

# F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)

## STEP ONE:

- After reading through this packet, to apply for the I-20 updated for “regular” 12 month post-completion OPT, fill in the Information Sheet (included in this packet or on line at: <http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/fl-work-post-grad-opt/request-i-20-opt>).
- If you are applying for the STEM OPT extension, follow the directions on our website here: <http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/fl-work-post-grad-opt/opt-stem-extension>
- Download “form I-765” from [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) and follow our directions on pages 2-3 to fill it in.
- To receive electronic notices from USCIS, download and fill in the G-1145 from [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

## STEP TWO:

- If you fill in the I-20 request on line, you will get an email that your I-20 is ready within 2-3 days.
- If you filled in the paper copy of the “information sheet,” bring that to the Office of Global Learning and sign in to speak to the advisor on duty. The advisor will create the new I-20 in 2-5 business days and email you when it’s ready.
- Your new I-20 will include our advisor recommendation for your OPT on page 2. You will send a copy of this new I-20, after you SIGN it, with your application.

## STEP THREE:

- Mail the documents listed below to the USCIS at one of the addresses listed below by certified mail or federal express.\* USCIS must receive your application within 30 days of the day the Office of Global Learning issues the new I-20 to you (60 days for STEM extension), and not more than 60 days beyond the end date on your I-20.
- Keep copies of everything you mail! You will get a receipt notice from USCIS in one month or electronically if you fill out the G-1145 form available from [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

For U.S. Postal Service deliveries including U.S.P.S. express mail USCIS, PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266	For (non-USPS) courier service deliveries (FedEx, UPS,DHL etc) USCIS, Attn: AOS, 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067
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(\* see the next page for important instructions regarding your return address on the I-765)

1. Form I-765 (which you will **download from uscis.gov**) (follow instructions on pages 2-3)
2. If you want to receive electronic notices from USCIS, attach form G-1145 available from [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).
3. A copy of page 1 and page 2 of the new I-20 with the OPT recommendation on page 2.
4. A print out of your US Admission Record from [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94) **OR** copy of your I-94 card
5. A copy of photo page (identification page) of your passport with passport expiration date.
6. A copy of the F1 visa page of your passport (even if expired) (Canadians won’t have this).
7. A copy of ALL previous I-20s that have been issued to you for your current degree program (if you do not have these, check with the advisor to get copies.)
8. A copy of your previous OPT card or other work card (EAD) if you have had one
9. Two **NEW** passport type photographs from within the last 30 days (See attached sample). You may NOT use photos that you have previously used for a visa or passport. Print your name and US Admission Record number (from the I-94 record) lightly in pencil on the back of each photo. Put the photos in an envelope and attach it to front of I-765. **DO NOT CUT THE PHOTOS!**
10. **Fee of \$410.** Attach a money order or a check drawn on a US bank, (NO CASH) to the front of the application payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
11. **If you are applying for the STEM extension**, include a copy of your transcripts or diploma as long as it states the degree field.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT FORM I-765

(See completed example on the next page. Read every line on the I-765 to see if it applies to you.)

- ❑ **Part 1: Check first box “Initial permission to accept employment” or, if you are applying for a STEM extension, check “renewal.”**
- ❑ **Part 2: Return Address:** This must be a US address at which you can receive mail for at least the next 3 ½ months. You cannot use a forwarding address. If the card is sent to an address with a forwarding order, or if you cannot receive mail at the address you use, your card will be returned to the immigration service and destroyed. If you want to use a friend’s address, you need to make sure your name is on the mailbox. If you want your department to receive mail for you, check with your department first. If the return mailing address you indicate on the I-765 is not located in New York State, please check the chart on page 8 for the proper mailing address for your application.
- ❑ **#12 Previous use of I-765:** If “yes,” include copies of supporting documentation (previous work card, approval notice/receipt notice, etc...)
- ❑ **#13.a SSN Application:** USCIS now permits applying for an SSN and the OPT together. This decision is too new to indicate if the applications are tied, or if applying for the SSN will slow down the production of the card. Should you apply for the number now, tick “YES” in #14.
- ❑ **#27 Eligibility Categories:** For F-1 OPT, fill out as follows:
  - **For POST – Completion (after graduating) OPT: ( c ) ( 3 ) ( B )**
  - **For the STEM extension of OPT (see FAQ #10 below): ( c ) ( 3 ) ( C )**
  - **For OPT PRIOR to graduating, summer only: ( c ) ( 3 ) ( A )**
- ❑ **#28 If you are applying for the STEM extension, you must also complete this section with your degree field and your employer’s “E-Verify” number.**
- ❑ **Part 3: Certification:** Sign with blue ink and enter today’s date.
- ❑ **Part 6:** Include dates of any previous work authorization. (see sample below)

### REMINDERS: REGULATIONS WHILE ON F-1 "OPT"

- ❑ **REQUIRED UPDATES (ADDRESS AND EMPLOYMENT).** Immigration regulations REQUIRE that while you are on OPT, you **MUST** notify the Office of Global Learning when you change your address AND/OR when you are NOT employed by filling out our OPT update form on the web at: <http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/f1-work-post-grad-opt/report-your-opt-employment>

### TRAVELING ABROAD WHILE ON PRACTICAL TRAINING:

- ❑ In order to re-enter the U.S. while you are on regular OPT or STEM OPT, you must have a valid passport, current F1 visa stamp, I-20 signed within the last six months, the EAD (OPT work card) or the receipt notice for you OPT application **AND your job offer letter.**
- ❑ **NEVER ENTER the U.S. in any VISA STATUS OTHER THAN F-1** while on your OPT (it will invalidate your OPT!)





**Part 2. Information About You (continued)**

**Place of Birth**

List the city/town/village, state/province, and country where you were born.

19.a. City/Town/Village of Birth

Croydon

19.b. State/Province of Birth

London

19.c. Country of Birth

United Kingdom

20. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

07/30/1980

**Information About Your Last Arrival in the United States**

21.a. Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)

69000888062

21.b. Passport Number of Your Most Recently Issued Passport

P123123

21.c. Travel Document Number (if any)

21.d. Country That Issued Your Passport or Travel Document

United Kingdom

21.e. Expiration Date for Passport or Travel Document (mm/dd/yyyy)

10/09/2020

22. Date of Your Last Arrival Into the United States, On or About (mm/dd/yyyy)

01/03/2018

23. Place of Your Last Arrival Into the United States

NYC

24. Immigration Status at Your Last Arrival (for example, B-2 visitor, F-1 student, or no status)

F-1 Student

25. Your Current Immigration Status or Category (for example, B-2 visitor, F-1 student, parolee, deferred action, or no status or category)

F-1 Student

26. Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)

N- 0004705512

**Information About Your Eligibility Category**

27. **Eligibility Category.** Refer to the **Who May File Form I-765** section of the Form I-765 Instructions to determine the appropriate eligibility category for this application. Enter the appropriate letter and number for your eligibility category below (for example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii)).

(C)(3)(B)

28. (c)(3)(C) **STEM OPT Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(3)(C) in **Item Number 27.**, provide the information requested in **Item Numbers 28.a - 28.c.**

STEM ONLY

28.a. Degree

28.b. Employer's Name as Listed in E-Verify

28.c. Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number

29. (c)(26) **Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(26) in **Item Number 27.**, provide the receipt number of your H-1B spouse's most recent Form I-797 Notice for Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker.

30. (c)(8) **Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(8) in **Item Number 27.**, have you **EVER** been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime?

Yes  No

**NOTE:** If you answered "Yes" to **Item Number 30.**, refer to **Special Filing Instructions for Those With Pending Asylum Applications (c)(8)** in the **Required Documentation** section of the Form I-765 Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.

31.a. (c)(35) and (c)(36) **Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) in **Item Number 27.**, please provide the receipt number of your Form I-797 Notice for Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(36) in **Item Number 27.**, please provide the receipt number of your spouse's or parent's Form I-797 Notice for Form I-140.

31.b. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) or (c)(36) in **Item Number 27.**, have you **EVER** been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime?

Yes  No

**NOTE:** If you answered "Yes" to **Item Number 31.b.**, refer to **Employment-Based Nonimmigrant Categories, Items 8. - 9.**, in the **Who May File Form I-765** section of the Form I-765 Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.

Post completion

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**Part 3. Applicant's Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature**

**NOTE:** Read the **Penalties** section of the Form I-765 Instructions before completing this section. You must file Form I-765 while in the United States.

**Applicant's Statement**

**NOTE:** Select the box for either **Item Number 1.a.** or **1.b.** If applicable, select the box for **Item Number 2.**

- 1.a.  I can read and understand English, and I have read and understand every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question.
- 1.b.  The interpreter named in **Part 4.** read to me every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question in , a language in which I am fluent, and I understood everything.
- 2.  At my request, the preparer named in **Part 5.**, , prepared this application for me based only upon information I provided or authorized.

**Applicant's Contact Information**

- 3. Applicant's Daytime Telephone Number
- 4. Applicant's Mobile Telephone Number (if any)
- 5. Applicant's Email Address (if any)
- 6.  Select this box if you are a Salvadoran or Guatemalan national eligible for benefits under the ABC settlement agreement.

**Applicant's Declaration and Certification**

Copies of any documents I have submitted are exact photocopies of unaltered, original documents, and I understand that USCIS may require that I submit original documents to USCIS at a later date. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information from any and all of my records that USCIS may need to determine my eligibility for the immigration benefit that I seek.

I furthermore authorize release of information contained in this application, in supporting documents, and in my USCIS records, to other entities and persons where necessary for the administration and enforcement of U.S. immigration law.

I understand that USCIS may require me to appear for an appointment to take my biometrics (fingerprints, photograph, and/or signature) and, at that time, if I am required to provide biometrics, I will be required to sign an oath reaffirming that:

- 1) I reviewed and understood all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application; and
- 2) All of this information was complete, true, and correct at the time of filing.

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that all of the information in my application and any document submitted with it were provided or authorized by me, that I reviewed and understand all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application and that all of this information is complete, true, and correct.

**Applicant's Signature**

- 7.a. Applicant's Signature
- 7.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

**NOTE TO ALL APPLICANTS:** If you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents listed in the Instructions, USCIS may deny your application.

**Part 4. Interpreter's Contact Information, Certification, and Signature**

Provide the following information about the interpreter.

**Interpreter's Full Name**

- 1.a. Interpreter's Family Name (Last Name)
- 1.b. Interpreter's Given Name (First Name)
- 2. Interpreter's Business or Organization Name (if any)

**Part 4. Interpreter's Contact Information, Certification, and Signature**

**Interpreter's Mailing Address**

3.a. Street Number and Name

3.b.  Apt.  Ste.  Flr.

3.c. City or Town

3.d. State  3.e. ZIP Code

3.f. Province

3.g. Postal Code

3.h. Country

**Interpreter's Contact Information**

4. Interpreter's Daytime Telephone Number

5. Interpreter's Mobile Telephone Number (if any)

6. Interpreter's Email Address (if any)

**Interpreter's Certification**

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that:

I am fluent in English and , which is the same language specified in Part 3., Item Number 1.b., and I have read to this applicant in the identified language every question and instruction on this application and his or her answer to every question. The applicant informed me that he or she understands every instruction, question, and answer on the application, including the **Applicant's Declaration and Certification**, and has verified the accuracy of every answer.

**Interpreter's Signature**

7.a. Interpreter's Signature

7.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

**Part 5. Contact Information, Declaration, and Signature of the Person Preparing this Application, If Other Than the Applicant**

Provide the following information about the preparer.

**Preparer's Full Name**

1.a. Preparer's Family Name (Last Name)

1.b. Preparer's Given Name (First Name)

2. Preparer's Business or Organization Name (if any)

**Preparer's Mailing Address**

3.a. Street Number and Name

3.b.  Apt.  Ste.  Flr.

3.c. City or Town

3.d. State  3.e. ZIP Code

3.f. Province

3.g. Postal Code

3.h. Country

**Preparer's Contact Information**

4. Preparer's Daytime Telephone Number

5. Preparer's Mobile Telephone Number (if any)

6. Preparer's Email Address (if any)

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**Part 5. Contact Information, Declaration, and Signature of the Person Preparing this Application, If Other Than the Applicant**  
(continued)

**Preparer's Statement**

- 7.a.  I am not an attorney or accredited representative but have prepared this application on behalf of the applicant and with the applicant's consent.
- 7.b.  I am an attorney or accredited representative and my representation of the applicant in this case  extends  does not extend beyond the preparation of this application.

**NOTE:** If you are an attorney or accredited ay need to submit a completed Form G-28, Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Accredited Representative, with this application.

**Preparer's Certification**

By my signature, I certify, under penalty of perjury, that I prepared this application at the request of the applicant. The applicant then reviewed this completed application and informed me that he or she understands all of the information contained in, and submitted with, his or her application, including the **Applicant's Declaration and Certification**, and that all of this information is complete, true, and correct. I completed this application based only on information that the applicant provided to me or authorized me to obtain or use.

**Preparer's Signature**

8.a. Preparer's Signature

8.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

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**Part 6. Additional Information**

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the **Page Number**, **Part Number**, and **Item Number** to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)

1.b. Given Name (First Name)

1.c. Middle Name

2. A-Number (if any) ▶ A-

3.a. Page Number  3.b. Part Number  3.c. Item Number

3.d.   
CPT Authorization:  
06/15/2017 - 08/30/2017

4.a. Page Number  4.b. Part Number  4.c. Item Number

4.d.   
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5.a. Page Number  5.b. Part Number  5.c. Item Number

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6.a. Page Number  6.b. Part Number  6.c. Item Number

6.d.   
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7.a. Page Number  7.b. Part Number  7.c. Item Number

7.d.   
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## **F1 OPT – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. What is F1 Optional Practical Training?**

Practical training is the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in your degree program to off-campus work in your major field (not your minor). OPT is authorized by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This authorization can take 2 to 3 months to obtain. The maximum amount of time granted to work on F1 OPT status is 12 months per degree level plus a possible H1B cap gap extension OR a 24 month STEM extension for those who qualify (see FAQ below). You may use some or all of the available 12 months of practical training during your course of study or save the full twelve months to use after you graduate.

### **2. What are the Eligibility Requirements for F1 Optional Practical Training?**

To be eligible to apply for optional practical training, you must: (1) have been a full time enrolled student in the U.S. for at least one academic year by the requested start date of your OPT, and (2) be in F1 status when you apply.

### **3. If I complete one degree program, take 12 months of practical training, and then begin a second course of study, am I eligible for an additional 12 months of practical training?**

Yes, you are eligible to apply for another 12 month period of Optional Practical Training after changing to a **higher degree level** and completing a full academic year of enrollment at the higher degree level.

### **4. How can I use optional practical training while I am still in my program?**

You may use OPT while you are still in your degree program as follows: (1) part-time while school is in session, (2) full-time during annual vacation periods, and/or (3) full-time after you completed all course requirements for the degree and have a thesis requirement remaining. These periods of OPT used before you graduate will be deducted from the total allowable period of 12 months. Part-time OPT will be deducted at one-half the full-time rate.

### **5. How long does it take to get authorization for OPT and when should I apply?**

Authorization for OPT is granted by USCIS and can take 3-4 months to obtain. Therefore it is important that you apply 3 months before the date you wish to start working. You may apply for POST-graduation OPT up to (but not more than) 90 days before your completion date and **the immigration service MUST RECEIVE your application NO LATER THAN 30 days beyond the ISSUE DATE on the I-20 (the issue date is on the lower part of the I-20) AND not more than 60 days beyond the end date of your I-20.**

### **6. Do I need to have a job to apply for optional practical training?**

You do **NOT need to have a job offer** before applying for the first 12 months of optional practical training. If you are applying for the STEM extension, you **DO** have to have a job to apply.

### **7. Do I need to have a job while I am on optional practical training?**

Yes. The regulations require that you do have employment while on your POST-graduation OPT period. You are only allowed to have a total of 90 days of unemployment in your 12 month period of OPT or 150 days if you apply for and receive the STEM extension. While on POST-graduation OPT, you **MUST** update your employment information on the Office of Global Learning website: <http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/f1-work-post-grad-opt/report-your-opt-employment>

### **8. Does the job I have while on OPT have to be paid employment, or can it be unpaid?**

For the first twelve months of OPT, the employment does NOT have to be paid employment. Therefore, a student who is self-employed (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 regular OPT employment. If you are “self-employed,” keep careful records of all the work you do—it is supposed to be at least 20 hours per week. While on the STEM extension, you must be paid, and you must have a regular employer—employee relationship with the employer (no temp agencies, no self-employment, no independent contracting).

### **9. Can I begin working before I receive the Employment Authorization Document?**

You may **NOT** begin employment before you receive your EAD from USCIS; working before practical training has been authorized by the USCIS constitutes illegal employment that will jeopardize your legal status in the US.

### **10. Do I have to do anything with the Office of Global Learning while I am on OPT?**

Yes! Immigration regulations REQUIRE that while you are on POST-graduation OPT, you **MUST** report your employment and address information to the Office of Global Learning by filling out our OPT update form at: <http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/fl-work-post-grad-opt/report-your-opt-employment>

### **11. Can I extend my OPT after the 12 months?**

There are two types of extensions available: 1) a STEM extension for those in certain fields (discussed below) and 2) an “H1B Cap Gap Extension” which extends your work authorization through to the start of your cap subject H1B visa if your OPT ends after your cap subject company has applied for a H1B for you but before the H1B starts on the following October 1<sup>st</sup>. This cap gap extension is available to all F-1 students using OPT in any field, as long as you have a pending or approved “cap subject” H1B application and the employer applied for in with a request for change of status as part of the application. The extension is automatic, you do not have to do anything at all to get the extension. “Cap Subject” refers to any H1B application that must be counted against the quota on H1B applications.

## **INFORMATION ON THE “STEM” EXTENSION:**

### **12. What is the STEM extension of OPT?**

The “STEM Extension” allows F1 students on OPT who have received a degree in the fields listed below, referred to as “STEM” fields (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics), to apply for an extension of their regular 12 month OPT period. The STEM extension will allow students to have extended work authorization in case they do not get an H1B visa in their first year after graduating. Students who timely file an application for the STEM OPT extension will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.

### **13. I think I qualify, how do I apply for the STEM extension? More information here:**

<http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/fl-work-post-grad-opt/opt-stem-extension>

**FIRST: Students graduating now with degrees in these fields will first apply for the regular 12 month period of OPT as usual.**

**THEN, WITHIN 3 months before the end of your first 12 months of OPT:** If you meet the following criteria, you can apply through the Office of Global Learning for STEM extension of your OPT.

#### **CRITERIA FOR THE STEM EXTENSION:**

- Your employer must be enrolled in the “E-Verify” program (see information links below).
- You must have graduated in and be working in one of the fields listed below referred to as “STEM” fields
- You must have maintained status while on OPT
- You and your employer **MUST** complete a “training plan” on form I-983 and present this completed form to the Office of Global Learning: <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/I-983.pdf>

### **14. What are the “STEM” fields?**

Actuarial Science, Computer Science Applications, Engineering, Engineering Technologies, Biological and Biomedical Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics, Military Technologies, Physical Sciences, Science Technologies, Medical Scientist (MS, PhD) For more info see our website at: <http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/fl-work-post-grad-opt/opt-stem-extension>

### **15. What is “E-Verify”?**

E-Verify is an Internet-based system operated by US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). E-Verify is currently free to employers and is available in all 50 states. E-Verify provides an automated link to federal databases to help employers determine employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security numbers. More information is available at: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

### **16. Are there any other requirements while I am on the STEM extension?**

In addition to filling out the OPT report form for changes in address or employment, students on the STEM extension of OPT will have to complete a report to the school every six months. You will report to us using the OPT report form at:

<http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/fl-work-post-grad-opt/report-your-opt-employment>

## **TRAVEL and OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING**

### **17. Now that I've turned in my application, can I travel outside the US while I wait for the card to come?**

**After you graduate**, in order to re-enter the U.S. you must have the following: OPT card (or receipt notice for the OPT application), your valid passport, a **current F1 visa stamp**, I-20 signed within the last six months, **AND your job offer letter or proof of employment.**

**Before you graduate**, you should be able to get back in to the U.S. without the OPT card as long as it is still long enough in advance of your graduation (at least one month). If you are within a month of the end date of your I-20, be prepared to show all the documents you would need for OPT (listed above and in number 19 below).

### **18. I want to leave the US for a short time while my OPT application is in process, but I need to return before the card will arrive. I have a tourist visa (B2) that is valid for 10 years. Can't I just enter the U.S. on my tourist visa while I'm waiting to get the EAD card, then start work with the card once I get it?**

**NO!!** If you intend to continue working on your OPT, **NEVER** enter in any other immigration status except F1. If you leave the US and re-enter with a B status, and you will have lost your F-1 status and your OPT will be **invalid!**

### **19. What documents do I need to re-enter the U.S. while on OPT?**

You will need your I-20 that has been endorsed on the travel line by the Office of Global Learning within the last 6 months; the OPT card from the USCIS (or the receipt notice for your OPT application), your valid passport, a **current F1 visa stamp**, **AND your job offer letter or proof of employment.**

### **20. What if I have applied for the STEM extension but I have not yet received the card, can I travel out of the U.S.?**

You are allowed to travel outside of the US while awaiting your STEM OPT card. You will enter with the I-20 showing the STEM recommendation, your job offer letter, and the receipt notice for the STEM extension along with the valid F1 visa stamp.

### **21. The visa stamp in my passport has expired, but I need to travel outside the U.S. while on OPT. Do I need to get a new visa stamp at an embassy?**

If you are going to Canada or Mexico, and staying for less than 30 days, you could re-enter the U.S. on your expired F-1 visa stamp, with your I-94 card or print out, a valid passport, your EAD card (or receipt notice), an I-20 that has been signed by the Office of Global Learning within the last 6 months, **AND your job offer letter or proof of employment** as long as: 1) you do not apply for a visa while in Canada and 2) you are NOT a national of Iran, Syria, Sudan, or North Korea. **If you are traveling elsewhere**, you will need to go to a U.S. embassy or consulate and seek a new visa stamp. **Please come in to the Office of Global Learning** to discuss your visa application with an advisor as the consulates often change the requirements for visa applications for students on OPT.

### **22. In what ways is my application to the embassy for a new visa stamp affected by being on Optional Practical Training?**

The risk of denial of an application for a renewed visa stamp for Optional Practical Training is somewhat higher than while you are in your active student program. The F1 student visa requires that the applicant must intend to return to the home country at the end of the program, and if the embassy official is not convinced of your intention to return home, the visa application will be denied. It is possible and many students on OPT get their F1 visa stamps renewed. You do have to be careful to demonstrate non-immigrant intent. Please see an advisor to discuss in more detail.

### **23. What documents do I need to show at the embassy for a new visa stamp under OPT?**

You need to take a valid passport, the EAD card or receipt notice for your application, an I-20 created by the Office of Global Learning for your OPT application, **AND your job offer letter or proof of employment.** The official job offer letter should sound temporary and not permanent. You should also be prepared to discuss how this job experience will apply to the job market in your home country, and how you intend to apply it there.

**24. Do I still need to get the travel line on my I-20 signed by the Office of Global Learning during the year of OPT?**

Yes, during the OPT year, if you travel outside the U.S., you need to have the travel line signed every six months. If you are not located in Ithaca, please submit an online request for an I-20 reprint.

## Where to File:

<p><u>If you live in (return address on I-765):</u></p> <p>Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia</p>	<p><u>Mail your application to USCIS Dallas Lockbox:</u></p> <p>For U.S. Postal Service deliveries: USCIS PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266</p> <p>For Express Mail: USCIS, Attn: AOS 2501 S. State Hwy, 121, Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</p>
<p><u>If you live in (return address on I-765):</u></p> <p>Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington (state), Wisconsin, Wyoming, or Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands</p>	<p><u>Mail your application to USCIS Phoenix Lockbox:</u></p> <p>For U.S. Postal Service deliveries: USCIS PO Box 21281 Phoenix, AZ 85036</p> <p>For Express Mail: USCIS, Attn: AOS 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034</p>

# Information Sheet for OPT Application

Complete this form and bring it to the Office of Global Learning, or complete this form on line at:  
<http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/fl-work-post-grad-opt/request-i-20-opt>

Follow the directions in STEP TWO of this OPT packet after you have completed this form. We will enter our advisor recommendation for your OPT in the SEVIS database and print out a new I-20 with our recommendation and your requested dates printed on page 2. If you are submitting this application on line, an advisor will contact you within a few days. We need the following information:

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Cornell Student ID#: \_\_\_\_\_ DEGREE Level (Phd, MA, BA): \_\_\_\_\_

SEVIS ID# (upper right hand corner of your I-20, starts with "N"): N \_\_\_\_\_

Major Field of Study (it is listed on your I-20): \_\_\_\_\_

(NOTE: OPT **only** authorizes you to work in your field of study)

Program Completion date\*\*: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*This is your graduation date if you are registered up until your graduation date. If you are an advanced PhD student, and you will stop registering before you graduate, the "program completion date" is your last date as a registered student. [Completion Dates: Fall 2018=12/31/2018; Spring 2019 = 5/26/2019; Summer 2019 = 8/29/2019]

OPT START DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ \* OPT END DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please read the information on the next page on choosing your start date.

Email Address that you will keep while on OPT: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are applying for the STEM extension of OPT you must follow the directions on this web page:**

<http://isso.cornell.edu/students/working-us/fl-work-post-grad-opt/opt-stem-extension>

# Choosing your Start Date

(see OPT time-line illustrated below)

You are allowed to pick a start date any time within the 60 days following your graduation date or your last day of registration (whichever is earlier). There is some leeway if you finish your coursework and need an earlier start date. There are many overlapping time constraints which effect your OPT application (see OPT time-line illustrated below). When choosing the start date for your OPT card, the most important priorities to weigh are:

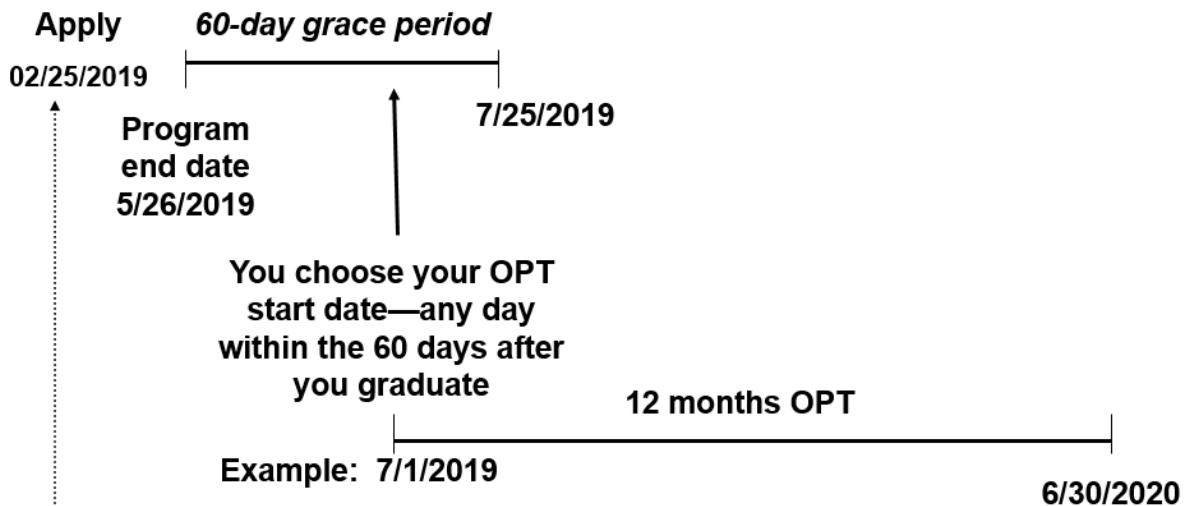
1. **Choose the earliest day that you might want to start working (you cannot begin working BEFORE the start date on the OPT card and until you receive the card).** What if someone offers you a job with the stipulation that you start the day after graduation? Plan for any possibility. [PLEASE NOTE: on campus work authorization ends when your registration ends, so if you want to continue in an on campus job once you are no longer registered, that job must be in your field, and you must have received your OPT card.]
2. **If you want the latest possible day to start your work authorization,** the latest day you may choose as your start date for the OPT card is 60 days after your graduation or last day of registration (whichever is earlier).

**REMEMBER: You may NOT change these dates after you apply for OPT.**

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## Your OPT Time-Line

(For example only -- your actual dates may be different than those listed here.)



- Apply no more than 3 months before you graduate;
- Not more than 60 days after graduation;
- & USCIS must RECEIVE your OPT application no more than 30 days after the date the ISSO advisor recommends your OPT (60 days for STEM extension).



## Passport Photographs: Composition Checklist

(from [http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/guide/composition/composition\\_874.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/guide/composition/composition_874.html))

### 8 Steps to Successful Photographs:

- ✓ Photos **MUST** be new—within the last 30 days and you may not have used them previously for a visa or passport
- ✓ Frame subject with **full face, front view, eyes open**
- ✓ Make sure photo presents **full head** from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1-3/8 inches (25 mm to 35 mm)
- ✓ **Center head** within frame (see Figure 2 below)
- ✓ Make sure **eye height** is between 1-1/8 inches to 1-3/8 inches (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
- ✓ Photograph subject against a plain white or off-white **background**
- ✓ **Position subject** and **lighting** so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- ✓ Encourage subject to have a **natural expression**

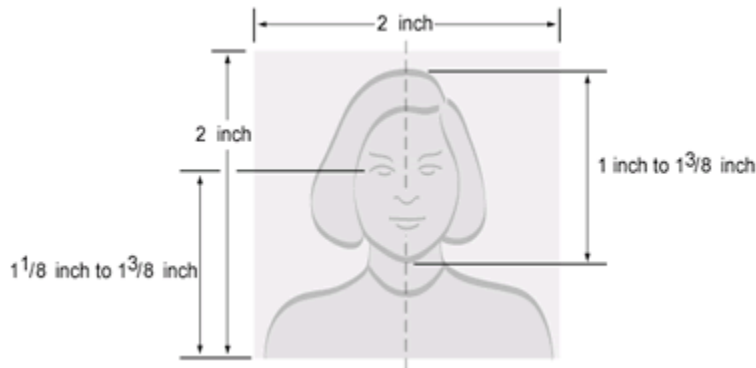


Figure 2. Head Position & Placement

### Well-Composed Photos



### Frequently Asked Questions about Passport Photographs

(from: [http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/guide/faq/faq\\_881.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/guide/faq/faq_881.html))

#### Do the photos have to be in color?

Yes, the photos must be in color.

**How recent must the photos be?**

The photos must be no older than 6 months.

**What pose should the photos show?**

The photo should show a clear, front view, full face of the customer. The customer should be in normal street attire, without hat or dark glasses against a plain white or off-white background. The customer should have a natural expression, mouth closed, and eyes open and looking directly ahead. Photos in which the face of the person being photographed is not in focus will not be accepted.

**How big should the head be in the photo?**

The customer's head, measured from the bottom of the chin to the top of the hair, should be between 1 inch and 1-3/8 inches. The head should be centered in the photo. The head of the person being photographed should not be tilted up, down or to the side. It should cover about 50% of the area of the photo.

**Can hats or religious headgear be worn for the photo?**

Unless worn daily for religious reasons, all hats or headgear should be removed for the photo. In all cases, no item or attire should cover or otherwise obscure any part of the face.

**Can eyeglasses be worn for the photo?**

Eyeglasses worn on a daily basis can be worn for the photo. However, there should be no reflections from the eyeglasses that obscures the eyes.

**Can sunglasses or tinted glasses be worn?**

Dark glasses or nonprescription glasses with tinted lenses are not acceptable unless you need them for medical reasons. A medical certificate may be required.

**Can work uniforms be worn for the photo?**

Uniforms should not be worn in photographs except in the case of religious attire that is worn daily. Otherwise, normal street attire should be worn.

**Are photos that are copied from recent driver licenses or other official documents acceptable?**

No, only original photographs are acceptable. Copied or digitally scanned photos of photos will not be accepted. In addition, photos must not be retouched to alter the customer's appearance in any way.

**Are snapshots, magazine photos, or photos from vending machine acceptable?**

No, snapshots, magazine photos, most vending machine prints, or full-length photographs are not acceptable.

**May photos be taken with a digital camera?**

If the digital camera has sufficient resolution — capable of capturing and storing images with 1 million pixels (megapixels) or more — it can be used to take the photos. However, printing of digital images is best done by professional photography processing labs because many off-the-shelf digital printers cannot achieve the image-quality required for passport and visa photographs. In any case, the image-quality criteria, described on this website, must be met in the submitted conventional film photo and/or the digital image printed photo.

## **Places to obtain Passport Photos**

**Fees are in the \$10-14 range**

### **AAA**

1284 Dryden Road  
273-6727

### **Student Agencies, Inc.**

[www.studentagencies.com](http://www.studentagencies.com)  
409 College Avenue  
272-2000

### **The Cornell Store**

### **The UPS Store**

407 College Avenue  
607-319-0248