



F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

What is OPT?

Optional Practical Training is practical work experience in your field of study. OPT employment authorization is granted for 12 months typically after completion of a degree. There are no OPT extensions beyond 12 months except for the students who qualify for the 17-month extension.

Special 17-month OPT Extension:

Students who graduate from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields and whose employer is enrolled in E-Verify program may qualify for an additional 17 month OPT extension. Please refer to the OPT extension application for further details about this option.

Who is Eligible?

- Students who are in F-1 status and have been enrolled on a full-time basis for at least nine months; **and**
- Who will be completing a course of study this semester or in the near future; **and**
- Whose proposed OPT employment will be directly related to their course of study.

When to Apply for OPT?

A student can apply for an OPT up to 90 days prior to the end of his/her program end date and up to 60 days after his/her program end date.

Though it is possible to file the I-765 (OPT) after graduation, we do not recommend doing so as the USCIS processing times vary and you may lose some of your 12-month employment authorization.

Please Note: If you plan to spend your last semester outside of the US, you might not be eligible for OPT. Please consult with advisor in the Office of International Programs.

Reporting Requirements while on OPT

All students on OPT are required to report to the Office of International Programs at Kettering University:

- any change of name or address, or
- any interruption of employment

Any name or address change should be reported by sending an email to international@kettering.edu. Please put "Address Change" in the subject line of your email. Any interruption of employment should be reported to the Office of International Programs. Students with an approved 17-month OPT extension have additional reporting requirements. Please refer to the OPT extension application for further information.

Employment requirements to maintain Status while on OPT

- During post-completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment.
- Employment **MUST** be related to the field of study.
- The employment does **NOT** have to be paid employment. Therefore, a student who is engaged in "free-lance" employment (including performance majors with regular "gigs"), interning, or volunteering in a position directly related to the academic field would be considered "employed" for the purposes of OPT employment.
- Students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any post-completion OPT.



Office of International Programs

Phone: 810-762-9869

Email: international@kettering.edu

- Employment authorization will begin on the date requested or the date the employment authorization is adjudicated (approved), whichever is later.
- Students must comply with the employment reporting requirements.

H-1B cap-gap extension of D/S and work authorization until October 1.

Duration of visa status and work authorization will be extended for a student on OPT who is the beneficiary of a H-1B petition filed in a timely manner requesting an employment start date of October 1 of the following fiscal year. This would apply to all students on OPT. The extension of duration of status and work authorization would automatically terminate upon the rejection, denial, or revocation of the H-1B petition filed on the student's behalf.

Application Procedure:

1. Assemble the following documents and come meet with an advisor at the Office of International Programs:

- **OPT Authorization Form** (blank form attached) completed and signed by your academic advisor and someone from the Registrar's office
- **Passport** with the **I-94** card attached.
- Copy of most current **I-20**
- Copy of your **Application for Graduation**

2. The Office of International Programs will prepare a new I-20. In most cases your I-20 will be ready for pick-up the next day.

3. **Checklist for mailing out your application to USCIS:**

- PHOTOCOPY of all pages of your **new I-20 endorsed for OPT**. (Do not send the original). Please make sure to sign your new I-20 before you make the photocopy.
- Completed **I-765 form** (may also be downloaded at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765.pdf>)
The answer to Section 16 on the I-765 is (c) (3) (B)
- Photocopy of both sides of your **I-94** card.
- Photocopy of the picture page/expiration date of your **passport**.
- Photocopy of your **U.S. Visa page**.
- Photocopies of all I-20s showing previous **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)** Authorization(s).
- **2** full frontal/passport **photos** (See reverse for example). Gently print your name and SEVIS number in pencil on the back of each photo.
- **\$340.00** check or money order made payable to: **Department of Homeland Security** (please do not abbreviate).
OPT expediting is available for exceptional cases only. If you already have a job offer please discuss this option with an advisor.

4. Within approximately two weeks of sending your application you will receive a Notice of Action. This is proof that you have an application pending with USCIS. The Notice of Action will contain your Receipt Number ("LIN number"). You can use this number to check your case status online at www.uscis.gov (in the lower right corner).



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For your Information:

- You **must** have your **Employment Authorization Document/card (EAD)** in-hand and the start date must be valid in order to begin employment.
- The EAD will be mailed to the address that you put on the I-765 form. The Post Office **will NOT forward** mail from USCIS if you change your address after you apply. USCIS will not mail your EAD to a P.O. Box or overseas address.
- USCIS will issue an EAD **approximately 60-90 days** after receipt of your application unless you are found ineligible.
- Travel outside of the US after you apply OPT can be risky. Please contact the Office of International Programs if you plan to travel after you submit your OPT application. To re-enter during OPT, you will need the following *original* documents: (1) Valid passport (2) Valid F-1 visa stamp (3) I-20 endorsed for OPT with a travel signature less than 6 months old (4) Unexpired EAD card (5) Job offer/confirmation letter from a U.S. employer.
- You **MUST** submit a photocopy of your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) to the Office of International Programs. It is your responsibility to submit a copy of your EAD for your student file.
- If you change your status prior to the OPT expiration date, please inform the Office of International Programs and send a copy of your change of status approval to the office.
- Please note that while you are on OPT you are still in F-1 visa status. Please see the attached handout **While you are on OPT** to learn about your responsibilities during your practical training year. Also attached is some basic information to help you prepare for employment in the U.S.



While you are on OPT... you are still considered an F-1 student

PLEASE NOTE THAT FAILURE TO FULFILL THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS CAN JEOPARDIZE YOUR STAY IN THE US.

- 1) Remember to report all address changes to Kettering University by sending an email with the subject line "Address Change" to international@kettering.edu within 5 days of moving to your new residence. Your address must describe where you live. It cannot be a P.O. Box or an office address.
- 2) Any change of name
- 3) Any interruption of employment
- 4) Make sure the Office of International Programs has a photocopy of your EAD card on file

REMINDERS DURING OPT:

- 1) Remember to depart the United States within the 60 day grace period that follows your last day of OPT.
- 2) If you plan on changing your status we recommend that you begin this process before your OPT is expired.
- 3) If you are transferring to another school, make sure to contact the Office of International Programs so that your records may be electronically transferred BEFORE the end of your authorized stay.
- 4) If you are subject to Special Registration, please make sure to use official ports of departure to exit the US and allow time at airports and land crossings to complete an exit interview (even if traveling to Mexico and Canada).
- 5) **Note on major medical insurance coverage:** many times students on OPT do not go directly into a job where insurance coverage is provided. You should check to see if you can extend the health insurance you are covered under, or find a policy that will cover you for a short amount of time. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have insurance coverage. A lack of health insurance will cause you to fall out of status.

TRAVEL WHILE ON OPT:

Before you travel, remember to

- Make sure your passport is valid at least 6 months into the future
- Make sure your I-20 has been signed for travel within 6 months. If you need a new travel signature, bring or send your I-20 to the Office of International Programs with a copy of your EAD card
- Make sure that your visa stamp is valid. If your visa is not valid for re-entry make preparations to renew your visa while overseas at the US embassy or consulate.

Please note: The Office of International Programs cautions F-1 OPT travel if a new visa stamp is needed. Consult the Office of International Programs before traveling.

- Carry your EAD card and proof of employment for the EAD time period with you. Proof of employment can include a letter from your employer or recent pay stubs.



OPT Authorization Form

Student Name: _____ Student ID # _____

STUDENT IS REQUESTING OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR:

Beginning date (required): _____ **End date (required):** _____

Company of employment: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Title of job: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

THIS SECTION MUST BE FILLED OUT BY THE FACULTY ADVISOR OR RESEARCH OFFICE:

The student who is listed above wishes to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT provides authorization for F-1 students to be employed in a job related to their major field of study. A job offer is not required before the application. We ask that you complete the following information to allow us to recommend this student for OPT:

Major (Field of Study): _____

Degree Objective:

Bachelors Masters Other: Specify _____

Expected **Completion Date** of Degree Requirements: _____
Month/Day/Year

Signature of Research Office/Faculty Advisor

Type or Print Name of Research Office/Faculty Advisor _____
Phone Number _____
Date

E-mail Address: _____

The student is scheduled to graduate on the date listed above and has submitted their application for graduation.

Signature of Registrar's Office _____
Date