Preparing your Optional Practical Training (OPT) Application
A step-by-step tutorial

Rutgers Global–International Student and Scholar Services

global.rutgers.edu
STEP 1 Attend the appropriate workshop: F-1 Post-Completion OPT Workshop or Off-Campus Employment Workshop (for pre-completion OPT)

STEP 2 Prepare all application materials (using this step-by-step tutorial)

STEP 3 Meet with an international student adviser (ISA) to review your application and request your new I-20 with OPT recommendation

STEP 4 Pick up your new I-20 with OPT recommendation (when you receive an email saying it’s ready)

STEP 5 Mail your completed application (including a copy of the new I-20 you just received) to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
If you have completed your coursework or will soon be graduating, you must attend the F-1 Post-Completion OPT Workshop to receive important forms to complete your OPT application and learn:

- What is Employment? Am I eligible for OPT? How can I apply for OPT?
- Defining Optional Practical Training
- OPT Timeline Scenarios
- Maintaining your status while on OPT
- OPT Extensions

If you are looking for off-campus practical training (work) experience while you are still completing your degree requirements, you must attend the Off-Campus Employment Workshop.

Check the workshop calendar
1. Certification for Optional Practical Training form completed by Academic Dean/Graduate Program Director; *completed by registrar for RBHS students
2. Form G-1145
3. Form I-765
4. $410 check (or money order) made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"
5. Two passport-style color photographs of you taken within 30 days of filing this application
6. Photocopy of your passport
7. Photocopy of your most recent visa
8. Hardcopy of your electronic Form I-94 OR photocopy of your paper Form I-94 (front and back)
9. Photocopies of any/all previous EAD cards (front and back) that have been issued to you
10. Unofficial full transcript that bears your name
11. Photocopy of your *NEW I-20 with OPT Recommendation
   *You will receive this new I-20 after meeting with an international student adviser to review your OPT application materials.

OPT APPLICATION PROCESS STEP 2
Prepare all application materials

Download the OPT Application Checklist

OPT APPLICATION PROCESS
RUTGERS GLOBAL—International Student and Scholar Services

For the OPT recommendation on I-20. An international student adviser will keep this document.

For the OPT application. You will send these documents to USCIS.

Bring documents 1-10 with you when you meet with an adviser. Missing documents will delay your new I-20.
STEP 1 Receive a stamped form from the F-1 Post-Completion OPT or Off-Campus Employment workshop.

STEP 2 Fill out section I. of the form and bring it to your academic dean or graduate program director (or registrar for RBHS students) to complete section II.

If you are applying for post-completion OPT: The date listed as “completion of all degree requirements” will most likely be the new program end date on your I-20. That is the last day you can work on-campus; however, you may be paid following that date for work already completed.

STEP 3 Bring this form with you as part of your materials when you meet with an international student adviser.

**Complete this top section before bringing it to your academic dean or graduate program director; RBHS students bring it to your registrar.**

**This bottom section can only be completed by an academic dean or graduate program director (or registrar for RBHS students).**
POST-COMPLETION OPT
SCENARIO 1: APPLYING FOR OPT
AFTER COMPLETING ALL DEGREE
REQUIREMENTS

90 days before expected completion date, start your OPT application as it can take this long to process

The earliest possible requested OPT start date is the day after degree requirement completion date; the requested OPT start date must fall within 60 days of degree requirement completion date

Applying for post-completion OPT on the basis of having completed all degree requirements

Possible OPT application date

Possible requested OPT start date
OPT APPLICATION PROCESS STEP 2

Prepare all application materials: Certification for OPT form

POST-COMPLETION OPT
SCENARIO 2: APPLYING FOR OPT AFTER COMPLETING ALL COURSEWORK (only for students who have a non-coursework degree requirement)

90 days before desired OPT start date, start your OPT application as it can take this long to process

The earliest possible requested OPT start date is the day after coursework completed (if one-year requirement is met). The day before the requested OPT start date will be the new program end date on your I-20; that is the last day you can work on-campus. F-1 status ends at the end of OPT employment authorization; students who choose this option MUST complete all degree requirements and graduate within the period of authorized employment.
OPT APPLICATION PROCESS  
**STEP 2**

**Prepare all application materials: Certification for OPT form**

**PRE-COMPLETION OPT**
(only for students who have not yet completed degree requirements)

90 days before desired OPT start date, start your OPT application as it can take this long to process.

The earliest possible requested OPT start date is the day after completing one full academic year (2 semesters) in F-1 status; the requested OPT end date must be before degree requirement completion date.

Download OPT Dates Document

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**Applying for pre-completion OPT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90 days before requested OPT start date</th>
<th>02/13/2018</th>
</tr>
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<td>Requested OPT start date</td>
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<td>05/14/2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree requirements completion date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Possible OPT application date**
STEP 1 Download fillable PDF Form G-1145 here: http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf

STEP 2 Complete form providing your name, email address and phone number

Use this form to request an email/text notification from USCIS when your application is accepted by the lockbox facility.

This notification is unofficial and does not replace the paper I-797C receipt you will receive in the mail.

You must have the paper receipt in order to travel.
STEP 1 Read official instructions for completing Form I-765: [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765instr.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765instr.pdf)

STEP 2 Download fillable PDF Form I-765 here: [http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf). Type the required information into the form, following the next steps.

STEP 3 Be sure to check off “I am applying for: permission to accept employment”
STEP 4 Complete the form, paying attention to these important reminders:

a. Write in a U.S. mailing address in section 3 where you will be able to receive documents for the next three or four months; this does not necessarily need to be your address; if it is not your address, write “c/o [full name of person whose address you are using]” in the margin as shown
b. If you do not yet have a Social Security number, you may apply for one now by completing item numbers 9.a. - 13.b. You must answer “yes” to numbers 10 and 11, and provide the requested information in item numbers 12.a. -13.b.

Once your OPT application is approved, the necessary information will be provided to the Social Security Administration. You should receive your Social Security Card by mail approximately one to two weeks after you receive your OPT approval and Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card.

For more information see page 12 of the official instructions for completing Form I-765: https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765instr.pdf
c. Obtain your I-94 number and write into section 14; to view and print your I-94 go to: [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/)

d. If you have ever applied for an EAD card before, check “Yes” in section 15, provide the requested information, and attach a copy of your previous EAD card or denial letter

e. Fill in (c)(3)(B) in section 20 for post-completion optional practical training

Fill in (c)(3)(A) in section 20 for pre-completion optional practical training

f. Leave sections 21, 22 and 23 blank

STEP 5 Sign, date, and write your telephone number. Signature must be in black ink
OPT APPLICATION PROCESS  
STEP 2
Prepare all application materials: $410 check or money order

$410 FEE USING A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER

The check must be drawn on a bank or other financial institution located in the United States and must be payable in U.S. currency.

Make the check or money order payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Spell this name out; do not use USDHS or DHS or other abbreviations.

Add your SEVIS ID number, phone number and the phrase “Fee for I-765” in the memo area.

Do not write on the back of the check or money order.

Each money order is different. Follow the instructions provided at the time of purchase or ask the institution providing the money order to explain how to fill in the necessary information.
PHOTOGRAPH SPECIFICATIONS

The photograph must have a white or off-white background, to be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish—do not mount or retouch.

The photograph must be sized at 2 inches by 2 inches and must be in full color with a frontal view of your face.

The head height in the photograph should measure 1 inch to 1 3/8 inches from top of head to bottom of chin.

Eye height in the photograph should be between 1 inch to 1 3/8 inches from bottom of photo.

Your head must be bare unless you are wearing headwear as required by a religious order of which you are a member.

OPT APPLICATION PROCESS STEP 2

Prepare all application materials: Two passport style photographs

Photographs must be taken within 30 days of application date.

Using a pencil or felt pen, lightly print your name and SEVIS ID number on the back of the photo.
OPT APPLICATION PROCESS  
**STEP 2**

Prepare all application materials: Photocopies of other immigration documents

Photocopy of your passport, most recent US visa, and most recent US entry stamp

Photocopy of your most recent I-94 [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/)

Photocopy of your Employment Authorization/EAD Card (if any)
OPT APPLICATION PROCESS

STEP 2

Prepare all application materials: Unofficial Full Transcript

1. Visit my.rutgers.edu and click “Get My Grades” under the Academics tab.

2. Use your NetID to log in and receive your unofficial transcript.

3. Print your unofficial transcript.
OPT APPLICATION PROCESS

STEP 1 To see an international student adviser:

New Brunswick Students: visit 180 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 during walk in hours: 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. or 1:30–4:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday—we are closed Wednesdays

Newark RBHS Students: make an appointment by calling 973-972-6138 or emailing ois@global.rutgers.edu

To learn more, visit Advising Services on our website.

STEP 2 Bring your completed application documents when you meet with an ISA

STEP 3 Review your application with an ISA and submit documents needed to request a new I-20 with OPT recommendation

Missing or incomplete documents can delay your receipt of your new I-20. Please make sure you’ve prepared all required documents outlined in STEP 2 of this tutorial before meeting an international student adviser
OPT APPLICATION PROCESS

STEP 1 Look for an email confirming that your new I-20 with OPT recommendation is ready.

STEP 2 Visit our office to pick it up from the front desk. If you cannot pick it up, the email from our office will provide information on how we can help you make other arrangements.

STEP 3 Double-check your new I-20 to make sure it is correct.

New Brunswick
180 College Ave
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
848-932-7015
Email: Globalservices@global.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Monday-Friday (CLOSED on Wednesdays) 8:30am – 5pm

Newark RBHS
65 Bergen Street, Room GA-72
Newark, NJ 07101
973-972-6138
Email: ois@global.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Monday-Friday (CLOSED on Wednesdays) 8:30am – 5pm
OPT APPLICATION PROCESS STEP 4

Pick up your new I-20 at Rutgers Global—International Student and Scholar Services.

Add a copy of pages 1 and 2 of your NEW I-20 with OPT recommendation to your application before mailing to USCIS.
STEP 1 Make a photocopy of your entire application to keep for your own records

STEP 2 Select a carrier and request a tracking number so you know the application was received:

United States Postal Service, mail to:
USCIS
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

Express mail (UPS, FedEx and DHL), mail to:
USCIS
Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

* If you are using an address on your I-765 that is NOT in NJ or NY, visit https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses to confirm you are using the correct address

STEP 3 In two to three weeks after mailing, you will receive the official receipt notice
REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING

Confirm that you are using the most updated I-765 form, which you can find at www.uscis.gov/i-765

Your post-completion OPT application should NOT be sent to the USCIS more than 90 days prior to the program end date on your new I-20 with OPT recommendation

Your pre-completion OPT application should NOT be sent to the USCIS more than 90 days prior to your requested OPT start date

Your OPT application MUST reach the USCIS within 30 days of the date that the OPT recommendation was issued on your I-20