Optional Practical Training

OPT Informational Workshop

NMSU International Student and Scholar Services

Welcome!

Meet ISSS Staff:

- **Matthew Lara**, Associate Director: mglara@nmsu.edu

- **Padma Reddi**, International Student Advisor: padmar@nmsu.edu

- **Dianne Gobrick**, Immigration Specialist: gobrick@nmsu.edu

- **Kylie Arrieta**, Program Coordinator: kyliearr@nmsu.edu

- **Supapid "BB" Khantee**, International Student Advisor: skhantee@nmsu.edu

Objectives

- Review the eligibility and requirements for OPT

- Ask questions via chat

- Understand how to complete Form I-765

- Know how to contact ISSS

What is OPT?

- "Temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study."

- It provides students in F-1 status an opportunity to gain employment experience for one year following completion of their program of study.

Who can apply for OPT?

- Any student in F-1 status who has been enrolled at a SEVIS-approved university for one full academic year and is completing a degree program.

- You must be in good academic standing and have maintained your F-1 status for the duration of your program at NMSU.

NM STATE

Requirements for OPT

- The work experience or position must be related to your field of study and appropriate to your degree level. (Note that you do NOT need to have a job offer to apply for OPT).

- You are required to work during OPT. You cannot be unemployed for more than 90 days because USCIS may determine you are out of status.

When to apply

- No sooner than **90** days <u>before</u> your program end date. No later than **60** days <u>after</u> your program end date.

- This means if you are graduating on 11 Dec 2020, you can apply for OPT from **15 Sept 2020 until 12 Feb 2021**.
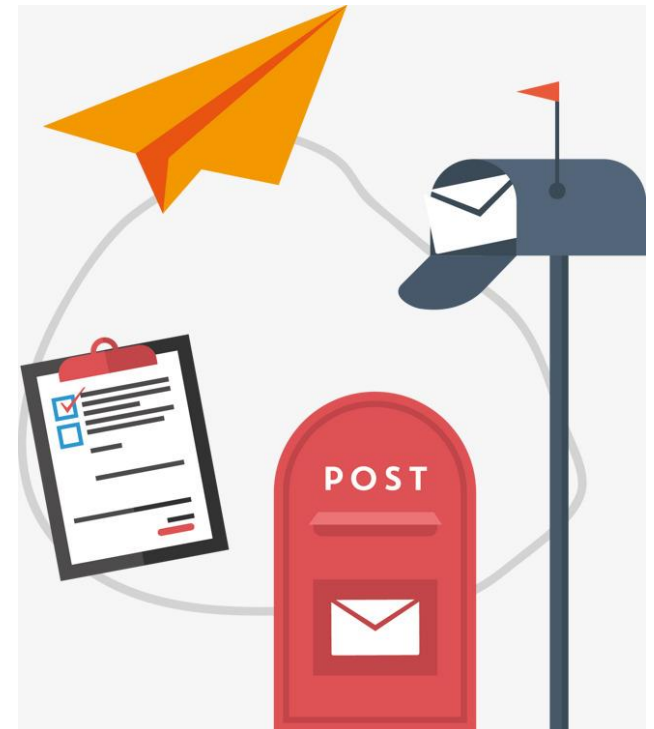
How to apply

Step 1

- Get your Academic Advisor's signature on the OPT Request Form, which was sent to you by email earlier

- Read and fill out the application form (I-765) on https://www.uscis.gov/i-765

Step 2

- E-mail ISSS to set up a virtual appointment. Before you come to the appointment, make sure you have the following documents:
  - Completed OPT application (I-765 on https://www.uscis.gov/i-765)
  - Complete E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance (G-1145 on https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145)
  - Form I-94 (https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/)
  - Passport and F-1 entry visa copies
  - Recent Two (2) passport-sized photos (2"x 2") with white background. Please write your full name and I-94 number on the back of the photos with a **pencil only**.
  - Check or Money Order for $410.00 to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
  - I-20 with OPT request, issued within the past 30 days.

NM STATE

Step 3

- *Mail your application package! You can use U.S. Postal Service (USPS) or FedEx, or UPS.
  - *Make sure that you use the mail tracking system
  - Find the USCIS address on https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-information/uscis-phoenix-and-dallas-lockbox-facilities
  - If you have questions about the USCIS address, ISSS can help you find the correct address.

Important Things to Remember

- The OPT application package must be received by USCIS within 30 days from the I-20 being issued.

- Check your case status online on https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do after you receive the Receipt Number or 797 Form.

- Notify ISSS when your OPT application has been approved. We will issue you an updated I-20 with the OPT approval. Please also send us a scan of your EAD and approval notice.

- You **cannot** work until you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) and the start date on the EAD has been reached.

- Please discuss with an International Student Advisor any travel plans while your OPT application is pending or after it has been approved.

After your application has been approved:

- You will receive an email from SEVP to create your portal account.

- When you start a new employment or change your address, please update the information in the portal within 30 days and email ISSS to get an updated I-20 reflecting your employment details.

- If you change employers, you must notify ISSS within 30 days of the new employment to get an updated I-20.

- You may not work after your OPT has ended. You can legally stay in the U.S. during the 60-day grace period after OPT has ended to make arrangements to leave the country.*

  *If you are applying for the STEM OPT Extension, and have timely filed your application, you can continue working while the application is pending, for up to 180 days beyond the expiration of the prior Post-Completion OPT EAD.

- OPT will not be approved more than once for the same degree level. OPT will also not be approved for a lower degree level.

NM STATE

Health Insurance While On OPT

- Students who are applying for OPT are strongly encouraged to purchase health insurance if your employer does not provide health coverage or if you do not have a job offer.

- Students who will be applying OPT and graduating in the Fall should buy health insurance no later than February 28. For the spring coverage, students should buy health insurance no later than August 30. This will help you avoid a break in coverage.

- If you would like to apply, you can request an insurance application form from ISSS that you can fill out and submit directly to **Relation Insurance Services** to continue your current student health insurance while on your first year of OPT.

- If you purchased health insurance without a break from Relation Insurance Services while you were on your 12-month OPT, you can request an additional 24 months of coverage once you have applied for STEM OPT.

NM STATE

Questions?

Send them in the Chat and
we will answer them.

Form I-765 Overview

Still Got Questions?

If you have any questions or would like additional help with the OPT application process, e-mail:

ISSS - isss@nmsu.edu

Include "OPT" in the subject line and
include your Aggie ID number in the email.

We are available for 1-on-1 virtual appointment.