F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Required Documentation

- Completed I-765 and G-1145; **obtain the most current versions from: www.uscis.gov**
  - Click on *Forms* and then scroll down to the appropriate applications
    *** DO NOT ELECTRONICALLY FILE THE I-765 ***

- Filing fee of **$380.00**. Make check or money order (You cannot send cash by mail.) payable to:
  Department of Homeland Security

- A photocopy of Form I-94 (download from **https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html** if you don't have a paper copy), the F-1 visa page and the biographical page in your valid passport (and any passport renewal information if applicable), and 2 passport-style photos.

- Photocopies of all I-20s issued to you by CWRU– pages 1 & 3 only. You do not need to include copies of your dependents' I-20s. *All I-20s must be endorsed by their owner on page 1.*

- If you attended another U.S. institution before coming to CWRU, include copies of those I-20s also.

**** If you have not completed the I-765 and prepared all of the required materials,
you are NOT ready to file for OPT.   ISS will only accept applications that are complete.****

- Instructions for 2 photos of yourself:

1) Passport-style color photo with white background	6) No larger than 2 X 2 inches, with face centered
2) Taken no earlier than **30 days** before submission	7) Distance from top of head to chin: about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches
3) Unmounted, on thin paper, glossy, unretouched	8) Eye height from bottom: $1\frac{3}{8}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches
4) Full face from front, eyes open, natural expression	9) No shadows on face or background
5) Bare head (no hat, etc.) unless wearing a religiously-required headdress	10) The student should lightly print his/her name and A# (if known) on the back of each photo

*We recommend that you have your photos taken at **Printing Services** located in **Thwing Center***
Monday – Friday, 8:30am –5:00pm
Phone: (216) 368-2550
$9.00 + tax for two photos

- Bring your complete application to the Office of International Student Services for review by an advisor during walk-in hours. A new I-20 detailing the requested OPT will be created for you. When it's ready, you'll be notified by email to pick it up.

****

Progress Check for Practical Training

Use the website listed below to check on the progress of your Practical Training application:

https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp

NOTE: You will need your Application Receipt Number, which appears on the
receipt notice sent to you by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Understanding the Application Process

What factors determine eligibility for Optional Practical Training?

- Optional Practical Training (OPT): Students become eligible for practical training after having been enrolled on a full-time basis, for one full academic year.
- A student is eligible for 12 months of practical training for *each* change to a higher educational level. For example, a student in F-1 status who enters as a Bachelor's degree student is eligible for up to 12 months of practical training upon completion of the Bachelor's and then *another* 12 months upon completion of the next higher degree (e.g. Master's).
- Students who do 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) are ineligible for optional practical training.

When can I apply for OPT?

- The USCIS Service Center will accept OPT applications submitted as early as 90 days prior to graduation or the completion of your course of study (defense date). The processing time for the application is about 90 days and most students chose to apply prior to graduation or their defense so that they can begin working as soon as possible. The OPT application can be submitted afterward but it must be received at the USCIS Service Center *prior to the end of the 60 day grace period*. If you chose to delay applying, be sure to allow extra for mail delays!

> *** ISS recommends that students apply 90 days prior to their graduation / completion date so that they receive their Employment Authorization Document (EAD) in time to start working on the date that they requested. It is not legal to work until you have your EAD. ***

How long is authorization for OPT?

- A student must complete all practical training within a 14 month period following completion of study unless they qualify for the 17 month STEM extension. For more information about the duration of OPT, please consult with an advisor in the Office of International Student Services (ISS).

** Travel Advisory **

All officers at U.S. Ports of Entry have been told to enforce a regulation regarding students applying for or engaged in OPT. The regulation requires that students re-entering the country after graduation be able to present their EAD card and a letter from their employer indicating that they will either "**begin their employment**" or **"resume their employment,"** depending on their situation.

Also, please note that the Office of International Student Services (ISS) is currently advising each student **NOT** to travel outside of the United States after applying for OPT until the application has been approved and the EAD has been received in the mail. If you must travel during this time, please consult with an advisor at ISS before your departure. Traveling after you possess your EAD card is possible, but you should consult with ISS before your departure to go over all the requirements for returning to the US.

We understand that this is disappointing news for many of you, and we will keep you informed of any new developments. Please feel free to stop by the ISS Office to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding this advisory.

F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Students' Responsibilities

During the OPT period, students are still in F-1 status and are expected to report to the Office of International Student Services changes to any of the following:

- The student's legal name
- The student's residential address
- The student's email address

NOTE: These changes should be reported within **10 days** of their occurrence.

In addition, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) published new regulations for the F-1 student category on April 8, 2008 requiring that students authorized for OPT report their employment and unemployment to ensure that their F-1 status does not expire due to excessive (more than 90 days) unemployment time.

Students should report changes to the Office of International Student Services as soon as possible– **no more than 10 business days after the change** – to avoid situations where a Department of Homeland Security official may determine the student to be out of status.

The following table describes the best way to comply with the new regulations and report changes.

SITUATION	REPORT
New Job	- Name of the employer - Start date of employment - Mailing address for the employer
Job Change	- Name of the previous employer - Ending date of previous employment - Name of new employer - Start date of new employment - Mailing address for new employer
More than 10 days of unemployment	- Advise ISS of unemployment - Ending date of last job
Student decides to exit the United States and end F-1 status prior to OPT end date	- Advise ISS of your plans to exit the United States - Date of exit/departure
Self-Employed, Work for Hire, or Employed through an Agency	- Discuss with International Student Advisor prior to beginning work

Please send all OPT updates through the *Quick Link* called *Update My OPT Information* on our homepage.

ISS will only accept notification of these changes through Quick Link.

F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING
REQUEST FORM

Personal Information

NAME: _____   EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

(Family Name,   First Name)

DEPARTMENT: _____   DEGREE SOUGHT: _____

GRADUATION DATE: _____   OR ** COMPLETION DATE: _____

> ** *Students should use the Completion Date if they are basing their application on a defense date, rather than an official January, May, or August graduation date, or are graduating earlier than the date shown on their I-20. An academic advisor's signature is required.*

Practical Training Information

REQUESTED START DATE: _____   REQUESTED END DATE: _____

EMPLOYER'S NAME (if known): _____

EMPLOYER'S ADDRESS: _____

_____

Signatures and Dates

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

**ADVISOR SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____