



**UC DAVIS**

Services for International  
Students and Scholars

A part of Global Affairs

# POST COMPLETION OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

# Contents

*OPT*

*Eligibility*

*Program completion*

*Start date*

*Timing*

*I-765 instructions*

*Requesting through iGlobal*

*Application materials*

*Other considerations*

*I-797 Receipt Notice and Submission*

*OPT Reporting*

# What is OPT?



- OPT is an abbreviation for *Optional Practical Training*
- OPT is an optional benefit to F-1 status allowing students to obtain practical work experience full-time for one year **after completing their program of study**

# Eligibility

## F-1 students are eligible after:

- Being enrolled full-time for one full academic year (9 months) on the same SEVIS Record
- Completing their program of study

*AND*

Training must be directly related to the major field of study



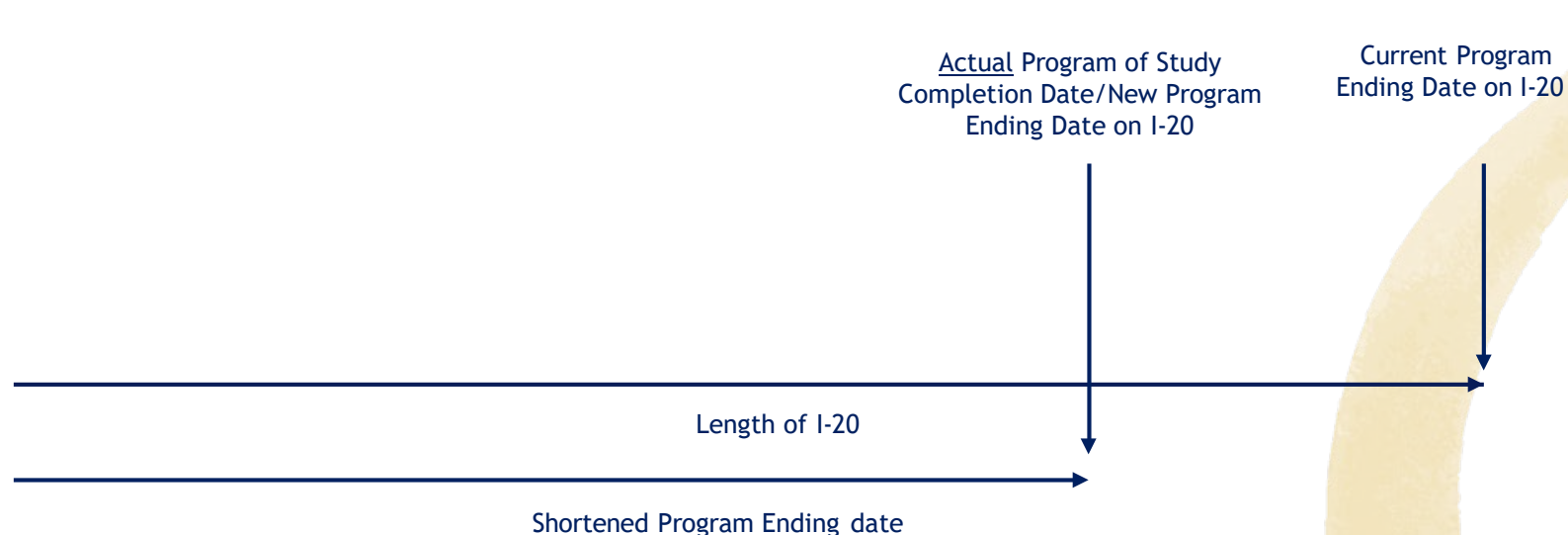
# What do you mean by: “Completing my program of study?”

- Program completion =
  - You have finished all classes required to graduate and
    - You are in the process of completing your thesis or dissertation OR
    - You are on Filing Fee (Filing Fee – ok)
- Your completion date becomes your new I-20 program ending date (if different from original).
  - Completion end date = term/quarter ending date OR
  - The last day of the month if you are working on-campus on a TA or GSR contract
  - Your I-20 will be shortened to the date that you actually complete your program of study

**Your completion date is not the day you graduate or receive your degree**

# Importance of the completion of program of study date

- You must finish your program of study before you can begin OPT.
- Your OPT start date is after your I-20 ending date.

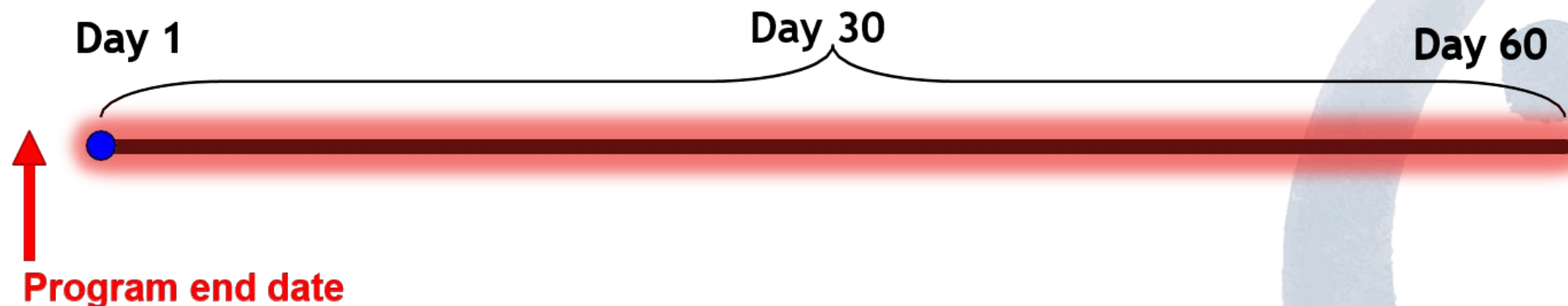


*Your program completion date becomes your new I-20 ending date*

# Choosing an OPT Start Date

**You have 60 days from the program completion date to begin OPT. This is also your *grace period*.**

**Your OPT start date can be as early as the day after your program ending date or any day up to 60 days after your program ending date.**



# OPT Timeline Calculator

Use the [OPT Timeline Calculator](#) to get customized information about:

- Submitting your OPT request to SISS
- Submitting your OPT application to USCIS
- Counting unemployment\*
- Maintaining status during your OPT period

*\*Maximum allowed unemployment days = 90*

**Download and save this calculator to use during your OPT application**



# Using the OPT Timeline Calculator

<https://siss.ucdavis.edu/optional-practical-training>

## Enter

- Type of degree
- Program End Date
- Contract information if you are working on campus

The calculator recommends start dates

**UC DAVIS**  
SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

**F-1 Student OPT Timeline Calculator**  
Enter information in the blue boxes.  
Green Boxes display custom timeline.

Choose Your Start Date

1. Which type of degree will you earn?

Doctoral

- Your Program End Date is the last day of the quarter in which you file your
- If you wish to apply earlier, consult with an SISS International Student Advisor .
- If on a TA or GSR contract your final quarter, you must use your contract end date in order to be

2. I plan to finish my degree:

Term

Fall

Year

2018

Working On Campus?

Yes

- Your **Program End Date** is: 12/31/2018
- Your **Grace Period** is the 60 days following your Program End Date 1/1/2019 through 3/1/2019
- Your Employment Start Date must be during your Grace Period.
- Your best option with today's timeframe is to pick a date between 3/1/2019 and 3/1/2019
- Consult an SISS advisor about possible unemployment days. MM/DD/YYYY

3. Which **Employment Start Date** do you choose?

3/1/2019

Do not work before your OPT starts

This is a valid Employment Start Date.

# Customize your OPT Timeline

## Customize Your Timeline

**Please plan ahead:** SISS takes up to two weeks to process your request; USCIS takes **90 days**

1. Submit your iGlobal OPT request to SISS between:  and 
  - USCIS takes 90 days to process OPT requests; desired start date < 90 days away.
2. Enter the date next to the Advisor Signature on page 1 of the new I-20 issued by SISS: 
  - USCIS only accepts materials during your **Processing Period**  through

# Maintain timely reporting to stay in status

## Maintain F-1 Status during OPT

**Stay in status** by reporting all Employment and Address changes **within 10 days**.

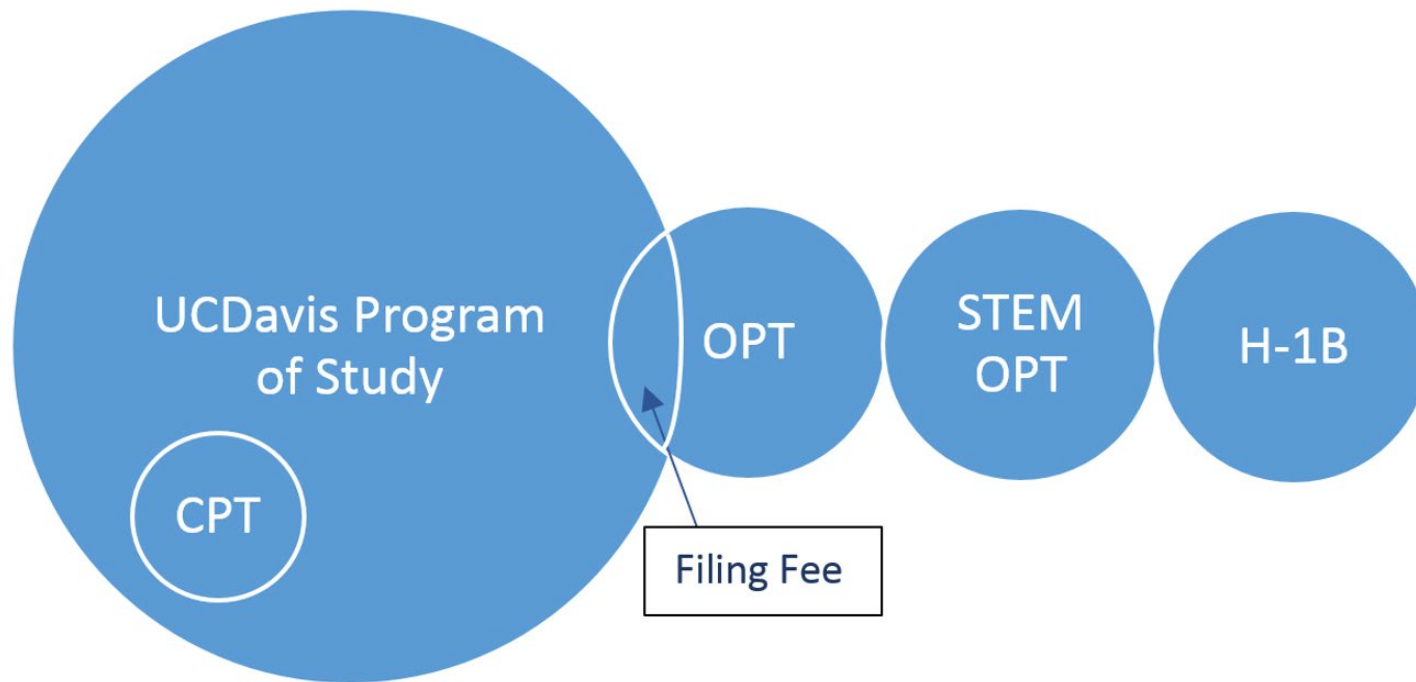
- **Report** employer and address to SISS after OPT starts: **3/1/2019**
- Report using the iGlobal portal: <https://iglobal.ucdavis.edu> (Limited Services option)
- Keep personal records of employment, hours, and how it is related to your major field of study.
- [Unemployment calculator](#) helps track all unemployment days (90 cumulative).

**When will I get my EAD card?** USCIS takes an average of 90 days from the I-797 receipt date.

**Can I work before I get my EAD card?**

- You must have your card in hand to begin working
- You cannot work OR volunteer until the authorized period of employment begins (dates on card)

# OPT can overlap Filing Fee



The most important thing to  
remember about OPT is

*Timing!*

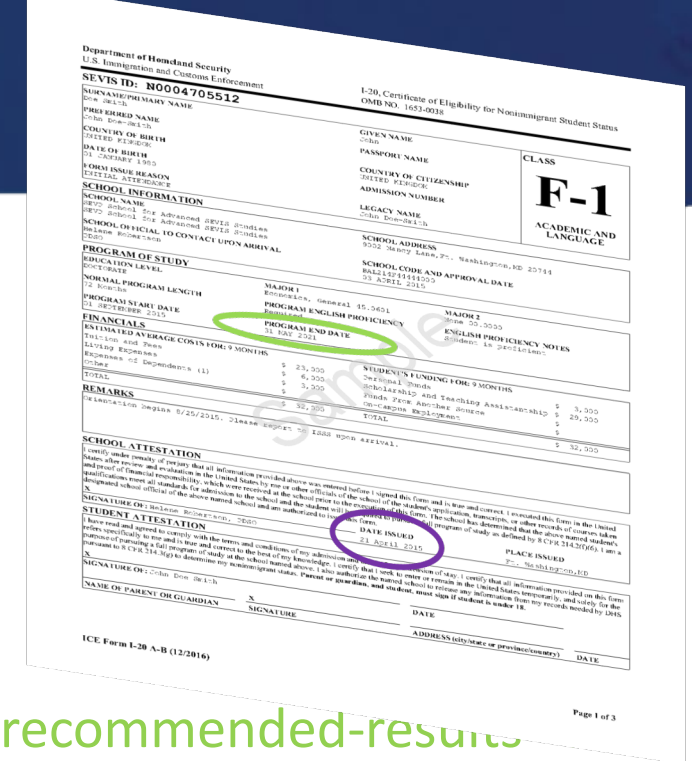
1. Submitting request to SISS
2. Submitting application to USCIS

# Recommended Timeline

- Submit a request for OPT to iGlobal one quarter before you file your thesis/dissertation or take your comprehensive exams-
- Why?
  - If you plan to finish your thesis/dissertation while on OPT and do not finish by the OPT expiration date, you will have no option to remain in the U.S. to complete your degree.
  - Additional documentation from your academic advisor/PI is required to submit your request more than one quarter prior.

# Other critical timeframes

- USCIS must receive your application**
  - No more than 90 days prior to program completion date
  - No more than 60 days after completion date (not recommended—results unemployment accrual)
  - Within 30 days of the OPT I-20 issue date (the I-20 issue date is the date next to your advisor's signature on page 1 of the I-20)
- USCIS processing takes approximately 90 days from the Notice Date on your I-797 receipt



Department of Homeland Security  
 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
 SEVIS ID: N0004705512  
 I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status  
 OMB NO. 1545-0048

SIGNATURE/PRIMARY NAME  
 JOHN DOE  
 PREPARED NAME  
 JOHN DOE  
 COUNTRY OF BIRTH  
 UNITED STATES  
 DATE OF BIRTH  
 01 JANUARY 1995  
 JOHN DOE  
 SCHOOL INFORMATION  
 SCHOOL NAME  
 UC DAVIS  
 SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL  
 NAME  
 ADDRESS  
 PHONE

GIVEN NAME  
 JOHN  
 PASSPORT NAME  
 JOHN DOE  
 COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP  
 UNITED STATES  
 ADMISSION NUMBER  
 123456789  
 LEGACY NAME  
 JOHN DOE  
 SCHOOL ADDRESS  
 9002 University Ave., Washington, DC 20714  
 SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE  
 01 APRIL 2015

CLASS  
**F-1**  
 ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE

PROGRAM OF STUDY  
 MAJOR 1  
 MAJOR 2  
 MAJOR 3  
 PROGRAM END DATE  
 12/31/2021  
 ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES

FINANCIALS  
 ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR 9 MONTHS  
 Tuition and Fees  
 Living Expenses  
 Insurance  
 TOTAL  
 STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR 9 MONTHS  
 2nd Year 1st Term  
 2nd Year 2nd Term  
 2nd Year 3rd Term  
 TOTAL

REMARKS  
 Education began 8/25/2015. Please advise of any changes to this information.

SCHOOL ATTESTATION  
 I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I understand this form is the United States' official record of the student's status and is used to determine the student's eligibility for nonimmigrant student status. The school has determined that the above named student meets all standards for admission to the school and the student will be admitted to the program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.

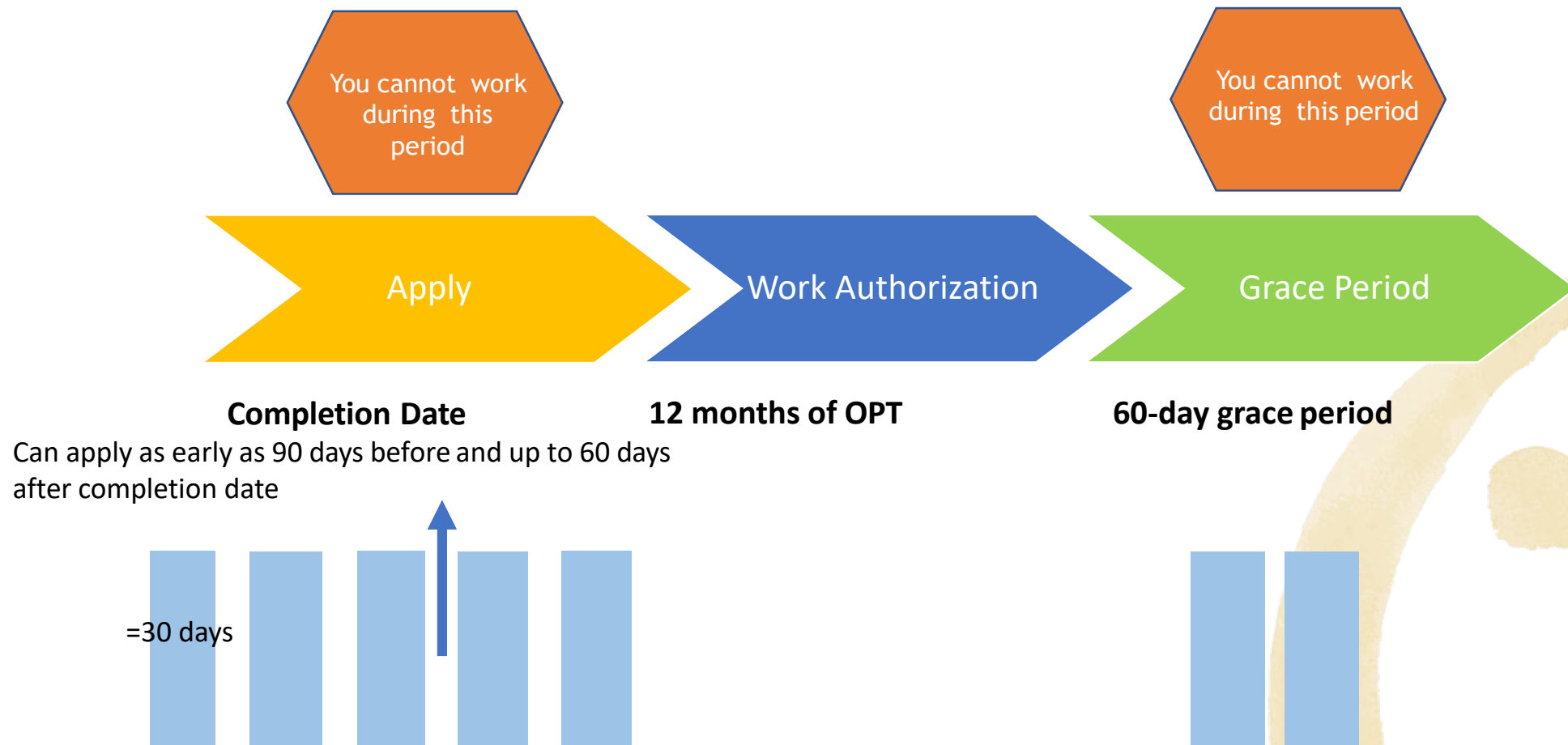
STUDENT ATTESTATION  
 I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission to the United States. I understand that I must maintain my status as a nonimmigrant student and must comply with all applicable laws and regulations. I understand that I must maintain my status as a nonimmigrant student and must comply with all applicable laws and regulations. I understand that I must maintain my status as a nonimmigrant student and must comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT  
 JOHN DOE  
 DATE  
 11/01/2021  
 PLACE ISSUED  
 UC DAVIS

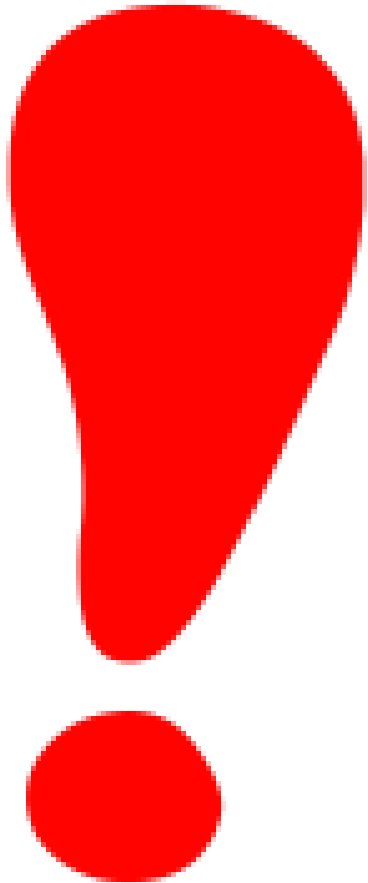
SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN  
 NAME  
 ADDRESS (city, state or province/country)  
 DATE

ICE Form I-20 A-B (12/2016)  
 Page 1 of 3

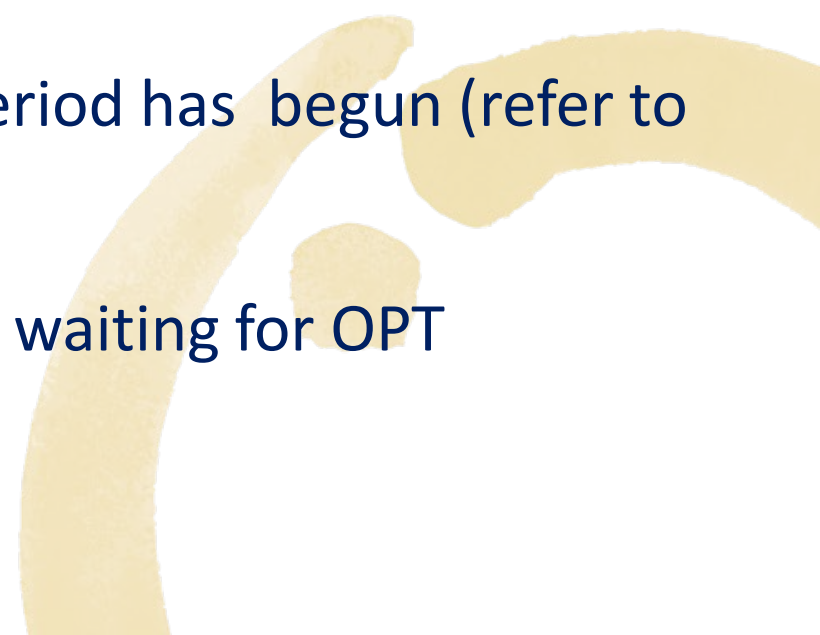
# Application Timeline



# When can I start?



- You can *only* begin paid or unpaid training when:
- You have received your EAD (Employment Authorization Document) *and*
- The date of your authorized training period has begun (refer to the dates on your EAD card)
- You are not allowed to volunteer while waiting for OPT approval and EAD card.



# I-765 Instructions

Fill out the form using the instructions on our [OPT webpage](#) and in [iGlobal](#) at F-1 Practical Training, Optional Practical Training.

# How to submit a request in iGlobal for OPT

1. Log into iGlobal
2. Click on F-1 Practical Training
3. Click on Optional Practical Training (Graduates)



## iGlobal

 **Secure Online Session**

**Gunrock Mustang**

Campus: UC Davis

Network ID: tsilver

iGlobal Home Page
<b>Document Request</b>
<b>F-1 Practical Training</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Curricular Practical Training</li><li><b>Optional Practical Training (Graduates)</b></li><li>Optional Practical Training (Undergraduates)</li><li>Report Employment on first year of OPT</li></ul>
<b>F-1 Student Services</b>
<b>J-1 Student Services</b>
<b>Reduced Course Load Requests</b>
<b>Update Personal Information</b>
<b>Logout of iGlobal</b>

### iGlobal Services Home Page

Online Services for International Students, Scholars, and Staff: Update your institutional information, request signatures, work authorization, certificate of enrollments, sign-up for sessions, and more.

SEVIS Status Information	Options
SEVIS ID: N0000000009	<input type="checkbox"/> View cases closed before today
Status: Active	<input type="checkbox"/> View correspondence and notes older than 60 days
Level: Master's	
Program Start: 09/09/2009	
Program End: 09/09/2015	

### About Services for International Students and Scholars (SISS)

Established in 1968, Services for International Students and Scholars (SISS) reports to the Vice Provost for Global Affairs. SISS is helping to build a campus community that includes students and scholars from over 100 countries and six continents. SISS serves over 6,000 international students, faculty, and researchers and their accompanying family members who come to UC Davis each year. We welcome the world to UC Davis.

SISS assists incoming and current international students and scholars, and their families with visa and immigration issues while they are at UC Davis. In addition to preparing the necessary documents to apply for a U.S. visa, SISS assists international students and scholars in maintaining their legal status while in the United States. SISS also provides orientation, assistance, information, and referral to international students, faculty, and researchers regarding financial, personal, cultural, and academic concerns.

1. In iGlobal, review instructions and links under **How to Apply for OPT**
2. Click on **Request An I-20 With An OPT Recommendation**
  - Upload required documents
  - Submit
3. Click on **Graduate Coordinator Recommendation for OPT**
  - Fill out information
  - Submit
4. Your form will be automatically routed to SISS after your Graduate Coordinator verifies and submits



# iGlobal

## Optional Practical Training Grad

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an employment benefit where for F-1 students can apply what they have learned in a degree program through off-campus employment after completion of all degree requirements. Employment approval takes at least 90 days, so careful planning is required.

### How to Apply for OPT

1. Attend an [OPT workshop](#) or view the [online OPT workshop](#).
2. Meet with your Academic Advisor(s) to discuss your degree completion.
3. Use the [OPT Calculator](#) to help you customize a timeline.
4. Submit this form to SISS along with:
  - [USCIS I-765 form](#)
  - [I-94 Record](#)
5. Your Graduate Coordinator must submit an electronic recommendation using these forms.
  - Once you fill out all required forms, your Graduate Coordinator will receive an e-mail to complete their recommendations.
6. After your I-20 is issued, you need to mail a copy of the new I-20 recommending OPT along with the [other required materials](#) to USCIS.

### Please fill out the following:

☒ [Request An I-20 With An OPT Recommendation](#)

☒ [Graduate Coordinator Recommendation for OPT](#)

<input type="checkbox"/> = Incomplete	<input type="radio"/> = Submit Another	<input type="info"/> = Follow-Up Required
<input type="radio"/> = Optional	<input type="checkbox"/> = Not Yet Available	<input type="arrow"/> = Awaiting Answer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = Complete	<input type="checkbox"/> = Pending Review	<input checked="" type="x"/> = Denied
<input type="pencil"/> = Draft		

# Other application materials

To submit materials in the correct order review the information:

- On our website: <https://siss.ucdavis.edu/optional-practical-training>
- In the iGlobal instructions
- In the email notification that your OPT I-20 is ready

# Your OPT I-20

- SISS recommends OPT
- USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) is the approval authority
- Recommendation appears on page 2

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status  
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: [REDACTED] (F-1)

NAME: [REDACTED]

## EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS

TYPE	FULL/PART-TIME	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
POST-COMPLETION OPT	FULL TIME	REQUESTED	28 MAY 2017	22 MAY 2018

## CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION

## AUTHORIZED REDUCED COURSE LOAD

## CURRENT SESSION DATES

CURRENT SESSION START DATE	CURRENT SESSION END DATE
09 JANUARY 2017	24 MARCH 2017

## TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT

This page, when properly endorsed, may be used for re-entry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each endorsement is valid for one year.

Designated School Official	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE ISSUED	PLACE ISSUED
		X		
		X		
		X		
		X		

# Sample Check or Money Order

**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 dollars


for \_\_\_\_\_ Chisaho Hirozane

:ROUTING NUMBER: ACCOUNT NUMBER CHECK NUMBER

Check or money order payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Check the current [filing fee](#) before submitting. Do not pay the biometric fee.

- Make payable to the order of exactly as it is in this sample
- Do not abbreviate Department of Homeland Security

# Credit Card Payment Option

		<b>Authorization for Credit Card Transactions</b>		<b>USCIS</b>	
		Department of Homeland Security		<b>Form G-1450</b>	
		U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services		OMB No. 1615-0131	
				Expires 01/31/2021	
<b>How To Fill Out Form G-1450</b>					
<p>1. Type or print legibly in black ink.</p> <p>2. Complete the "Applicant's/Petitioner's/Requester's Information," "Credit Card Billing Information," and "Credit Card Information" sections and sign the authorization.</p> <p>3. Place your Form G-1450 ON TOP of your application, petition, or request package.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Failure to provide the requested information may result in USCIS and your financial institution not accepting the payment. USCIS cannot process credit card payments without an authorized signature.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Form G-1450 may only be used with a form being submitted to a USCIS Lockbox. <b>Do not submit this form to a USCIS Field Office. They will not accept it.</b></p> <p>We recommend that you print or save a copy of your completed Form G-1450 to review in the future and for your records.</p>					
<p><a href="https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450">https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450</a></p>					
<b>Applicant's/Petitioner's/Requester's Information (Full Legal Name)</b>					
Given Name (First Name)		Middle Name (if any)		Family Name (Last Name)	
<b>Credit Card Billing Information (Credit Card Holder's Name as it Appears on the Card)</b>					
Given Name (First Name)		Middle Name (if any)		Family Name (Last Name)	
<b>Credit Card Holder's Billing Address:</b>					
Street Number and Name				Apt. Ste. Flr.	Number
				<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
City or Town				State	ZIP Code
				<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Credit Card Holder's Signature and Contact Information:</b>					
Credit Card Holder's Signature					
Credit Card Holder's Daytime Telephone Number			Credit Card Holder's Email Address		

# OPT Photo Requirements

Clear image,  
White  
background



2 x 2 inches  
(51 x 51 mm)

- 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.
- Print your full name, birthdate and SEVIS number (10-digit number beginning with N in the top left corner of your I-20) in pencil on the back of each photo.

# And what about...

*An RFE*

*The EAD card*

*Job relation to major*

*Traveling out of the United States*

*Renewing my visa*

*Canceling*

*Starting a new course of study*

*When you receive your I-797 Receipt Notice*

*Unemployment*

# What is a Request for Evidence (RFE)?

- When USCIS needs clarification or more documentation about your OPT application
- Sent to the address you provide to USCIS in the I-765 application form
- Usually a blue cover sheet with a response deadline
- Usually an additional sheet(s) with a list of information to provide

## What to do if you get an RFE?

- Schedule an appointment with your SISS Advisor immediately
- Prepare all documents requested – **even if you already submitted them with the original request**
- Make photocopies of all documents before sending
- Review packet before mailing
- Send by the deadline indicated on the cover sheet

*RFEs are serious*

*Not submitting what is requested in a timely manner may lead to an OPT denial*



# How do I know if my job directly related to my major?

Employment is an extension of what you learned and must be directly related to your major field of study

- Ways to document a direct relationship:
  - Job Description requires knowledge and skills you learned at UC Davis
  - Your degree is a minimum or preferred job requirement
  - You took specific coursework that makes you qualified for the job
- If in doubt:
  - Ask a professor
- Maintain documented evidence of relationship

# Traveling during OPT

For more information <https://sis.s.ucdavis.edu/resources/travel/international-students>

Once you have applied for/been approved for OPT,  
you must have the following 5 items when you return to the U.S.

1. Unexpired passport, valid for 6 months in the future
2. Unexpired F-1 visa
3. Most recent I-20 with a current travel signature  
(Travel signatures are only valid for 6 months on OPT)
1. I-797 receipt notice/**EAD card**\*
2. Proof of **job**/job search/training

**Risk** of being denied entry for if entering without

- \*If you have your EAD card you **MUST** return with a job offer
  - Ask your SISS Advisor for a sample job offer letter to provide to your employer

# What if I'm traveling and my visa has expired?



Bring all your travel documents  
and apply for an extension

# What if I have to cancel OPT?

- Contact your SISS Advisor
  - Your SISS Advisor can cancel your OPT in SEVIS if you haven't mailed your application.
  - If you have mailed your application, you will need to withdraw. Consult your SISS Advisor for guidance. **You will not receive a refund.**

# What if I go back to school before OPT expires?

If you are admitted to a program at UC Davis or another institution that requires you to have an I-20, your OPT will end the day before your new degree program start date. **Discuss this with your SISS Advisor because it will require either a *Change of Level I-20* for UC Davis or a *SEVIS Transfer* to another institution.**

While on OPT, you are permitted to take a class here and there if the institution allows you to do so as a non-admitted student (meaning not needing an I-20 for the other program).

# I-797 Receipt Notice

- You will receive an I-797 Receipt Notice approximately 3 weeks after you submit your OPT application to USCIS
- Your Receipt Notice will have the Received Date and Notice Date
- The Received Date is the date that USCIS received your application
- The Notice Date is the date that USCIS created the receipt to notify you that they have your application
- If your EAD is approved, it should arrive at the address you provided in the I-765 application at least 90 days after the **NOTICE DATE**
- **YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SCAN AND EMAIL A COPY OF YOUR I-797 RECEIPT NOTICE TO YOUR SISS ADVISOR IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT**
  - Your SISS Advisor will verify that your I-797 was received within the 30 day required timeframe
  - If there is a problem with your Receipt Notice, your SISS Advisor will contact you to discuss options

# What if I am unemployed?

- International students are required to maintain employment that is directly related to their field of study during the OPT authorized period
- Ninety (90) days of total unemployment is allowed (not consecutive but aggregate)
- Unemployment begins after the start date of your EAD
- Students approaching 90 days of unemployment must make plans to leave the United States or to transfer to another program of study
- Calculate your unemployment using the [unemployment calculator](#)

# OPT Reporting Requirement

# What is OPT Reporting?

- International students on OPT are required to report
  - New employment
  - End of employment
  - Changes to employment
  - Address Changes
  - Verification of employment every 6 months
- Reporting verifies to USCIS that you are not accumulating unemployment days
  - All unreported days will be considered unemployed days
  - USCIS will begin terminating student SEVIS records who exceed the 90 day unemployment limit

# When do I report?

- You will not be able to report OPT until the first day of your OPT employment.
- You must report changes through iGlobal within 5 days of the change
  - Late reporting may be considered a status violation by USCIS
  - Late reporting may lead to unlawful presence

# How do I report OPT & what do I report?

- Report using <https://iglobal.ucdavis.edu> within 5 days of a change
- **Login under Limited Services** using your student ID, Date of Birth and a temporary PIN number that you can have emailed to yourself.
- Upload your Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) the first time you report.
- Report any changes of:
  - Legal name
  - Residential or mailing address
  - Email address (permanent, non-UCD)
  - Employer name and address/change of address
  - Employment status
    - Loss of employment
    - Start & end dates of employment
  - How employment is directly related to your major field of study
  - Departure from the U.S. (permanent leave)
  - Change of Status (such as H-1B approval, etc.)

# A word about the SEVIS OPT PORTAL

## *What is the portal?*

- A way for students on OPT to directly report employment and address changes to SEVIS

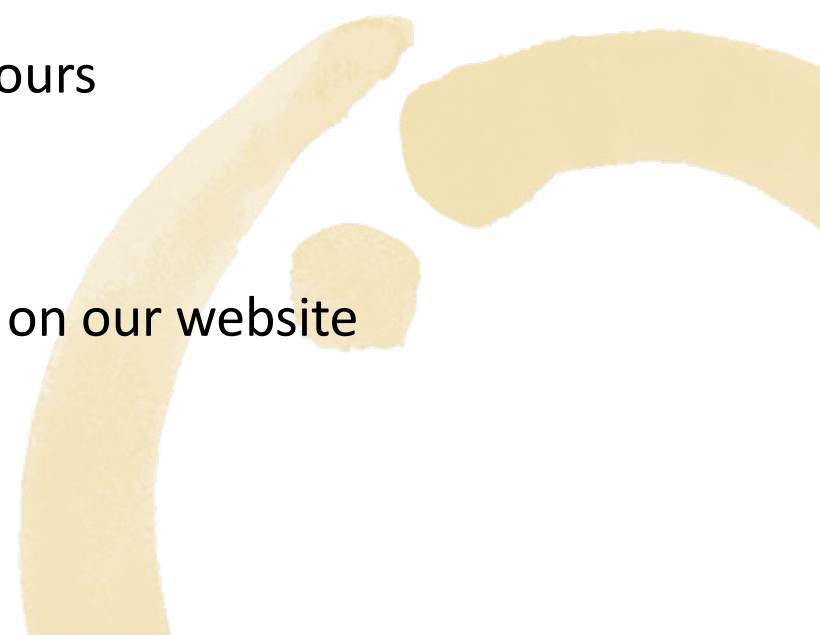
## *Is the SEVIS portal mandatory?*

- No and SISS does not currently support the portal

## *Can I report using the portal?*

- No—for now report all OPT activities using iGlobal

# Review of steps to Prepare your OPT Application

1. Choose your OPT start date – you do not need to have a job to apply
  2. Fill out the [I-765 form](#).
    - Use the instructions on our OPT webpage and in the [iGlobal](#) OPT request form
  3. Submit the OPT eform in iGlobal
  4. SISS will email you when your new I-20 is ready
  5. Optional courtesy check when you pick it up during drop-in hours
    - Mondays & Thursdays 1-3:45pm
  6. Make a copy of your new I-20 to mail (keep original)
  7. Mail documents in the order listed on the iGlobal e-Form and on our website
  8. Report your OPT in a timely manner
  9. Review this online workshop as often as needed
- 

# Contact SISS

- Come to drop-in advising if you have additional questions about your OPT application/process
  - Mondays: 1-3:45pm
  - Thursdays: 1-3:45pm

*OR*

- Email [siss@ucdavis.edu](mailto:siss@ucdavis.edu) with any questions you have

SISS also conducts OPT workshops some Fridays  
Check [website](#) for employment workshop schedule.

*There are no scheduled drop-ins or appointments on Fridays*



**UCDAVIS**

## Services for International Students and Scholars

A part of Global Affairs

[siss.ucdavis.edu](https://siss.ucdavis.edu)