Optional Practical Training:
Working in the US after degree completion

International Students and Scholars Office | University of Wyoming
Cheney International Center, Ste 5 307-766-5193 uwglobal@uwyo.edu
Online OPT Resources

www.uwyo.edu/iss

Click here for the most current OPT information and live Reporting Survey Links
Today’s Post-Completion OPT Presentation

- What is Post-Completion OPT?
- Eligibility for Post-Completion OPT
- Application and processing timeline
- Maintaining status while on Post-Completion OPT
- Types of employment allowed on Post-Completion OPT
- Unemployment while on Post-Completion OPT
- Reporting requirements while on Post-Completion OPT
- Resources for students, advisors, and employers
- Enrolling at UW while on OPT or after change of status
- Completing the Post-Completion OPT application
What is Post-Completion OPT? The Basics

- OPT is designed to allow an F-1 student to remain in the US and gain experience in their field for one year after completion of their program.
- Student remains in F-1 status for the duration of the OPT.
- One OPT is allowed for each degree level.
- Student is allowed to travel while on OPT.
- Student must be employed while on OPT.
- Those who completed a program in a designated STEM field may apply to extend their OPT for 24 additional months if they, and their employer, meet the criteria. Two OPT extensions are allowed per lifetime.
- OPT allows student to apply for change of status; allows cap-gap extension with submitted H1B petition by non-cap-exempt employer.
Eligibility for Post-Completion OPT

- Student must have maintained lawful status, including being enrolled on a full-time basis at a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approved school, for at least one full academic year

- Student must be graduating or completing required coursework in an accredited Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctoral program within 90 days of application date

- No offer of employment is required for application, but the student should be actively seeking employment to begin as soon as the OPT is approved

- Student must not have completed 365 days of full-time CPT during degree. Part-time CPT does not affect OPT.
Application and Processing Timeline

- Student should begin planning for OPT application at least one year before completion of their degree. Specifically important for graduate students who will enroll in less than 9.0 credits to finish thesis/dissertation.

- Student must attend an ISS OPT Information and Application workshop before submitting application.

- Meet with ISS staff to submit application **90 days before** completion of degree/graduation. Can take up to THREE months for OPT to be approved.

- May submit application up to **60 days after** graduation.

- Employment is not allowed after graduation/completion date until OPT EAD is received and start date has been reached. This includes graduate assistantships!
Application and Processing Timeline

- Receipt notice from USCIS approximately two weeks after application is received by USCIS. Will be emailed to student by ISS staff. Electronic notification from USCIS will arrive approximately one week after application is received by USCIS.

- Track your application online at www.uscis.gov

- Approval notice/EAD card received by ISS approximately 90 days of receipt date (or less). ISS will email student THE DAY the card is received at ISS.

- Employment may begin only after EAD card is received and the start date on the card has been reached.
Once OPT start date on EAD is reached, status is maintained by employment, regardless of enrollment in credits to finish degree!

- Employment must be directly related to major field of study
- Must work at least 20 hours per week. Multiple jobs are allowed but each job should be at least 20 hours per week if possible
- Do not exceed 90 days of unemployment during post-completion OPT
- Report changes to contact information and employment within 10 days of any change
- Beginning a new degree program automatically terminates OPT, even part time. Notify ISS of intent to begin a new degree so that SEVIS record can be updated/transferred appropriately
- Notify ISS of any application or approval for change of status
Types of Employment Allowed on Post-Completion OPT

- Regular paid employment – multiple employers allowed
- Payment by multiple short-term employers ("gigs")
- Work for hire/contractual employment
- Self-employed business owner
- Employed through an agency
- Volunteering or unpaid employment

*Note: STEM OPT extension does not allow self-employment, working for an agency, or volunteer/unpaid employment*
Unemployment While on Post-Completion OPT

- Must not exceed 90 days of unemployment while on post-completion OPT
- Unemployment days begin counting on the start date on the EAD and stop on the start date of the job. Each day between employment when changing from one job to another also counts
- Weekends and holidays ARE included in unemployment days before official employment start date
- Cannot stop the “unemployment clock” by leaving the US for a period of time
- Official vacation days, sick days, office closures and weekend days do not count as unemployment days after official employment start date
- Unemployment days must be reported and should match the official human resources records of your employers
Reporting Requirements While on Post-Completion OPT: Contact/Personal Information

- Must report no more than 10 days after any change
- Physical address – not a PO or mail box
- Mailing address – PO or mail box
- Email address
- Phone number
- Leaving the US before the end of the OPT with no intention of returning (abandoning the OPT)
- Admission to start a new academic program. ISS must update SEVIS and/or transfer your record before you may begin your new program
- Any application for, or change to, your immigration status – H1B, US Permanent Resident, etc
Reporting Requirements While on Post-Completion OPT: Employment Information

- Must report no more than 10 days after any change
- Employment start and end date – must match official human resources record
- Employer information
  - Name – Name of company
  - Address
  - Employer ID Number (EIN) – This is NOT your personal employee number!
  - Job Title
- Supervisor information
  - Name
  - Phone number
  - Email address
- How is the employment related to your major field of study?
  - Be brief but thorough – two sentences
How to Report Updates While on Post-Completion OPT

1. Directly to ISS via www.uwyo.edu/iss/opt

- Online survey links allow easy reporting of information directly to ISS
- Surveys require specific information to make sure that all SEVIS fields can be completed by ISS staff
- Students receive automatic confirmation email when information is successfully submitted. ISS staff strives to complete the update in SEVIS within one week of receiving the information.
- Surveys are required if a student chooses to leave the US and abandon the OPT so that ISS is notified directly.
- Students should notify ISS directly via email if they change status.
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

What is Optional Practical Training?
Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a temporary employment benefit contained in the United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) regulations governing the F-1 visa category. Students who have maintained their status for 30 months or more have the opportunity to obtain work experience directly related to their major area of study in order to enhance their educational experience in the United States.

- OPT Post-completion OPT
- OPT Extension for carte-holders

Resources for Individuals Currently on Post-Completion OPT
- Information for Continued Enrollment at UW while on OPT
- Tips and Requirements for Post-Completion OPT
- List of STEM-Approved Majors
- OPT Extension Responsibilities for Students and Employers
- 90-Day Cap Gap Extension Request Form

Report: Update Your Contact Information - address, phone, and email
Report: Update Employment - new employment, employer update, end of employment, or leaving the US / terminating OPT early
How to Report Updates While on Post-Completion OPT

2. Directly to SEVIS via the SEVP Student Portal

- Online portal allows student to report information directly to SEVIS

- Students receive email from the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) once their OPT has been approved and the start date has been reached

- Email contains a secure link that can only be used ONCE to set up the initial student portal account

- After account is set up, students may log into the account to see their current OPT information and update most of their information

- Use of the student portal is OPTIONAL. Students may continue to report directly to ISS using the online surveys if they want.
What Can Be Reported in the Student Portal?

**Biographical Information:**
- Physical and mailing address, email address, phone numbers

**Employer Information:**
- First employer on OPT, additional employer, change from one employer to another, leave employment (begin unemployment)
- Official start and end dates of employment
- Address of employer, Employer EIN, Supervisor information
- How employment is related to major field of study

*Reporting of employer information is limited while on STEM OPT extension

ISS will provide samples and guidance via email and on the ISS OPT Information website to assist students in using the portal
ISS Follow Up to Direct SEVIS Updates

- ISS will have access to a report summarizing all updates made directly by students in the student portal. ISS staff plans to review this weekly to ensure data integrity and follow up on any issues or changes.

- If a student adds/changes their employer directly via the student portal, ISS staff will print a new I-20 showing the updated employer information and mail it to the student directly at the mailing address that is in SEVIS.

- If a student updates their email address, ISS staff will update both the Talking Stick and the OPT mailing lists so that students continue to get email updates at their requested address.

- While ISS staff will monitor the updates, it is vitally important that students are very careful to enter correct information, spelling/grammar, and official employment start and end dates. ISS staff will not have any way to check that what you enter is correct.

ISS will provide samples and guidance via email and on the ISS OPT Information website to assist students in using the portal.
Resources for Students, Advisors and Employers

- UW ISS website: www.uwyo.edu/iss/opt
  Presentation slides, OPT applications, STEM degree list, information reporting links, sample letter for advisor, OPT extension information for students and employers

- STEM OPT Hub: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub
  Form I-983 tutorial and information for students and employers about the OPT extension application and requirements. Students will work with UW ISS to process the extension application and continue to report changes to ISS while on extension

  Instructions and videos to assist students with approved OPT who want to report information directly to SEVIS via the SEVP portal
Enrolling at UW While on Post-Completion OPT: Undergraduates Who Fail a Course in Final Semester

- If you do not officially graduate in the semester planned
  - If the OPT has not been approved, student may submit a letter to ISS asking the OPT be cancelled. Letter must be forwarded to USCIS and received by them before the OPT is approved in order to cancel the OPT request. Application fee will not be refunded
  - If the OPT has already been approved, student must continue to participate in OPT, meeting all requirements, with the exception of hours per week. Student will be limited to no more than 20 hours per week or work until completion of their degree
  - Any undergraduate who enrolls at UW while on OPT is required to pay the tuition, fees, and international student health insurance until completion of their degree. This cannot be waived
Enrolling at UW While on OPT: Graduate Students Who Must Enroll to Graduate

▪ If you must complete writing, defense, etc
  – Students may enroll in one credit of continuous registration (on or off campus does not matter) as a “place holder” so that they may officially graduate*
  – Student will be charged for the tuition, fees and international student health insurance
  – Student may petition to have the insurance removed, and the fees if the insurance if removed, at the beginning of the semester. This request must be made BEFORE the end of the add/drop period. The determination will be made by the Student Insurance Advocate, stuins@uwyo.edu, on a case-by-case basis. Most commonly, insurance and fees are waived for those living outside of Wyoming and/or those who have a job that provides insurance at coverages equal to or greater than UW’s policy coverage
Enrolling at UW After Change of Status:

- **Students who change status to H1B or other non-resident status**
  - Please notify ISS of any change of status so that your status in the UW computer system and the SEVIS system may be updated. As an H1B, or any other non-resident status, you are still considered an international student and will be charged the tuition, fees and for the international student health insurance.
  - Student may request a waiver of the insurance and fees. See previous slide for details. Request MUST be made BEFORE the end of the add/drop period.

- **Students who change status to US Permanent Resident or US Citizen**
  - Please notify ISS immediately so that your status in the UW computer system and the SEVIS system can be updated. US Permanent Residents and US citizens should not be automatically charged for the fees or the student health insurance. Please review your bill carefully to make sure these charges do not appear. Contact ISS right away if these charges appear on your bill so that we can make sure that your record was updated correctly.

*Refunds will not be given for those who change status in the middle of a semester.*
Completing the Post-Completion OPT Application – Checklist!

- Complete USCIS Form I-765
- Complete the OPT Request Information form
- Complete Tips and SEVIS Requirements while on Post-Completion OPT form
- *Undergraduate students* must provide a letter from their Degree Analyst in the Office of the Registrar verifying the anticipated graduation date
- *Graduate students* must provide a letter from their Academic Advisor verifying the completion of their required coursework and the anticipated date of completion of all requirements
- Complete Form G-1145 for electronic notification of application receipt
- Current passport, most recent visa, all I-20s, current I-94 printed from www.cbp.gov/i94 or I-94 card if in passport, any other documents you have such as I-797 for change of status
- Two passport photos according to USCIS requirements, taken within the last 30 days. Make sure these are good quality photos that meet requirements before you accept them
- Filing fee of $410.00. A check or money order payable to “US Department of Homeland Security”. Or complete the Form G-1450 Credit Card Authorization Form. *Cash cannot be accepted*
Application For Employment Authorization
USCIS Form I-765
05/30/2017

Form I-765

START HERE - Type or print in black ink.
I am applying for:

Permission to accept employment:

Replacement (if lost employment authorization document):

Removal of my permission to accept employment (attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document):

1. Full Name
   Family Name First Name Middle Name
   Joe

2. Other Names Used (include Maiden Name)
   Family Name First Name Middle Name

3. U.S. Mailing Address
   Street Number and Name Apt. Number
   1000 E University Ave 3020
   Laramie
   WY 82071

4. Country of Citizenship or Nationality
   Cowboy Country

5. Place of Birth
   Town or City State ZIP Code
   Laramie WY

6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)
   01/25/1990

7. Gender: Male [ ] Female [x]


9a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever issued a Social Security card to you?
   Yes [x] No [ ]

Note: If you answered "Yes" to Item Number 9a, provide the information requested in Item Number 9b.

9b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known)
   [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

10. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?
    You must also answer "Yes" to Item Number 11.
    Yes [x] No [ ]

Note: If you answered "No" to Item Number 10, skip to Item Number 14. If you answered "Yes" to Item Number 10, you must also answer "Yes" to Item Number 11.

11. Consent for disclosure: I agree to disclose the information in this application to the SSA, as required for the purpose of verifying my employment eligibility.
    Yes [x] No [ ]

Note: If you answered "Yes" to Item Numbers 9a - 10, provide the information requested in Item Numbers 12a - 13b.

12a. Family Name
    Last Name
    [ ]

12b. Given Name
    [ ]

13a. Family Name
    Last Name
    [ ]

13b. Given Name
    [ ]

14. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or Form I-94 Number (if any)
    23456789

15. Have you ever been applied for employment authorization from USCIS?
    Yes [x] No [ ]

Note: If you answered "Yes" to Item Number 13b, refer to Item Number 14, in the Who May File Form I-765 section of these Instructions for information about providing court disposition.

16. Date of Your Last Arrival or Entry into the U.S.
   On or After (mm/dd/yyyy)
   08/20/2017

17. Place of Your Last Arrival or Entry into the U.S.
   Laredo, TX

18. Status at Last Entry (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status)
    F-1 Student

19. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.)
    Student

20. Eligibility Category. Go to the Who May File Form I-765 section of the Instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. For example, [a] [3] [1] [b] [c] [2] [1], etc.

21. Certification: I certify, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the Who May File Form I-765 section of these Instructions for information about providing court disposition.

Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Applicant
Cowboy Joe

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)
12/01/2017

Printed Name

Address

Signature

Page 1 of 2
OPT Request Information Form

Name: Cowboy Joe

Date of Birth: 01/25/1996
I-94 No. 123456789 10

Date first granted F-1 status: 08/01/2014 (Date of first entry stamp in F-1 status)

Major Field of Study: Chemical Engineering
Major Code: 14.0701

Requested OPT Start Date: 05/15/2018
OPT End Date: 05/14/2019

List all CPT approved during the current degree at UW and circle full or part time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Part Time or Full Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06/01/2017</td>
<td>07/31/2017</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/31/2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/15/2018</td>
<td>05/14/2019</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signature of student Cowboy Joe Date 03/31/2016

To be completed by Designated School Official (DSO):

___ Is taking a full course load at this school with the stated date of completion of
___ Is taking less than a full course load at this school ending on
___ Completed the course of study by the stated date or before

DSO Name and title: _______________________________ Coordinator, Student/Scholar Immigration

DSO Signature: _________________________________ Date

University of Wyoming
DEN214D0024000 307-766-5193

Revised 01/2016

Chosen by student

Must be after the program end date (graduation/completion date) and no more than 60 days after that date.

ISS completes this section!
Tips and SEVIS Requirements While on OPT form

(copy will be given to the student to keep)
Optional: To receive direct electronic notification of receipt of application by USCIS – approximately one week after receipt date
Form G-1450

Optional: To pay the $410 fee using your credit or debit card. Form will be mailed to USCIS with your application.