degree, or PhD after master's), the student is eligible for another 12 months of OPT.

*(Students in advanced certificate programs at John Jay College do not qualify for OPT.)*

### Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for Optional Practical Training, you must:

- *have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year;*
- *currently be maintaining a full-time program of study and valid F-1 status; and*
- *work in a job directly related to your major field of study.*

### Types of OPT

OPT is available in the following cases:

- *Summer vacation and semester break – either part-time or full-time employment*
- *While school is in session – part-time employment only*
- *After completion of all course requirements for a bachelor's or master's degree, excluding the thesis or equivalent – part or full-time employment*
- *After completion of all requirements for the course of study – full-time employment only*

### Reporting Requirements While on OPT

Students on OPT are required to report any change of name or home address, or any interruption of such employment within 10 days. In addition, the following must be reported to the college's Designated School Official (DSO):

- *Name and address of the employer*
- *Your job title*
- *Start and end dates*
- *Full-time or part-time*
- *Supervisor name, phone number and email*
- *Describe how the employment is related to your course work*
- *Any change in your employer's address*
- *If you were terminated from your employment, report the date of termination*
- *(For 24 month STEM extension students: you and your employer must complete, sign and submit the Form I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT Students, to their DSO)*

Such reporting should be done via e-mail to the DSO. You are permitted to work for more than one employer while on full-time OPT, but you must report each employer to the DSO as stated above.

### Limited Periods of Unemployment to Maintain Status

During post-completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment. Students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any post-completion OPT carried out under the post-completion OPT authorization.

## **OPT Filing Window**

A student will be able to file the OPT application up to 90 days before the program completion date, and up to 60 days after the program completion date. **However, the OPT application MUST be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date on which the DSO issues an OPT I-20.** Processing times for OPT applications can be found on the USCIS web site at <http://www.uscis.gov>. In general, expect that the OPT application will take up to three months for approval.

## **Selecting OPT Dates**

### Pre-Completion

List the dates you actually intend to work. Your start date should be the earliest date that you could possibly begin work. Your end date should be the latest day that you could possibly work.

### Post-Completion

If you are applying for post-completion OPT, you are given a 60-day grace period following the completion date of your studies. Therefore, for post-completion OPT, the beginning date must be within the 60-day grace period.

## **Duration of OPT Employment Authorization**

Employment authorization will begin on the date requested or the date the employment authorization is adjudicated, whichever is later.

## **Stem Extension**

Currently, John Jay College is approved by the Department of Homeland Security to offer an additional 24 months of OPT for students graduating in specific majors in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). To qualify for the STEM Extension:

- *Student must be currently participating in a 12-month period of OPT, working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to the student's STEM major area of study.*
- *The student's current or prospective employer must be registered with the DHS [E-Verify](#) employment verification system.*
- *You and your employer must complete, sign and submit the Form I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT Students, to their DSO.*

## **Deadline to Apply for the 24-month OPT Extension**

The application for the 24-month OPT extension must be received by USCIS prior to the expiration date of the student's current OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD), and no later than 30 days after the DSO signs the OPT extension recommendation on Form I-20.

## **Application Process**

### Step 1

- *Request an I-20 recommending OPT from the DSO. (Call a John Jay College DSO for an appointment. Please refer to end of document for contact information of DSOs.)*
- *Complete \*Form I-765 (available at <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>) – type or print legibly (For pre-completion OPT, enter “c 3 A” under Item 16.) (For post-completion OPT, enter “c 3 B” under Item 16.) (\*If you are not sure how to fill out the Form I-765, the DSO will assist you during your appointment.)*

### Step 2

Prepare your OPT application for mailing. Include the following;

- *A completed Form I-765 Application*
- *A check or money order (for the I-765 application fee) for \$410.00 (a check is preferable because, if necessary, you can determine if and when it is cashed), payable to the US Department of Homeland Security*
- *A copy of your new OPT I-20 with OPT recommendation*
- *Photocopy of all your previous and current I-20s*

- Photocopy of Form I-94 (front and back), or download and print your most recent I-94 number at <http://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/i-94-instructions>
- Photocopy of passport (biographical data, photo, and expiration date)
- Two US passport-style photos (lightly print your name on the back of each photo with a pencil)
- Front and back copy of any previously approved employment authorization (EAD) cards.
- (For 24-month STEM extension students: a copy of your STEM degree)

Check all documents for completeness and accuracy. Be sure to sign Forms I-20 and I-765. Make a complete copy of your application for your records. The college does not maintain copies of OPT applications.

### Step 3

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

**US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**

**PO Box 660867**

**Dallas, TX 75266**

For express mail and courier service deliveries:

**US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**

**Attn: AOS**

**2501 S. State Hwy. 121, Business Suite 400**

**Lewisville, TX 75067**

(Make sure to write in the lower left hand corner **“Optional Practical Training, Form I-765” on the front of the envelope.**)

We recommend that you mail your application by Express Mail or by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested, so you will have a record of its delivery.

### **Travel Information for Post-Completion OPT**

Currently, the following are required to return to the US:

- A valid passport
- A valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport (except Canadian and Bermudian citizens)
- Your OPT I-20 endorsed for reentry by the DSO within the last six months
- Your valid EAD card for OPT
- Evidence of employment such as a job offer or employment verification letter

If you do not have all of these documents listed above or plan to leave the US while your OPT application is pending with USCIS, you should consult with the DSO before traveling abroad. For more information, visit: [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq\\_f2.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq_f2.htm).

Please note: Your EAD will have a notation “not valid for reentry to US.” This is printed on all EAD cards issued for OPT and simply means that the card alone is not sufficient for reentry to the US.

### **Special Notes**

*Your program end date on your I-20 may be shortened if deemed appropriate*

- *If you later decide not to mail your OPT application to USCIS for any reason, you must notify the DSO immediately so that we may timely cancel your OPT recommendation in SEVIS. Failure to inform the DSO that you are not applying for OPT can cause problems for you in the future*
- *Please email a John Jay College DSO a copy of your OPT card immediately upon receipt*
- *While OPT is pending, we strongly advise you against changing the address listed on Form I-765*
- *Your OPT will be automatically terminated when you begin study at another educational level or transfer to another school*

**Designated School Officials (DSO's) at John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

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