



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

OPT Information Session



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

INTERNATIONAL ADVISING



Overview

- What is OPT?
- Requirements to apply for OPT
- Application Process
- What happens after my OPT is approved?
- Travel on OPT
- Resources



What is OPT?

- Optional Practical Training (OPT) allows for practical training after graduation
- Provides valuable practical experience for use in student's home countries
- Possibility of 24 additional months of OPT for STEM majors.



Post-Completion OPT Requirements

- Must complete program (exception: thesis/dissertation)
- Must be in F-1 status at time of application and throughout OPT
- Must have been enrolled full-time for two or more consecutive academic semesters
- Must apply to USCIS for employment authorization
- An employment offer is not required to apply



Duration

- For non-STEM majors – 12 months maximum
- For STEM majors – 12 months with eligibility to extend for another 24 months for 36 months maximum
- Opportunity for another OPT period after completion of another higher education level
 - Bachelor's – OPT
 - Master's – OPT
 - Doctorate – OPT



Types of Employment

- Paid Employment
 - Must work 21 hours or more per week
- Unpaid Employment
 - Must work 21 hours or more per week
 - Log your time and tasks
 - Not permissible for STEM OPT extension



When should you Apply/Submission Deadlines

- Consider what date you want to start OPT; select a start date 1-59 days after graduation.
- Graduate or doctoral students who have completed all coursework with the exception of a thesis or dissertation may opt to apply for post-completion OPT.
- Must submit the OPT application to USCIS within the Filing Window: **90 days before your graduation** or during the **60-day grace period** after graduation. No applications will be accepted by USCIS outside of the filing window.
- Consider the current processing time + processing options
 - **Consider Premium Processing Cost:** Available for an additional charge, usually resulting in a decision within 30 days.
 - **Regular processing:** Times may vary, usually 2-4 months.



Avoid an OPT Denial

Denials are uncommon. However, what might cause a denial?

- Applying more than 90 days before graduation will result in a denial and need to reapply.
- Applying after the 60-day grace period will result in a denial and a loss of your OPT opportunity for your current program.
- In addition, students who apply later within the application window risk losing the opportunity to reapply if a denial is issued.
- Submitting your application to USCIS more than 30 days after an international student advisor entered the recommendation in SEVIS.



How to Apply

Step 1 – Complete the OPT Request E-form under F-1 Practical Training in iGlobal - submit the following information to receive your I-20 recommending OPT from International Student Advising. You will need the following:

- Your academic advisor's name and email
- Your expected graduation date
- The date you would like to start your OPT
- Copy of your passport, visa, and I-94

Home

Currently Enrolled Student

F-1 Practical Training

J-1 Scholar Services

Letter Request

New Student

F-1 Practical Training

Tasks

- Curricular Practical Training Request Form - UNO
- Optional Practical Training (OPT)**
- STEM Optional Practical Training
- Upload OPT/STEM OPT Card - Work Authorization EAD - UNO



How to Apply

- Step 2 – Go to <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> and click on the “file online” button. Create your account, prepare your I-765, and upload the documentation requested. Be prepared to upload the following:
 - Copy of I-20 recommending OPT from International Advising – signed by the advisor and you
 - Copy of passport, visa, and I-94
 - One passport photo taken within the past 30 days
 - If you had OPT in the past, you will need to upload a copy of the previous OPT EAD card and an I-20 that shows the previous OPT approved or recommended.
- Step 3 – **It is strongly recommended to make an appointment with an international student advisor to review your I-765 and supporting documents before submitting your application on the USCIS website.** In person is preferred when possible; bring your laptop to show an advisor your I-765 and supporting documents before paying and submitting your application to USCIS.
- Step 4 – Submit your OPT application on the USCIS website. This will include paying the filing fee. You can find the current filing fee here: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

Important: You must submit and pay for your I-765 with USCIS within **30 days of the recommendation for OPT** being entered into SEVIS by International Advising.



Expectations after filing with USCIS

- You will receive a receipt immediately upon submission when filing online with USCIS.
- Generally, expect 2-3 months to receive your OPT EAD card to begin working. However, processing time can be outside of this range – both faster or longer. We've seen a few weeks to five months. Premium processing is available for an additional cost.
- USCIS processing times: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>
- Check case status/update address here: [Tools | USCIS](#)



After OPT is Approved

- When you receive the OPT EAD card, you may start working on the start date listed on your card. The date may change from the date you requested if processing is delayed.
- Log into iGlobal here <https://iglobal.nebraska.edu>. Submit the e-form “Upload OPT/STEM OPT Card – Work Authorization EAD under F-1 Practical Training. Include the front and back of the card.
- Provide your employer with a copy of your OPT EAD card.



After OPT is approved

- You will receive an email from SEVP to create your SEVP Portal account.
- The SEVP Portal is where you will update:
 - Current U.S. address
 - Current U.S. telephone number
 - Employer information – complete name and address, start date, full-time or part-time, explanation of how the work is related to your degree, supervisor's name and contact information, etc...
- SEVP Portal account must be set up within 30 days of receiving an email.



During OPT

- When you find employment, update your SEVP Portal account with the employer's information.
 - If you need a new I-20, email unointladvising@unomaha.edu
- Any changes of employment must be reported within 10 business days.
- Unemployment during OPT is limited to 90 days. SEVP may terminate records of students who have gone beyond 90 days without reporting employment.
- Make sure to keep your address current on the SEVP Portal. Also, update your address in MavLINK so that UNO has your local/current address, if needed.



During OPT

- Non-STEM majors
 - After your OPT expires, you will have 60 days to leave the country or transfer to another academic program
- STEM majors
 - Apply for STEM OPT no earlier than 90 days before your standard OPT ends.
 - For the STEM OPT extension you will need to submit your I-983 Training Plan to International Advising via iGlobal and apply to USCIS **before** your standard OPT ends. As long as you apply with USCIS before your standard OPT ends, you can continue to work beyond your standard OPT end date for up to 150 days while your STEM OPT application is pending.



Pre-Completion OPT Requirements

- What is Pre-Completion OPT? OPT that happens before a program is completed. It is requested for a certain amount of time during an academic program.
- Pre-Completion OPT is rare at UNO. Most students do only post-completion OPT; that is OPT after graduation.
- When might pre-completion be used at UNO? A few students may need to apply for pre-completion OPT if they want to do an internship during their program and CPT is not an option.
- Same requirements for post-completion apply for pre-completion
- Any time used for pre-completion is subtracted from post-completion eligibility



Change of Graduation Plans

- Cancelling OPT
 - You can cancel/withdraw your OPT application if you have submitted or mailed your OPT application to USCIS and it is still “pending”.
 - Contact an International Student Advisor to discuss your options and learn how to cancel or withdraw your pending OPT application.
 - If you have been approved for OPT, you cannot cancel or withdraw your OPT and reapply after completing your program. International Student Advising will ask you to work part-time only until you’ve finished your studies. You must be enrolled and making academic progress with completing your degree to use your OPT EAD part-time. Your SEVIS record may be terminated if you do not graduate and are not enrolled and making academic progress to complete your program.
 - Take-Away: It is best to delay applying for OPT if you are not sure you will be finishing your program as expected.



Travel

- When OPT is pending
 - Travel at your own risk
 - If your OPT is approved while you are abroad, you may need all the items below for re-entry.
- When OPT is approved
 - Travel if you have the following:
 - OPT Card
 - Job offer or proof of employment
 - I-20 endorsed for travel
 - Valid visa
 - Passport with at least six months validity



H-1B Cap-Gap Extension

- The **H-1B Work Visa** is an employer sponsored petition submitted by the employer on the student's behalf.
- The **H-1B Cap** is a congressionally-mandated limit on the number of individuals who may be granted initial H-1B status during each fiscal year which runs from October 1 to September 30. Some employers are exempt.
- The **Cap Gap Extension of OPT** through September 30th of the current year is granted if an H-1B petition has been filed by a cap-subject employer before the current period of OPT expires. The first day to file for H-1B's is April 1.
- Work authorization on cap gap is valid until September 30th unless the H-1B petition is denied, withdrawn, or revoked.



H-1B Cap-Gap Extension



OPT must be valid April 1 or beyond to be eligible for the cap-gap extension.



Summary of Website Links:

- International Programs Student Portal: iGlobal: <https://iglobal.nebraska.edu>
- USCIS Form I-765: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
- USCIS Processing Times: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>
- USCIS Tools (check case status, change address): [Tools | USCIS](#)
- Study in the States: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov>



International Advising

International Advisors are available to answer questions by email or by appointment in person or on zoom. In person appointments are preferred when possible. For reviewing your OPT I-765, please bring your laptop to show your online application and supporting documents to an advisor.



International Advising

- unointladvising@unomaha.edu
- <http://world.unomaha.edu>
- 6001 Dodge St, ASH 241
 - Omaha, NE 68132
 - Phone: (402) 554-2293