

# OPT Online Application

**Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) Guidelines**

North Park University  
Office of International Affairs

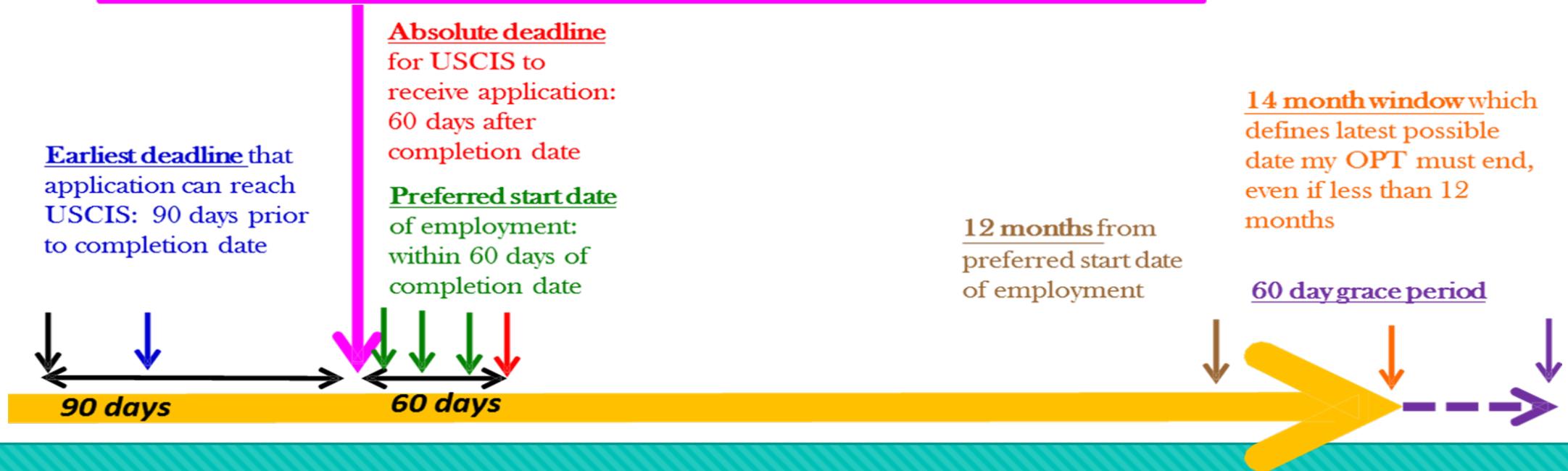
# What is OPT?

- OPT is training/employment that is directly related to an F-1 academic student's major area of study. It is intended to provide students with practical experience in their field of study upon completion of a degree program in the U.S. It can be either paid or unpaid. (But paid is always better! 😊)
- Available after completing each level of education (i.e., Bachelors, Masters)
- One year of work authorization for non-STEM degrees
- Two-year extension available for approved STEM degrees
- Must apply for approval from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

# Eligibility

- F-1 academic student who has attended a Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) approved school for one academic year.
- Student is on track to complete their degree this term.
- Student must have a valid passport and be in F-1 status (no status violations).
- OPT employment must be related to the student's major area of study.
- Note: No specific job offer is required to request OPT.

## Program Completion Date:



# When to apply for OPT

# Important Dates

I-20 Program End Date: Saturday, May 13, 2023

First day to apply: Monday, February 13, 2023

Last day to apply: Tuesday, July 11, 2023

OPT "start date" between May 14 – July 11, 2023

# How to Apply Online for Post-Completion OPT

- Follow the step-by-step instructions provided by OIA
- **DO NOT submit your online OPT application without your OPT I-20 with your OPT recommendation. You request this new I-20 from the Office of International Affairs (OIA).**
- Alternatively, you can submit a paper application to USCIS via mail.



How do I  
request my  
OPT I-20?



# Step #1: Apply for Graduation

- Once you complete the Graduation Application, you will wait for an email from the Office of the Registrar who will send you and your Academic Advisor a “Degree Audit.”
- You may NOT apply for OPT if you are not on-track to graduate this semester.

## Step #2: Request OPT I-20

You must complete the OPT I-20 Request form (DocuSign):

- ✓ Fill out the form, including your requested start date for OPT
- ✓ Form will be sent automatically to your advisor to confirm that you are on track for graduation
- ✓ OIA will prepare your new I-20

## Step #3: Sign your OPT I-20

- ✓ You will be sent a PDF that you can print-out **and sign** or you may stop by the Center of Student Engagement Front Desk in the Johnson Center to pick-up the original copy.
- ✓ **DO NOT FORGET TO SIGN YOUR NEW I-20!**
- ✓ **Upload this I-20 with your OPT Application**

## **Step 1: Prepare Your Documents**

**When you submit the online I-765 application for Post-Completion OPT, you will need to have your documents ready to upload.**

Save all documents as .pdf or .jpeg documents and follow USCIS's requirements for file names. Do not use foreign characters.

# Application Materials

- ❑ Passport identification page
- ❑ I-94 arrival record
- ❑ Digital Photos - you must prepare a digital passport-style photo taken within the last thirty days
- ❑ All I-20s with CPT authorization or previous OPT authorization
- ❑ Any I-20 from a previous school or degree program, if applicable.
- ❑ Any previously issued Employment Authorization Documents (EAD) cards, if applicable
- ❑ **Your new OPT I-20 obtained from the Office of International Affairs (OIA)**
  - ❑ Once you have read through this entire application packet and are ready to apply, please request a your OPT I-20, using the form provided by OIA.
  - ❑ Be sure to sign your new I-20 in ink at the bottom of page 1, in the "Student Attestation" section
  - ❑ Confirm your I-20 has the correct requested start date. No date changes are allowed once you submit your application.

# Step 2: Create Your myUSCIS Account

## Create Account

Set up your myUSCIS account by going to [uscis.gov](https://uscis.gov) and selecting "Sign In" --> "Create Account"

## Enter Email

Use a personal e-mail to create your myUSCIS account. Do not use your school e-mail.

## PIN

The system will send you a one-time PIN to log into your account; you will need to continue to use two-factor authentication when signing-in to your account.

## Create Account

Follow all other USCIS instructions to finalize the account creation process.

## Save Password

Save your log-in information as you will need to return to your account to continue your application.

## Next Steps

Once you create your myUSCIS account, read through USCIS's [Tips for Filing Forms Online](#) page. After you have reviewed the information, start your online I-765 application (next step).

## Step 3: Prepare and Submit Your Online I-765 Application for Post-Completion OPT

**Important Notes on Timing:** You must submit your application within 30 days of your OPT I-20 issuance date or your application will be denied.

Look for the option to "File a Form Online"

Look for the option to file Form I-765 (toward the bottom) - be sure to select the correct form!

Once you have selected Form I-765, you will be prompted to start the online I-765 application

You should make an edit to you online application every 30 days or your form progress will reset, and you will need to start over.

# Section 1: “Getting Started”

Basis of eligibility: select the correct eligibility code

(c)(3)(B) for post-completion Optional Practical Training (most common - for employment following graduation)



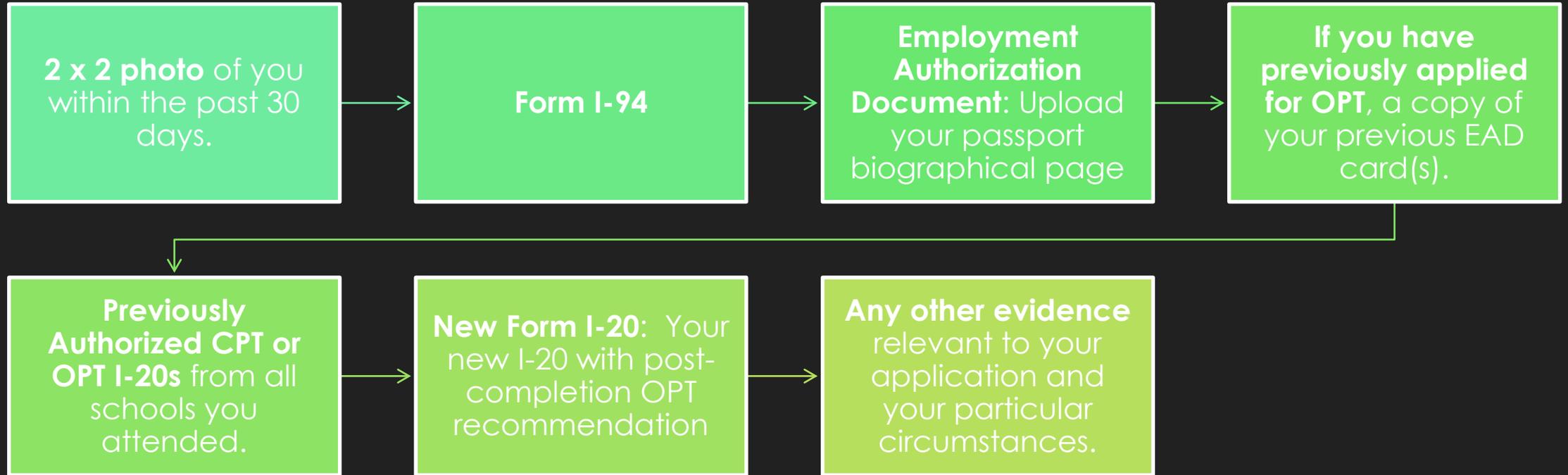
Reason for applying:

For post-completion OPT for your first time at this academic level, select “initial permission to accept employment”

## Section 2: “About You”

- Your name:
  - Include any names you have identified as currently or in the past
- Your contact information:
  - Current mailing address: Address where you wish to receive your card.
    - If you will move in the next 4-5 months, it is recommended you include a friend or family member's address on your I-765. Put their name in the “in care of” field.
  - If you include a friend or family member's address, select “no” to the question is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?
  - Under “where in the United States do you currently live” enter your current address even if you will move during your OPT application process.
- Other information: F-1 students generally do not have an A-number or a USCIS online account number
- Fill-in all other requested information as applicable.

## Section 3: "Evidence"



## **Section 4: “Additional Information”**

- This section is to provide additional explanation or information for your responses in your I-765 or for your uploaded evidence. This section does not allow for uploads.
- In this section you can include additional information such as:
  - Previous SEVIS ID #s or previous academic studies (Section: About You; Page: Your immigration information; Question: What is your SEVIS number?)
  - If you have missing I-20s for previously authorized CPT or OPT, include those details (Section: Evidence, Page: Form I-20, Question: I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status)

## Section 5: Review and Submit

- MyUSCIS will review your I-765 for completeness. It is your responsibility to check that all uploaded documents are correct. Correct any errors under the “alerts and warnings” section.
- If there are no alerts or warnings, your I-765 has been checked for completeness.
- There is an option to print this page or save your draft I-765 as a .pdf file. Please review your application for accuracy and save a copy for your records

## **Section 6: Submit Payment**

- Once your application is complete, the system will direct you to Pay.gov, a US government payment site, to pay the required I-765 application fee (\$410)
- There, you will be able to pay the application fee using a US credit / debit card or through an ACH transfer (direct withdrawal) from your US checking account.

- **IMPORTANT: Once you submit your payment information and that payment is successfully received, USCIS considers your application OFFICIALLY SUBMITTED.**
  - You cannot change or edit your I-765 application responses after payment has been submitted.
  - The fee is non-refundable once payment has been made.
- Once your application is submitted, USCIS will assign a receipt number.
  - You can print out an electronic receipt from your myUSCIS portal.
  - A paper receipt (I-797) will be mailed to you within a few weeks.



**Waiting for Approval**

# ***Check your mail!***

You should receive three items in the mail in the weeks/months after applying for OPT:

1. I-797 Receipt Notice
2. I-797 Notice of Approval
3. EAD Card

Retain all notices for your records.

## ***Check your case status***

- You can log back into myUSCIS to check for any updates.
- Often, any RFEs (Requests for Evidence) will be emailed to you and/or posted here. These require your immediate attention.
- You can also check your case through this [USCIS website](#), using your receipt number.

## ***What should I do if I get an RFE?***

- If you do receive a “request for evidence” (RFE) via email or mail please notify OIA immediately.
- This means you are required to submit or resubmit (additional) information regarding your application.
- Failure to comply with an RFE may result in a denial of your OPT application.
- You will need to upload or mail in the additional evidence requested.

# Travel During OPT

## While OPT application is pending:

- Travel during this time frame is strongly discouraged.
- If OPT is approved while you are outside of the U.S., you will need to receive the EAD card via email to be re-admitted.

## After OPT is approved:

- Students are generally permitted to travel after receiving OPT approval.
- Remember to carry valid travel documents:
  - Passport
  - Visa
  - EAD Card
  - I-20 with OPT request and travel signature (within 6 months)
- Do NOT travel if your visa is expired, unless you plan to renew it.

# Reporting Employment

# SEVP OPT PORTAL

- You will be emailed login information AFTER your OPT has been approved and the start date has been reached. Learn more and review the User Guide at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/create-an-sevp-portal-account>
- To report changes, complete the OPT Reporting Form OR report directly in the SEVP OPT Portal.
- You must report any changes to your contact or employment information (including breaks in employment) within 10 days.
- Your OPT will end if you accrue a total of 90 days of unemployment (counted from the start of your OPT period) or if you transfer your SEVIS record to another school.

OPT Information Session, Part 2  
will cover all reporting & travel  
guidelines in more detail!

All students who apply for OPT will be  
invited to attend, later in the  
semester.

QUESTIONS?



# Online Resources

- **OPT Application Instructions and Request form – click here to access on the NPU website**
- USCIS website on Optional Practical Training
- Study in the States: STEM Extension OPT Hub
- Study in the States: Training Opportunities in the U.S.