

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) GUIDELINES

When to Apply

Students who intend to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) must submit the OPT Application Form <https://form.jotform.com/220537100786149> for Post-Completion OPT. Students are able to submit the application 90 days within the program end date in their SEVIS records. For example, if your program end date is May 5, you are recommended to apply as early as February 8. Students are also able to apply up to 60 days after the program end date.

How to Apply

Although the Director of the Admissions Office provides information and help with the process, the OPT application is your application. Reformed University does not approve the application or has the authority to influence the process. If there is a request for additional information by the USCIS, USCIS will notify you of the request and it is your responsibility to respond to the request ON TIME! Please read the instructions provided below carefully and meet the Director of the Admissions Office before filling out the application and starting the process.

STEP 1:

Request your OPT I-20 recommendation from Reformed University by clicking on the following link:

<https://form.jotform.com/220537100786149>

STEP 2:

Download the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization and Instructions from:

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

STEP 3:

Prepare the following documents:

- Completed G-1145 Form (optional; This form will allow you to receive email/text message notifications for your application's arrival at USCIS)
- Completed I-765 Form

- Photocopy of all previously issued I-20s (pages 1 and 3) (pages 1 and 2 of the updated/redesigned I-20s)
- Photocopy of passport identification page
- Photocopy of F-1 visa page
- Two passport-style photos per USCIS photo instructions (see the “Required Documentation” section on page 13). Lightly print your name and your I-94 number in pencil or felt pen on the back of each photo. The photos must have been taken within the last 30 days (do not use the same photos used for your F-1 visa application; USCIS might notice and will return the application). The two photos should have a white background. They should be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish and be unmounted and unretouched. The photos should show a passport-style, full-face image, with both ears visible. The photos should be 2 x 2 inches, with the distance from the top of the head to just below the chin about 1 3/8 inches.
- Printout of your electronic I-94 information, which can be obtained at:
<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>
- Photocopy of previously issued EAD (if applicable)
- Pay the Form I-765 filing fee by money order, personal check, cashier’s check, or credit card using Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions. If you pay by check, you must make your check payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- OPT Start Date: The “start date” is the date your work permission begins. You cannot work earlier than the start date, but you can start working later. Your requested start date must be within 60 days after your program completion date. For example, if you graduate or complete your program on May 5, your start date can be no later than July 2. Changing the requested OPT dates after the application has been mailed to USCIS can be very difficult. Choose your dates carefully.

STEP 4:

The PDSO will issue a new, updated I-20 with an OPT recommendation printed on page 2. Allow 7-10 business days for processing. You will be notified by the PDSO to pick up the new I20.

Step 5:

1. Review your application to make sure that it is complete.
2. Sign your OPT-endorsed I-20 at the bottom of page 1 before photocopying it and mailing it to USCIS.
3. Mail your application within 30 days of the new OPT-endorsed I-20 being issued. Late applications will be denied by USCIS.

- Do not mail your original passport, I-94, or I-20.
- It is recommended you send your application by certified mail, return receipt requested.
- After you mail your OPT Application to USCIS, USCIS will send you a receipt notice (I-797 Notice of Action) confirming receipt of your OPT application, assigning a “receipt date,” and assigning a receipt number. Carefully review the notice to make sure your name is spelled correctly. If it is not, contact the PDSO immediately. You may use the receipt number on your receipt notice to check the status of your application online. It is normal for your case status to say “initial review” for most of the 2-3 months processing period. You may not begin employment until USCIS approves the OPT application and you have received your Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Authorized OPT dates will be on your EAD.

WARNING: You must report your practical training/employment to the PDSO. If you do not report your practical training/employment to PDSO, the U.S. government will terminate your F-1 SEVIS record 90 days after the OPT start date printed on your EAD card. A terminated SEVIS record cancels the OPT authorization and requires you to leave the U.S