Services for International Students and Scholars (SISS)
University of California, Davis

Optional Practical Training (OPT)
ONLINE WORKSHOP

Estimated time for workshop viewing: 30 minutes
Unless specified otherwise, all information in this presentation refers to post-completion OPT.

Click to advance to the next slide.

After viewing this presentation, only schedule the OPT appointment with your International Student Advisor if you have completed all the required forms.
OPT Application Process

STEP 1: View this online workshop.

STEP 2: Read the OPT handout.

STEP 3: Complete the OPT Request Form and form I-765.

STEP 4: Make an appointment or come to Drop In with your International Student Advisor to submit your OPT application.

STEP 5: Your International Student Advisor issues a new I-20.

STEP 6: Prepare your documents and mail them to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
Completing the Forms

- In this presentation, we will guide you through each form in an effort to answer questions that you might have.
- If you still have questions after viewing the entire presentation, contact your International Student Advisor at SISS.
- Always use the most current version of form I-765.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When can I use OPT or CPT?</th>
<th>CPT</th>
<th>OPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPT can only be granted during academic program, but not during filing fee status. CPT cannot be approved after completion of program (see #5 on your I-20).</td>
<td></td>
<td>OPT is usually used after completion of program; however, it can be applied for during your academic program as pre-completion OPT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Do I have to have a job to apply for CPT or OPT? | Yes, approval is given for a specific employer during a specific time. | No, a student does not need a job before applying for OPT. |

| Can I work at any kind of job? | No, the job must be considered an integral part of your academic program (see CPT workshop for more details). | No, it is the student’s responsibility to find employment in his or her the major field of study only! |

| Who gives the authorization? | SISS can give CPT authorization. Processing time is approximately 7-10 business days. | SISS can only recommend OPT; USCIS gives OPT approval. Processing time can take up to 90 days. |

| How long can I use CPT or OPT? | There is no limit to the amount of part time CPT you can use. If you use full-time CPT greater than 12 months, you will lose OPT eligibility. | The maximum length of OPT approval is 29 months based on the possibility of the 17-month OPT extension. 12 months of post-completion OPT + 17 months of OPT extension = 29 months |
Your Immigration Documents

To begin, have the following documents in front of you:

- OPT handout
- Form I-765
- I-20
- Passport with latest I-94 printed out
What is OPT?

- OPT = Optional Practical Training
- Off-campus employment benefit of the F-1 status.
- Practical employment experience in major field of study at the appropriate degree level, for 12 months post-completion, possible extension for an additional 17 months (with STEM major and E-Verify employer).
- Work authorization for OPT is the Employment Authorization Document or EAD card, issued by USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services).
- If you complete a degree at a higher educational level, you may be eligible to apply for another 12 months of OPT.

**Example:**
If you are applying for OPT now on the basis of your Bachelor’s degree, if you later obtain a Master’s degree, you will be eligible to apply for another 12 months of OPT on the basis of the Master’s degree.
Eligibility

- You are eligible for OPT if:
  - You are an F-1 student in good standing who has been enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year (9 months) and
  - Your proposed employment will be directly related to your major field of study and appropriate for someone with your level of education

Reminder:
You do NOT have to have a job offer to apply for OPT!
Who is NOT eligible?

You are NOT eligible to apply for OPT if...

- You used 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- You have NOT been enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year (9 months)
- You are ‘out of status’ (violated your immigration status)
  - Common reasons for students to become “out of status”:
    - Failure to pursue a full course of study (i.e. 12 units/quarter)
    - Failure to follow immigration transfer procedures when changing schools
    - Working without proper authorization
Three Types of OPT

- Pre-completion OPT
- Post-completion OPT
- 17-month OPT Extension
Pre-completion OPT

- OPT authorized for work before the student’s program completion date.

- **Graduate students who have completed all coursework and have only thesis or equivalent remaining** can apply for full-time pre-completion OPT and work full-time throughout the academic year.
  - Note: If OPT employment is to continue after program completion, a separate I-765 application must be filed for post-completion OPT.

- **Undergraduate students** can only work up to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full-time during official school breaks if student is eligible to register the following term.

- Not subject to unemployment rules.

- Eligibility code (C) (3) (A) on I-765 question #16
Post-completion OPT

- OPT authorized for work after the student’s program completion date.

- Graduate students:
  - Thesis-pending graduate students who have completed all coursework may apply for post-completion OPT.
  - I-20 program end date cannot be extended if cannot complete program by the anticipated program end date.
  - Student must complete program by the OPT expiration date.

- Undergraduate students:
  - I-20 must be extended if degree requirements cannot be completed as planned. Notify SISS Advisor immediately.
  - OPT employment is limited to part-time until program completion.

- Maximum 90 calendar days of unemployment.

- Eligibility code (C) (3) (B) on I-765 question #16
17-month OPT Extension

- One-time, 17-month extension of post-completion OPT, for a total of 29 months of OPT (12 months of post-completion + 17 months of OPT extension = 29 months)

- Eligibility criteria:
  - Earned a Bachelor’s, Master’s or Ph.D. in a UCD major that is STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) eligible. If you are unsure, contact an SISS advisor to verify.
  - Employer is E-Verify-registered

- Maximum unemployment during 29 months of OPT is 120 calendar days
- Employer must be E-Verify-registered during entire 17 months of OPT extension
- For complete information refer to SISS OPT Extension handout
- Eligibility code (C) (3) (C) on I-765 question #16; also complete #17
Eligible OPT Employment

- Paid or unpaid employment
- Minimum of 20 hours per week (20 hours per/week in a month’s time in case of variable appointments)
- For a complete list of eligible employment types refer to the latest OPT Policy Guidance or type in “OPT Policy Guidance 1004-03” in your Internet browser
  - Pre- and post-completion OPT – refer to section 7.2.1
  - OPT extension – refer to section 7.2.2
**Unemployment on OPT**

- Unemployment is counted from approved OPT start date (refer to dates on EAD card)

- Unemployed = you do not have eligible OPT employment

- Maximum unemployment is 90 calendar days

- No 60-day grace period if 90 days of unemployment is reached; must leave the U.S. immediately
Unemployment Suggestions

- Keep track of unemployment days

- Remember to report employment changes within 10 days on the [SISS OPT reporting website](#)

- Always request an employment verification letter from employer especially if unpaid, with the following:
  - Position title and description
  - Dates of employment
  - Number of hours per week employed
  - Supervisor’s name and contact information
Employment must end 12 months from start date, or within 14 months of degree completion.

OPT start date must be within 60 days* from UCD program completion date.

You cannot work during the 60-day grace period.

Can apply as early as 90 days before and up to 60 days after completion date.

* Must be received by USCIS by 60th day.
Application Timelines

- **Post-completion:**
  May apply up to 90 days before and within 60 days of program completion. Note USCIS must receive your application before 60th day.

- **Pre-completion:**
  May apply up to 90 days prior to anticipated employment start date or prior to completing a full academic year.

- **OPT extension:**
  May apply up to 120 days prior to end of post-completion OPT.

Applying early will result in application denial and fee payment for new application.
Program Completion Dates

**Graduate:** You have finished all the classes required for your program and

- You are completing your thesis or dissertation OR
- You are on filing fee OR
- The date you will complete a TA or GSR contract

**Undergraduate:** End of the quarter in which degree requirements are fulfilled
Choosing an OPT Start Date

You have a 60-day grace period from your program completion date to begin OPT.

**EXAMPLE:**
- Chisago’s program completion date: December 11, 2015
- Chisago chose the OPT start date of January 20, 2015

Chisago could choose her OPT start date between 12/12/2015 and 02/09/2016

12/11/15

Program end date

01/20/16

OPT
OPT Start Date: Suggestions

- It is better to use “early” start dates if you:
  - have an employment offer
  - would like to be available for employment right after program completion
- It is better to use “later” start dates if you:
  - do not have any employment offers at the time of OPT application
  - do not expect that you will be able to secure employment soon after program completion
  - submitted your application “late” (e.g. during the 60-day window after program completion)

Choose a realistic start date, keeping in mind USCIS processing times
You can only begin paid or unpaid employment if you have met the following requirements:

- You have received your EAD (Employment Authorization Document) and
- The date of your authorized employment period has begun (refer to dates on your EAD card)

Undergraduate students only: you can only work part-time (no more than 20 hours/week) if you still have coursework to complete in order to graduate.
EXAMPLE:

- Chisaho’s OPT start date: January 20, 2016
- Chisaho receives EAD card: January 1, 2016
- Employment can only begin on OPT start date (in this example on 01/20/16)

Students who receive their EAD after their OPT start date need to wait for their EAD to begin employment, even if unpaid.
OPT Request Form

- Download the **OPT Request Form**

- **Graduates:** Take the OPT Request Form to your Major Professor or Graduate Advisor

- **Undergraduates:** Take the OPT Request Form to your Academic Advisor AND Dean’s Office

The program completion date on the form cannot be changed without your professor’s/advisor’s approval!
How to complete Form I-765

I am applying for:
- [ ] Permission to accept employment
- [ ] Replacement (of lost employment authorization document)
- [ ] Renewal of my permission to accept employment

(attach previous employment authorization document)

You should have Form I-765 in front of you for the next few slides.
**I-765 Form (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Name (Family Name in CAPS)</th>
<th>(First)</th>
<th>(Middle)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIROZANE</td>
<td>Chisaho</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Other Names Used (Include Maiden Name)

3. Address in the United States  
   (Number and Street)  
   (Apt. Number)  
   *Note: Please refer to next slide before filling in address!*
   (Town or City)  
   (State/Country)  
   (ZIP Code)

4. Country of Citizenship/Nationality  
   JAPAN

5. Place of Birth (Town or City)  
   (State/Province)  
   (Country)  
   Tokyo  
   Japan

6. Date of Birth (Month/Day/Year)  
   02/05/1980

7. Sex  
   [ ] Male  
   [x] Female

8. Marital Status  
   [x] Married  
   [ ] Single  
   [ ] Widowed  
   [ ] Divorced

9. Social Security Number (Include all Numbers you have ever used)  
   999-99-9999

10. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or I-94 Number (if any)  
    57365656412 (11 digit # on I-94)

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**Notes:**

- #1, your Family Name is the only name that should be written all in CAPS. Your First Name should be written as you normally would.
- #10, I-94 Number: If there are 2 sets of numbers, use the set that has not been crossed out.
- If you changed your status in the U.S., your I-94 card is at the bottom of your I-797 approval notice.
I-765: Your Mailing Address

- On line 3 of I-765 write your current mailing address ONLY IF YOU WILL BE LIVING THERE FOR THE NEXT 3-4 MONTHS
  
  Note: If you have moved when your EAD card is received, your mail will NOT be forwarded; it will be returned to USCIS.

- If you plan to move within 3-4 months, you may use the mailing address of a person you know well:

  **EXAMPLE:**
  
  Line #2:  c/o your uncle’s name
  Line #3:  your uncle’s address

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Other Names Used (Include Maiden Name)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c/o KENJI HIROZANE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Address in the United States (Number and Street) (Apt. Number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>223 South Road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Town or City) (State/Country) (ZIP Code)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burlingame CA 94010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you move after you mail your I-765 to USCIS, you may file an **AR-11** (i.e. Alien’s Change of Address Card). Also be sure to notify SISS within 10 days of your move.
I-765 Form (continued)

11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?
   - Yes (If yes, complete below)
   - No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which INS office?</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)

12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S. (Month/Day/Year)
   03/02/2006

13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S.
   Los Angeles, California

14. Manner of Last Entry (Visitor, Student, etc.)
   Student (F-1)

15. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.)
   Student (F-1)

16. Go to Part 2 of the instructions, Eligibility Categories. In the space below, place the letter and number of the category you selected from the instructions (For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.).

   Eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12

   (C) (3) (B) = post-completion OPT
Form I-765 (continued)

Chisaho Hirozane (signature within lines) (530) 220-0588 April 18, 2011
You have now completed the OPT Request Form and the I-765 and are ready to meet with your International Student Advisor.

Bring the following documents to the appointment:

- Completed OPT Request form
- Completed I-765 form
- Current SEVIS I-20
- Unexpired passport with I-94

Your International Student Advisor will email you when your new I-20 (see 3rd page for OPT Recommendation) is ready to be picked up from the front desk. Please allow 7-10 business days for processing time.
OPT I-20 (Sample)

- OPT Recommendation
- OPT dates you requested
- Travel Signature
Preparing your OPT Application

After you have picked up your new I-20 with the OPT recommendation (see previous slide):

- Print your name and sign your new I-20 at the bottom
- Review all information on I-20 for accuracy (#’s 4, 5 and 10 in particular)
- Copy all the pages of your new I-20
- Copy both sides of your I-94
- Copy all CPT I-20’s (if applicable)
- Copy your passport page (with photo and expiration date)

Go to the next 2 slides for photo and check information!
Preparing your OPT Application

IMPORTANT 30 Day Rule

Please remember that USCIS (United States Citizenship & Immigration Service) has to receive your OPT application within 30 days of your SISS International Student Advisor’s recommendation date of OPT.

Please refer to the date next to your advisor’s signature on your OPT I-20 (#10 on I-20)

USCIS needs to receive your OPT application within 30 days of this date or it will be denied!

Go to the next 2 slides for photo and check information!
OPT Photos

- All photos must be of only the applicant and must be identical.
- All photos must meet the specifications for full frontal/passport photos and must be no more than 30 days old when an application is filed.
- Do NOT cut the pictures!
- Print your full name and SEVIS number (10-digit number beginning with N in the top right corner of your I-20) in pencil on the back of each photo.

**OPT PHOTO SAMPLE:**

[Diagram showing photo specifications]
Check or Money Order (Sample)

Chisaho Hirozane
18 Russell Blvd.
Davis, CA 95616

Check 2281

date May 2, 2011

Pay to the order of: U.S. Department of Homeland Security

$ $$

$ $$ dollars and 00/100 cents only

for ____________________________

________________________________

Chisaho Hirozane

:ROUTING NUMBER: ACCOUNT NUMBER CHECK NUMBER

For the current I-765 application fee, visit www.uscis.gov
Quick Checklist

- Completed original form I-765
- 2 photos with SEVIS ID# and full name printed lightly in pencil on back of photos
- Check or money order for current I-765 fee, www.uscis.gov
- Photocopy of new signed I-20 with OPT recommendation
  - USCIS must receive your application no later than 30 days after your OPT I-20 has been issued (refer to date next to the Adviser’s signature in #10 on page 1 of the OPT I-120. Please account for mailing time.
- Photocopy of passport biographical information (showing passport expiration date & photo)
- Copy of I-94 –
- Photocopy of CPT I-20’s (if applicable)
- Job offer letter (optional)
- E-notification (optional) – receive an e-mail and/or a text message that your application has been accepted at USCIS, if you complete Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance and clip it to the first page of your application.

Review application materials before mailing out and make a copy for your reference.
Mail all documents to USCIS to one of the addresses below if you live in California*:

**Regular U.S. Postal Delivery:**
(Certified Mail/Return Receipt recommended)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
Attn: I-765 Unit
California Service Center
P.O. Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

**Express Mail Delivery:**
(e.g. Federal Express)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
Attn: I-765 Unit
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

*Note: If you are using a mailing address on the I-765 outside of California, contact your International Student Advisor for mailing instructions!
Expedited OPT

If you have a job offer, you may be eligible to expedite your OPT application.

There is no time guarantee.

You must meet USCIS expedite criteria and contact the National USCIS Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 with your WAC #.

SISS cannot assist in expediting your OPT application.
After mailing out your application

- Notice of Action
- Request for Evidence
- EAD Card
- Reporting Requirements
- International Travel
- F-1 Visa Renewal
- Maintaining your Immigration Status
Notice of Action (I-797)

- **Notice of Action (Form I-797)**
  - You will receive a Notice of Action (Form I-797) in about 2-4 weeks.
  - **WAC number:** Form I-797 has a reference number or WAC number, which can be used to track the status of your application online at https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do
  - Verify the **address** to make sure your name and address are correct. If incorrect, contact your International Student Advisor immediately.
  - **Dates:** “Received date” refers to the date USCIS may begin processing your application and “Notice of Action date” refers to the date the notice was created.
USCIS Request for Evidence (RFE) –

- If there is a problem with your application, USCIS will send you a notice by mail called the “Request for Evidence (RFE).”
- Your application has not been rejected; you just need to send in additional documents before your EAD can be issued.
- Please note the deadline to respond to the RFE. If you fail to meet this deadline, your application will be automatically canceled and you will have to file a new application with a new fee.
- Getting an RFE will delay the processing of your application for OPT. For this reason, it is important to make sure that you have completed the I-765 correctly and sent the proper documents to the USCIS.
Once approved for OPT, you will be mailed the EAD card at the address on your I-765 application.

- USCIS mail cannot be forwarded by the U.S. Post Office to another address.
- You are required to obtain your EAD before beginning employment, paid or unpaid.
- Provide SISS with a copy of your EAD.
- Update your employment information on the OPT reporting website at http://siss.ucdavis.edu/opt.cfm
OPT Reporting Requirements

- You are required to report the following information to SISS within 10 days of any change on OPT:
  - Legal name
  - Residential or mailing address
  - Email address (permanent, non-UCD)
  - Employer name and address
  - Employment /Unemployment status
  - Departure from the U.S. (permanent leave)

- Update employment and address information at http://siss.ucdavis.edu/students/current_students/opt.cfm

- SISS advisor then updates the information in the SEVIS System
International Travel on OPT

- For complete OPT travel information, refer to the OPT handout.
- After you have completed your studies, you will need the following documents for travel on OPT:
  - a SEVIS I-20, signed for travel by the International Student Advisor within the last six months and
  - an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) and
  - a valid F-1 visa (unless eligible for automatic revalidation of an expired visa) and
  - a valid passport (valid for six months at the time of re-entry to the U.S.) and
  - employment verification (an offer/employment verification letter from your prospective/current employer with dates of employment, position title, dates of authorized leave for vacation or business).

Students who do not meet these requirements may not be allowed to re-enter the U.S.
F-1 Visa Renewal on OPT

- While on OPT your immigration status is still F-1.
- It is possible to renew your F-1 visa based on participation in OPT.
- SISS does not recommend visa renewals on OPT towards the end of your OPT period because the non-immigrant intent could be difficult to prove at that point.
F-1 Status Maintenance on OPT

- OPT is an employment benefit of the F-1 status, and you must maintain eligible employment on OPT.
- Employment must be:
  - minimum 20 hours per week (average out to 20 hours/week in a month in the case of variable appointments)
  - at the appropriate degree level in field of study (as noted on I-20)
- Unemployment is limited to 90 calendar days during the initial 12 months of post-completion OPT.
Thank you for viewing the online OPT slideshow.

Please contact SISS to report your online OPT Workshop training. Make sure to include your Name and Student ID Number to receive credit for the training.