

# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING TUTORIAL

**Kent State University**  
**International Student and Scholar Services**  
**330.672.7980**  
**[iss@kent.edu](mailto:iss@kent.edu)**

## Optional Practical Training Tutorial

- It is your responsibility to understand all of the details and requirements of your immigration status. Only you are responsible for maintaining your status.
- Read this entire tutorial carefully in order to completely understand the timelines, eligibility, procedures, and requirements for seeking Optional Practical Training authorization.
- If, after reading this tutorial, you have questions, ask an international student and scholar advisor by emailing [iss@kent.edu](mailto:iss@kent.edu)
- Do NOT send multiple emails to multiple advisors regarding the same question



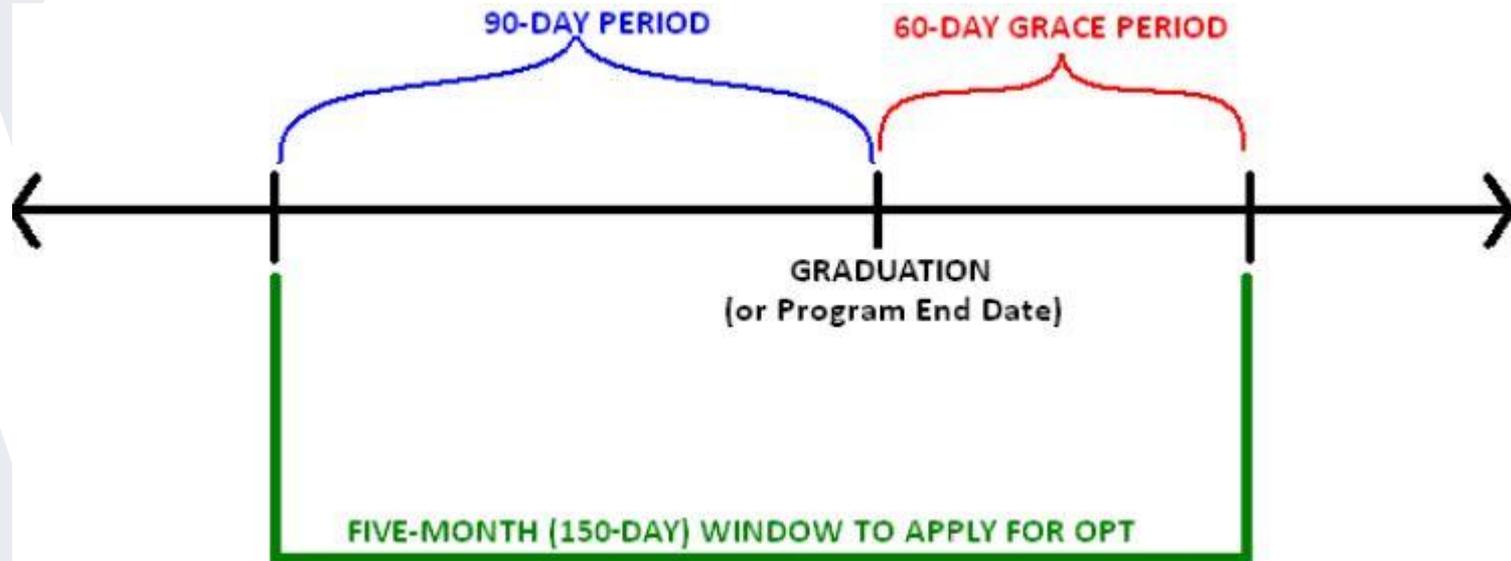
## OPT Eligibility and Types of OPT

- You may apply for OPT if you have been in valid F-1 student status for at least one academic year (two academic terms), **unless**:
  - you have completed 365 days of full-time CPT, or
  - you are a non-degree or ESL student.
- Students who wish to work prior to graduation or completion of coursework should apply for pre-completion OPT (maximum of 20 hours per week when school is in session).
- Students applying for post-completion OPT after graduation or completion of course work **MUST** work full-time (21 hours and more).



## Understanding the OPT Application Window

- You have a five-month (150-day) window in which you may apply for OPT, based on your graduation date or Program End Date (up to 90 days before this date and up to 60 days after).



## Requesting an OPT Start Date

- You must request an OPT start date that is within your 60-day grace period.
- Waiting until late in your grace period to apply may result in an OPT authorization period that is less than 12 full months.
- Once an OPT application is mailed to USCIS, it is not possible to change the requested start date.
- You CANNOT begin working until you receive your EAD card **AND** you CANNOT begin working until the start date on your EAD card.

## Understanding OPT Processing Times and Expedite Requests

- It could take up to 90 days to be approved for OPT and receive your EAD card.
- There is no way to expedite the processing time with USCIS prior to 90 days.
- After 90 days from application submission, please reach out to [iss@kent.edu](mailto:iss@kent.edu) for assistance.



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Do I need a job or a job offer to apply for OPT?

**A:** No. You are able to apply for OPT without having any job offer ready. You are given time to look for a job while on OPT, because you are allowed 90 days of unemployment during the 1-year OPT authorization period.



# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Can I work without my EAD card?

**A:** No. You must physically have your EAD card in your hand in order to report to work. You are allowed to interview, accept a position, and complete any paperwork before you have an EAD card, but you may not actually report to work until you have the EAD card.



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Can I travel with pending or approved OPT?

**A:** Yes, but you could risk not getting back into the U.S.

When your OPT application is **PENDING** (meaning you have mailed your application but have not received an **EAD** card), you may travel outside the United States and you may return **before** the program end date on your I-20.

If your OPT is **APPROVED**, you must present the **EAD** card and a job offer letter at the U.S. port of entry. If you do not have these documents, there is a greater risk you will be denied re-entry.



# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** What if I leave the country when my OPT application is pending, and it is approved when I am outside of the United States?

**A:** Since you need to physically show your EAD card and a job offer letter at the U.S. port of entry, and since the EAD card will be mailed to the U.S. address listed on Form I-765, we do **NOT** recommend traveling internationally while an OPT application is pending. However, if you receive the card and offer while outside of the U.S., we recommend having the items sent to you wherever you are outside of the U.S.



# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Can I work anywhere I want on OPT?

**A:** Any employment, internship, or other practical training experience you accept while on OPT must be directly related to your major field of study. For example, a computer science major must work, volunteer, or intern in a position directly related to computer science.

You must work Full Time (21 hours or more) if you are on Post-Completion OPT



# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** What if my grace period ends and my application is still pending?

**A:** A student with a pending OPT application is in valid F-1 status (meaning you are allowed to remain in the United States), even after the end of the grace period.



# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Am I allowed to be unemployed while on OPT?

**A:** You are allowed 90 days of unemployment during your OPT authorization period (between the dates listed on your EAD card). If you exceed 90 days of unemployment, your OPT authorization ends.



# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** I just got a job or internship. How do I tell ISSS?

**A:** You must report your employment or internship details through the OPT Employer Information Form, which is available on the ISSS website ([www.kent.edu/iss](http://www.kent.edu/iss)), on the Guides & Forms page under “Optional Practical Training.”

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** I applied for OPT because I was supposed to graduate this semester. However, I need to retake a course or complete my capstone before I officially graduate. Can I start my OPT?

**A:** If your application was approved and you received your EAD, you can begin OPT **part-time** (max 20 hours per week) until you complete the course or capstone.

If your application is still pending, you need to contact USCIS and withdraw your application. You can reapply 90 days before your new program end date.



## A Summary of Required Documents

You must submit all of these documents in **one PDF** before we create your OPT I-20:

1. A copy of your passport biographical page
2. A copy of your most recent U.S. visa
3. A printout of your Form I-94 found at [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94)
4. An original check or money order, made out to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for \$410
5. Two recent 2" x 2" passport-style photos, cut in 2" x 2" squares. Write your I-94 number in PENCIL on the back. Do not use pen.
6. The completed Form I-765 (use internet explorer to complete) (<http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf>)



# Sample Check

- This is the correct way to fill out a check to USCIS:



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 document).

1. Full Name

Family Name	First Name	Middle Name
Brooker	Meggie	

2. Other Names Used (include Maiden Name)

Family Name	First Name	Middle Name

3. U.S. Mailing Address

Street Number and Name	Apt. Number
106 Van Campen Hall	OGE

Town or City	State	ZIP Code
Kent	OH	44242

4. Country of Citizenship or Nationality

United States

5. Place of Birth

Town or City	State/Province	Country
Kent	OH	USA

6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

01/01/1997

7. Gender  Male  Female

8. Marital Status

Single  Married  Divorced  Widowed

9.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?

Yes  No

NOTE: If you answered "Yes" to Item Number 9.a., provide the information requested in Item Number 9.b.

9.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known)

▶

10. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? (You must also answer "Yes" to Item Number 11., Consent for Disclosure, to receive a card.)

Yes  No

NOTE: If you answered "No" to Item Number 10., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered "Yes" to Item Number 10., you must also answer "Yes" to Item Number 11.

11. Consent for Disclosure: I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.

Yes  No

NOTE: If you answered "Yes" to Item Numbers 10. - 11., provide the information requested in Item Numbers 12.a. - 13.b.

Father's Name

12.a. Family Name (Last Name)

12.b. Given Name (First Name)

Mother's Name (Provide your mother's birth name.)

13.a. Family Name (Last Name)

13.b. Given Name (First Name)

14. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or Form I-94 Number (if any)

15. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?

Yes (Complete the following questions.)

Which USCIS Office?	Dates
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)

No (Proceed to Item Number 16.)

16. Date of Your Last Arrival or Entry Into the U.S., On or About (mm/dd/yyyy)

17. Place of Your Last Arrival or Entry Into the U.S.

18. Status at Last Entry (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)

19. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.)

20. Eligibility Category. Go to the Who May File Form I-765? section of the Instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.

(  ) (  ) (  )

22. (c)(26) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(26) in Item Number 20. above, please provide the receipt number of your H-1B principal spouse's most recent Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-129.

23. (c)(35) and (c)(36) Eligibility Category

a. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) or (c)(36) in Item Number 20. above, please provide the receipt number of the Form I-140 beneficiary's Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-140.

b. Have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime?  Yes  No

NOTE: If you answered "Yes" to Item Number 23.b., refer to Item Number 5., Item H. or Item I. in the Who May File Form I-765 section of these Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.

#### Certification

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the Who May File Form I-765 section of the Instructions and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in Item Number 20.

Applicant's Signature

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

Telephone Number

Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Applicant

I declare that this document was prepared by me, at the request

## Guide to Selected Form I-765 Questions

Check the box marked “Permission to accept employment” above Question 1.

**Question 1.** Write your family name first, followed by your given name.

**Question 3.** You must write the address where you would like your EAD card mailed. If you are moving soon or have trouble receiving mail, you may use the Office of Global Education address. Use “106 Van Campen Hall” and write “OGE” in the (Apt. Number) field. Then type “Kent, OH 44242” in the appropriate fields.

**Question 5.** You must write the name of the city where you were born, followed by the state or province, if any, and lastly the name of your birth country.

**Question 9.** If you have an SSN card, select “yes” and fill in the number. Skip to question 14.

**Question 10.** If you would like to simultaneously apply for your SSN with your EAD, then select “yes” for **Question 10 AND Question 11**. Then fill in questions 12.a. – 13.b.



## **Guide to Selected Form I-765 Questions**

**Check the box marked “Permission to accept employment”  
above Question 1.**

- Question 14.** Fill in the number from you I-94.
- Question 15.** Select “no”
- Question 17.** This is the U.S. city where your plane first landed in the United States on your most recent arrival, even if you had another connecting flight afterward.
- If you drove across the U.S. border, list the U.S. port of entry.
- Question 18.** If you entered the U.S. in F-1 status, write “F1 Student.” If not, write the appropriate status in which you entered the country.
- Question 19.** If you entered the U.S. in F-1 status, write “Student.”
- Question 20.** (c)(3)(B)

Sign your name in the “Certification” area and type your telephone number and the date you completed the form.



## Communicating with ISSS While on OPT

If you become employed, change employers, or become unemployed, you must notify ISSS by completing the “OPT Employer Information Form” in the ISSS Forms Library.

The OPT Employer Information Form is here:

<http://www.kent.edu/globaleducation/opt-employer-information-form>

If you move to a different city or change your local address, you must update your information in FlashLine:

<http://www.kent.edu/globaleducation/how-update-addresses-flashline-2016>

Report any change in the above information within 10 days.



## **Thank you for completing the OPT Tutorial!**

If you are confused about any of the material presented, you may ask an international student and scholar advisor by emailing [iss@kent.edu](mailto:iss@kent.edu)

