


Optional Practical Training

OPT Informational Workshop

NMSU International Student and Scholar Services



Application For Employment Authorization
Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS
Form I-765
OMB No. 1615-0040
Expires 02/28/2018

For USCIS Use Only	Fee Stamp	Action Block	Initial Receipt		Resubmitted	
			Received	Sent	Received	Sent
<input type="checkbox"/> Application Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid From _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid To _____ Subject to the following conditions: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Application Denied - Failed to establish: <input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (a) or (c) <input type="checkbox"/> Economic necessity under 8 CFR 274a.12(c)(4), (18) and 8 CFR 214.2(f) <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant is filing under section 274a.12 _____	Completed <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied	A/E			

► **START HERE** - Type or print in black ink.

I am applying for:

☐ Permission to accept employment.
☐ Replacement (of lost employment authorization document).
☐ Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach a copy of your previous employment authorization).

7. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
8. Marital Status

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, requirements, and Spring 2021 timeline of applying for OPT
- Post OPT approval requirement
- GeoBlue Insurance
- Latest updates from USCIS
- Ask questions via chat & know how to contact ISSS
- Understand how to complete Form I-765

Before We Start...

- Your microphone will remain muted.
- Type questions in the Chat anytime and we will answer them shortly.
- This session is being recorded and will be available on our website (<http://issn.nmsu.edu>).

What is OPT?



- OPT offers temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study and educational level.
- It provides students in F-1 status an opportunity to gain employment experience for one year following completion of their program of study and maybe transition to work visa like H-1B visa etc.
- OPT application is processed by USCIS and upon approval issues Employment Authorization Card(EAD).

Who is eligible to 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.
- After graduation/completing of the course of study.
- After completion of all course requirements for the degree, excluding thesis or equivalent, if the student is in a Master's, or Doctoral degree program.
- The student will need to finish thesis/dissertation at least 90 days prior to OPT completion, to be eligible for STEM OPT

Who is NOT eligible to apply for OPT

- Students who have engaged in off-campus Curricular Practical Training full-time (20 hour or more per week) for more than 12 months.
- Students who previously applied for OPT at the same educational level.
- If the student previously had an OPT at a higher educational level, then the student is not eligible for OPT at lower educational level. Example: If the student had OPT at master's level, the student is NOT eligible to apply for OPT at Bachelors Level. However, the student will be eligible to apply for OPT at PhD level.
- Students in English language training programs are ineligible for practical training, like CELP students



When to apply

OPT When to Apply

- No sooner than **90** days before your program end date.
- No later than **60** days after your program end date.
- This means if you are graduating in Spring 2021, you can apply for OPT from **18th Feb 2021 to no later than 17th July 2021.**
- If you are graduating in Summer 2021, you can apply for OPT from **13th May 2021 to no later than 7th October 2021.**
- If you are planning to graduate in summer 2021, please make sure you register for at least one class which is classroom based.



OPT Packet requirements

1. Students applying for OPT for Spring 2021 must complete the OPT Request form and submit it to your academic advisor for signature. ISSS can proceed with your OPT application after your Academic Advisor's signature on the OPT Request Form. Here is the link to the application:

https://issn.nmsu.edu/_files/issn-pdfs/opt-forms.pdf

OPT Packet Requirements – cont.

2. Completed OPT application (I-765 on <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>)
3. Complete E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance (G-1145 on <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>)
4. Form I-94 (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>)
5. Passport Identification page and F-1 entry visa copies

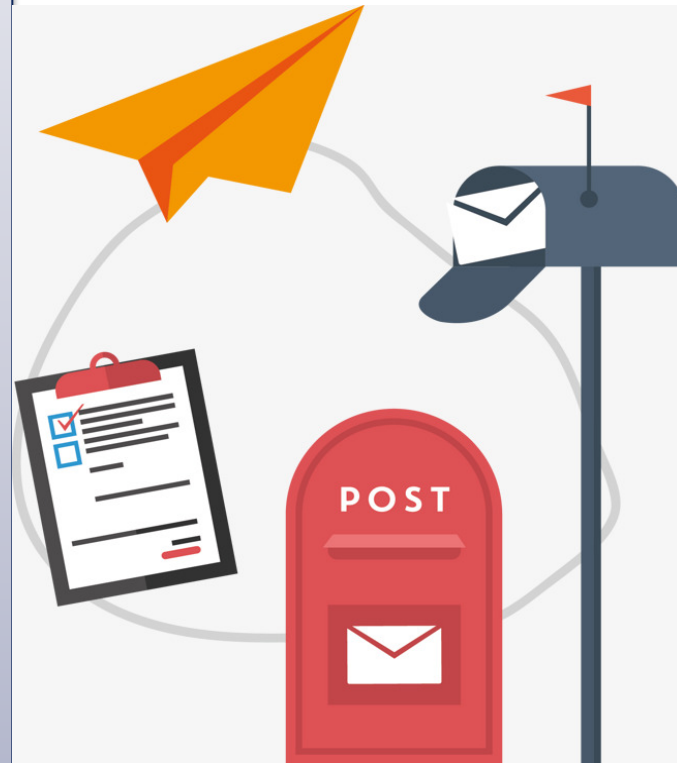
OPT Packet Requirements – cont.

6. 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**. (not required to email ISSS office for review)
7. Check or Money Order for \$410.00 to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**. (not required to email ISSS office for review)
8. After reviewing #1 to #5, ISSS will issue an I-20 with OPT recommendation.

Mailing OPT Packet

*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.
- 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.
- 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).



Important Things to Remember – Cont.

- You **cannot** work until you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- You can work only within the dates reflected on your EAD card.
- Please discuss with an International Student Advisor any travel plans you may have after your OPT has been approved.

Post approval of OPT :

1. You will receive an email from SEVP to create your portal account after your OPT is approved.
2. When you start a new employment or change your address, please update the information in the portal account within 10 days and email ISSS to get an updated I-20 reflecting your employment details.
3. If you change employers, you must update SEVP portal account within 10 days of the new employment
4. Always have an updated I-20 reflecting your current employer details.
5. If you forgot your password or your portal account is locked and need help with reset of portal account, please email ISSS.

Unemployment during OPT

- During *standard post-completion OPT*, a student may be unemployed for an aggregate of no more than **90 days**.
- Each day (including weekends) during the period when OPT authorization begins and ends that the student does not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment. OPT authorization begins on the employment start date shown on the student's EAD.

When you have reached OPT completion

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

You cannot reenter U.S in the 60 days Grace Period.

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

Health Insurance While On OPT

- Students who are applying for OPT are encouraged to purchase health insurance. If your employer does not provide health coverage or if you do not have a job offer.
- OPT students can continue their school sponsored coverage with GeoBlue on a voluntary basis. OPT coverage has very strict guidelines and enrollment must be within 30 days of their school coverage termination date. They cannot have 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.

Recent updates from USCIS regarding OPT 02/26/2021

- USCIS has experienced delays at certain lockboxes in issuing receipt notices for Form I-765 for optional practical training (OPT) for F-1 students.
- F-1 students requesting post-completion OPT who receive an approval of Form I-765 for less than the full amount of OPT time requested (not to exceed 12 months) due to the requirement that the OPT be completed within 14 months of the program end date may request a correction of the EAD due to USCIS error. USCIS will issue a corrected EAD with a new end date, as requested, to cover the full amount of OPT time recommended in the original application.

USCIS will accept a refiled Form I-765 for OPT and STEM OPT as filed on the original filing date if:

The original, timely filed application was received on or after Oct. 1, 2020, through May 1, 2021, inclusive;

Missing or Deficient Signatures

Applications with missing or deficient signatures are generally rejected at the lockbox. This policy remains unchanged. However, if the lockbox accepts a Form I-765 application for OPT or STEM OPT with a missing or deficient signature, USCIS will issue a Request for Evidence rather than deny the application, to give the applicant the opportunity to respond and provide the necessary signature or correct the deficiency. We encourage applicants filing Form I-765 to review the form instructions on our website to ensure their application is complete before filing it.



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 - iss@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.

Next OPT Webinar: Summer 2021, Date TBA