



Post Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) Guidelines for F1-Students

According to immigration regulation 8C.F.R. 214.2 (f) (10) (ii)(A), post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) is available to F-1 students who have been lawfully enrolled for one full academic year and have applied for graduation in one of the Associate Degree programs or full-time certificate programs at Houston Community College. Post-completion OPT allows students to work up to 12 months after graduation anywhere in the U.S. in ***a field related to the student's major***. Initial proof of employment is not required to apply for OPT with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). **Students in the Intensive English Program are not eligible to apply for OPT.**

The application for post-completion OPT can be filed as early as 90 days prior to graduation, but has to be received by the adjudicating Service Center no later than 60 days after graduation. We recommend filing OPT as early as possible: for Spring graduates by the end of February; for Summer graduates in the beginning of June; for Fall graduates by the end of September.

APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST:

The student must first apply online for graduation then submit the following documents:

- { } [Completion Verification Form](#) filled out by an Academic Advisor
- { } Copy of current SEVIS I-20 Form
- { } All previous SEVIS I-20 forms with Curricular Practical (CPT) training periods granted (where applicable),
- { } Copy of valid passport and I-94 card (both sides) or print out your I-94 at www.cbp.gov/i94.
- { } Completed Form I-765 *downloadable at www.uscis.gov (please fill in the form online and then print)*
- { } Sign the commitment letter acknowledging the regulatory obligations for students
- { } Two [passport photos](#) (print the student's name on the back)
- { } A [money order](#) for \$410 payable to: U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

The International Advisor/ Designated School Official (DSO) completes the following:

- { } Reviews application for accuracy and answers student's questions.**
- { } Requests a new SEVIS I-20 form which includes a recommendation for post-completion OPT.
- { } Supplies mailing envelope and the address to mail completed application to USCIS.
- { } Provides students with his/her contact information for any OPT related questions and updates

MAILING CHECKLIST

- { } The student picks up the new SEVIS I-20 Form and photocopies from the DSO.
- { } The student mails the following documents in the envelope provided:
 1. I-765 Application Form
 - Money Order for \$410 payable to Dept. of Homeland Security
 - 2 Photos stapled to I-765 form
 2. Sign the SEVIS I-20 Form. Submit a photocopy of the SEVIS I-20 form (all 3 pages)
The student keeps the original SEVIS I-20 form.
 3. Photocopy of passport photo page including expiration date
 4. Photocopy of front and back of I-94 card
 5. G-1145 Delivery Confirmation Form (*when you use Express Mail or Courier Service*)
- { } The application should be sent to the Service Center using Priority Mail with Delivery Confirmation or using certified or registered mail (enables you to confirm delivery at USPS website, www.usps.gov) Once the application is posted as "delivered", the student should print the page for you his/her own records.

APPROVAL CHECKLIST

{ } By submitting the G-1145 form, the student should receive a text message or email notification that the package arrived at the USCIS Lockbox facility in Lewisville, TX. This is a separate form from the formal receipt notice.

{ } The student receives an official receipt (I-797C Notice of Action) in about 2 weeks. The receipt number (SRC# or EAC#) on the left top corner of this form can be used to track the progress of your case from the USCIS website at <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/sps/index.isp>.

{ } Normal processing times are from 50 – 75 days. If the student has not received any adjudicating (decision-making) documentation from the Service Center over more than 90 days from the official receipt date, contact your DSO for assistance.

AFTER RECEIVING YOUR OPT CARD

{ } Fax (713-718-2112) or email (int_student_svcs@hccs.edu) a clear (enlarged) picture-quality copy of the Employment Authorization Card (EAD) to the Office of International Student Services (include HCC ID #).

{ } F-1 international student who are granted an **Employment Authorization Card (EAD)** from the U.S Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to participate in Optional Practical Training (OPT) are required to provide employment information within 90 days of the start date on the EAD. Please complete the [OPT Employment Authorization Form](#) and email or fax it to OISS along with a copy of the EAD.

{ } Once the student's OPT ends, the student enters a 60-day grace period. The student has to following options to maintain a valid status:

- (1) Receive a new SEVIS I-20 Form for a secondary program with Houston Community College
- (2) Request to transfer to another SEVP approved college/university
- (3) File for a change of status or
- (4) Depart the U.S.

The SEVIS I-20 Form automatically completes 60 days past OPT end date if no actions are taken; therefore the student's F-1 status becomes completed if no action is taken to maintain/extend it as outlined above.

STUDENTS MUST NOT begin any employment activities until receiving the Employment Authorization Card (EAC) indicating a start and end date from USCIS.

The information on the Houston Community College (HCC) Office of International Student Services (OISS) website is intended only for current and prospective international students, faculty, and staff affiliated with HCC. All matters relating to the immigration status of the student is the student's responsibility, not the responsibility of HCC. If a student has an immigration issue that requires legal advice, the student is encouraged to seek professional services from a qualified immigration attorney. Any information on OISS's website is subject to change at any time and without notice and may not apply to individuals outside HCC. Nothing contained herein should be constructed as giving legal advice as contemplated under any statute, regulation, or other law.