**Steps to Obtain Post Completion OPT**

**Step 1. Verify your eligibility.**
- Currently in valid F-1 status.
- At least one academic year of full-time enrollment immediately prior to the OPT application.
- Completion of UT Dallas degree.
- Must apply during the application period (up to 90 days before program completion date, and up to 60 days after).

**Step 2. Attend an OPT workshop.** Thursdays, 2:30-3:45 p.m. Student Services Building (SSB), 3rd Floor, Room 3.107.
More information can be found at: [https://www.utdallas.edu/isso/opt/](https://www.utdallas.edu/isso/opt/)

**Step 3. Compile the documents listed below.**
*Pay the $100 Practical Training fee before submitting this form or your I-20 will be delayed. Pay online at: utdallas.edu/isso/ptfee.*
- OPT I-20 Request Form.
- Completed I-765 Form.
- Copy of any previous EAD cards (only if you have received an EAD in the past).

**Step 4. Submit your documents to the UT Dallas ISSO.**
- In person: Submit to the ISSO during office hours, SSB 3.4. Monday - Thursday, 8:30am to 6pm. Friday, 8:30am to 5pm.
- By e-mail: Submit to ISSODocuments@utdallas.edu. Verify that the total size of attachments in one e-mail is not larger than 5MB. Do not send files in compressed formats, such as .rar or .zip. Instead, use a PDF, JPEG or DOC format.
- Processing time is about 3 business days. You will receive an email from ISSO when your request has been processed.

**Step 5. Pick up your OPT I-20 from the UT Dallas ISSO. Compile the documents listed below.**
- Form G-1145 (Optional). Authorizes USCIS to send you application processing updates via email/text. If this is desired, paperclip completed form on top of application packet.
- Original Form I-765.
- 2 U.S. size passport photos. Lightly write name and I-94 number on back of each photo. Attach photos to top, left corner of Form I-765 (a plastic bag is supplied for your convenience).
- $380 check or money order. Make payable to “Department of Homeland Security,” write I-94 number at top. Staple check midway down the left edge of Form I-765.
- Copy of OPT I-20. Pages 1 and 3. I-20 must be less than 30 days old, signed by you and an ISSO advisor.
- Copy of passport ID page. Showing picture and expiration date.
- Copy of I-94. Front and back or electronic I-94 print out.
- Copy of F-1 visa. Most recently issued visa, valid or expired.
- CPT printout. Provided by ISSO.
- Copies of any former OPT EADs.

**Step 6. Mail the application to USCIS.** Mailing instructions will be provided with the OPT I-20 and are also available at [https://www.utdallas.edu/isso/forms/](https://www.utdallas.edu/isso/forms/)

**Step 7. Wait for USCIS to process your request.** Check case status online at [https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do](https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do). If approved, you will receive an OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD). The normal processing time for USCIS is three months.

**Step 8. Do not begin employment until you have the EAD card and the start date on the EAD card has arrived.**

**Step 9. Maintain F-1 status while on OPT.** To maintain F-1 status during OPT you must comply with U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) employment and reporting requirements. Refer to more information at [http://www.utdallas.edu/isso/opt-reporting/](http://www.utdallas.edu/isso/opt-reporting/)

The University of Texas at Dallas /International Student Services /OPT Guide /Revised 01-21-15
REGULATORY GUIDANCE

The following information will help you maintain your F-1 status while you are on OPT. Review it carefully. Additional information is available at [https://www.utdallas.edu/isso/opt/](https://www.utdallas.edu/isso/opt/). If needed, consult with the ISSO, or an immigration attorney.

UNEMPLOYMENT LIMIT

To maintain F-1 status, students on post-completion OPT must limit unemployment to 90 days or less during the year of OPT. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may terminate a student’s status if that limit is exceeded. Additional information is available at [http://www.utdallas.edu/isso/opt-reporting/](http://www.utdallas.edu/isso/opt-reporting/)

ACCEPTABLE EMPLOYMENT

Employment during OPT must be at least 20 hours per week and applicable to the degree you just completed.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Federal regulations require students on post-completion OPT to report all changes in employment and address to the UT Dallas ISSO. You should make these reports within 10 days of each change. The ISSO will forward the updates to Homeland Security. You may email or mail the UT Dallas OPT Employment Report Form to the ISSO to meet this requirement. The form is available at [http://www.utdallas.edu/isso/forms/](http://www.utdallas.edu/isso/forms/). You will be sent an email when the report is complete, within five business days.

NOTE: Changes of address reported on the OPT Employment Report Form affect only the SEVIS immigration system. To update your address in the school information system (Orion) do so through Galaxy [http://www.utdallas.edu/galaxy/](http://www.utdallas.edu/galaxy/) (current students) or the Registrar’s Office [http://www.utdallas.edu/registrar/](http://www.utdallas.edu/registrar/) (alumni).

TRAVEL

During the last semester of enrollment and after graduation you may re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status with the correct documents. The requirements vary according to your specific circumstances. Additional information is available at [http://www.utdallas.edu/isso/travel-outside-us/](http://www.utdallas.edu/isso/travel-outside-us/)

After Graduation - Before OPT approval:

- Valid passport with an expiration date that is at least six months into the future
- Valid, unexpired F-1 visa
- OPT I-20 signed on page three by an international student advisor within the last six months
- OPT application receipt

After Graduation - After OPT approval:

- Valid passport with an expiration date that is at least six months into the future
- Valid, unexpired F-1 visa
- OPT I-20 signed on page three by an international student advisor within the last six months
- OPT EAD
- Proof of employment (e.g. initial offer letter, pay stubs, employment verification letter)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

If you do not already have a Social Security Card, you may apply for one after you receive the EAD. The Social Security Administration will not process your request before your OPT start date.

17-MONTH OPT STEM EXTENSION

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) limits this benefit to selected programs. To be eligible the major on your initial OPT I-20 must match one of the designated programs. Apply within 120 days prior to the initial OPT expiration date. Additional information is available at [http://www.utdallas.edu/isso/opt-extension/](http://www.utdallas.edu/isso/opt-extension/)