

Eligibility and Description of Post-Completion OPT

Post-Completion OPT (c)(3)(B) Eligibility:

- 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 one full academic year. If you have either taken a leave of absence or left the U.S. to apply for reinstatement then check with ISS as this may affect your eligibility under the one full academic year rule;
- 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. Unemployment days begin on the approval date and are limited to 90 days during the OPT period.
- Employment must be directly related to the student's major field of study and be appropriate with the student's level of study.

Post-Completion OPT Highlights:

- Period of OPT is 12 months (must be completed in the 14 months following graduation/completion);
- Full-time OPT requires working more than 20 hours per week;
- No upper limit on the number of hours allowed per week;
- Allows student to gain work experience directly related to their major field of study;
- Student may be approved for one post-completion OPT period for each increasing level of degree achieved;
- 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. Unemployment days begin on the approval date and are limited to 90 days during the OPT period;
- Allows student to work as a standard employee, as an entrepreneur in their own business, for an agency or consulting firm, or as an unpaid or volunteer employee;
- Students with approved post-completion OPT are eligible for the cap gap extension and to apply for the 24-month OPT extension if they, and their employer, meet the qualifications for the OPT Extension.

Post-Completion OPT Student Responsibilities:

- Report any change of name, address, phone number or email address within 10 days of change;
- Report start of first employment and any new employment (second jobs) within 10 days;
- Report termination of any employment within 10 days of termination;
- Report application for H-1B visa to ISS by submitting copy of H-1B petition receipt, and Cap-Gap Extension form if appropriate, to ISS;
- Report any change of status to ISS within 10 days of change;
- Report abandonment of OPT if student decides to leave the US without completing their OPT to ISS within 10 days.

H-1B Cap-Gap

There is an annual limit on the number of new H-1B visas available. This number is commonly referred to as the H-1B Cap. When the available H-1B visas have been issued for the federal fiscal year, which begins October 1 and ends September 30, the cap is considered to have been reached, and no new cap-subject applications can be approved until the next fiscal year.

Any student on post-completion OPT or OPT extension, who meets the below requirements, will have their OPT extended. The extension of status and OPT automatically terminates upon the rejection, denial, or revocation of the H-1B petition filed on the student's behalf. If an H-1B petition is filed, the student should complete the Cap Gap Request Form that can be found on the ISS OPT Information website.

To qualify for the H-1B Cap-Gap Extension, the student must be the beneficiary of an H-1B petition that

- has been timely filed;
- that requests an employment start date of October 1 of the current year; and
- requests a change of status

Further, the student must not have violated the regulations of their F-1 status

APPLYING FOR POST-COMPLETION OPT – TIMING AND APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Post-completion OPT application may be filed up to 90 days before the graduation/completion of coursework, and up to 60 days after the graduation/completion of coursework. Application MUST be received by USCIS on or before the 60th day and student must allow enough time for processing with ISS and mailing the application. Student may not be employed between their graduation date and the start date on the EAD card (including graduate assistantship). Approval of the OPT application can take up to 90 days. Student should apply as early as possible to allow enough time for approval before their desired employment start date.

Checklist - You must bring ALL documents to your appointment with ISS before your OPT request can be made in SEVIS.

1. Complete USCIS Form I-765 – download from the ISS OPT Information webpage. See step-by-step samples in the ISS OPT Information and Application Workshop slides on the UW ISS OPT website.
2. Signed copy of the Tips and SEVIS Requirements While on OPT page verifying that you have READ and UNDERSTAND your reporting requirements. Download from the ISS OPT Information website. You will receive a copy of this to keep.
3. Complete USCIS Form G-1145 Notification of Application Acceptance – download from the ISS OPT Information webpage
4. Undergraduate (Bachelor's) students must provide a letter from their Degree Analyst in the Office of the Registrar verifying the anticipated completion of the coursework required for your degree.

Graduate (Master's and Doctoral) 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. Sample form available on ISS website.
5. Copy of current passport, most recent visa, all I-20s with CPT approval on the back (See I-765 pg 7 CPT sample in the Workshop slides), current I-94 printout from www.cbp.gov/i94 or I-94 card if stapled in passport, and any other relevant immigration documents you have such as an I-797 for a change of status or previous OPT EADs.
6. Two (2) passport style photos according to USCIS requirements, taken within the last 30 days. You can get these from FedEx Kinkos, Walmart, The UPS Store, UW WyoOne office in the IT Building or any other establishment that takes passport style pictures. Make sure these are good quality photos that meet the requirements before you accept them!
7. Filing fee of \$410. A check or money order made payable to "US Department of Homeland Security", or you may complete Form G-1450 with your credit/debit card information and submit with the application – download from ISS OPT Information website. Cash cannot be accepted!
8. Attend a MANDATORY OPT workshop with ISS staff. These workshops are scheduled throughout the semester and dates will be posted in the Talking Stick and in other direct emails to students. Students must stay for the whole workshop!
9. Make an appointment with ISS to apply for the OPT. If you are not in Laramie, your application may be mailed to ISS but it is recommended that you call ISS to go over the packet before you mail it so that you do not forget anything. Please do not send original passport/visa, I-20s or I-94 cards if you mail your application to ISS.

Social Security Number

If you do not have a Social Security Number (SSN), you may complete Questions #15-17 on the Form I-765 and USCIS will forward your application to the US Social Security Administration. A social security card will be issued and mailed to you.

Note of Caution

While USCIS Regulations provide a variety of opportunities for you to be employed during your time in F-1 status, working improperly or without authorization is a serious violation of your status. It is your responsibility to comply with all Immigration and SEVIS reporting requirements that apply to F-1 students. The ISS staff is responsible for advising and counseling you regarding your responsibilities. If you fail to meet your responsibilities, you may not be eligible for benefits normally granted to F-1 students and could potentially lose your immigration status and have to leave the United States. While on OPT, you are still under the sponsorship of the University of Wyoming. The reporting requirements while on OPT are very comprehensive. Failure to report properly can result in your status being automatically terminated in SEVIS.