

OPT Checklist

(Optional Practical Training)

Before submitting your OPT application, contact Becky Treece at 704 463- 3368. Your SEVIS record MUST be updated to show that you have requested OPT. You will receive a new I-20, and a copy MUST be included in your OPT application.

OPT applications are NOT approved by Pfeiffer's International Center, but must be mailed to the US Immigration Service in Mesquite, Texas. You may apply for OPT up to 90 days BEFORE the date of your last class or during your 60 day grace period. **YOUR APPLICATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE IMMIGRATION SERVICE NO LATER THAN THE 60TH DAY OF YOUR GRACE PERIOD.** Do not wait until the last minute to apply!

Documentation required for a complete application includes:

- 2 Copies of I-20 (new I-20 indicating OPT has been requested *and* all other I-20's *especially those indicating periods of CPT approval*)
- 2 Copies of I-94 (front and back)
- 2 Copies of visa
- 2 Copies of passport (page indicating expiration date)
- I-765 Form
 - To download form, go to: "<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>
 - Click on "Immigration Forms"
 - Select "Application for Employment" (I-765)
 - Make a note of the current application fee (it changes often)
 - Item 3: use the following address:
 - c/o B. Treece Pfeiffer U POB 960
Misenheimer NC 28109
- 2 passport photos
- Up-to-date unofficial Pfeiffer transcript
- Fee
 - check or money order
 - in the correct amount (not more – not less)
 - use today's date (they will not accept post-dated checks)
 - payable to Department of Homeland Security
 - write I-94 # on check/money order

Before mailing your application to the address below, ask the Post Office clerk to weigh the envelope to make sure you have attached enough stamps/postage.

US INS TSC
PO Box 851041
Mesquite TX 75185-1041

**** FOR OFFICE USE ****

Verify student is in legal status

Verify student will graduate or has graduated but not past 60th day of grace period

Verify that passport is valid

Verify reliability of student's phone number

Explain application deadline (can apply up to 90 days before last class as well as during 60 day grace period).
14 month window: 12 months of OPT must be completed during this period, but still get full 60 day grace period after OPT finished).

Explain that USCIS must receive application within 30 days of DSO's signature. Also, application **MUST** be received by USCIS by 60th day of grace period.

Explain how OPT is to be used

Explain that students must report any changes in their employer, address, or name

Explain that students must report their employer's name and address, and any periods of unemployment while on OPT.

If student does NOT have a job: In SEVIS, in Remarks type: "How is the position is related to major" type: "Student Y is seeking a job as a xxxxxx to gain experience for her medical degree."

If student has been offered and has employer information: In SEVIS Remarks, type: "Student X will be working as an xxxxx to gain experience for his business degree."

Shorten program in SEVIS if necessary

Write I-765 on envelope

I-765: Code is (c)(3)(B)

Photos: write name and I-94 # on back

Tell student to have postmaster weigh the envelope to ensure proper postage is applied

Tell students if they are having trouble finding a job, or lose an OPT job, they must dedicate their full effort to looking for a job, and keep documentation that can demonstrate the job search. Also, accumulating 90 days of unemployment will put them out-of-status.

Discuss travel restrictions:

- Before EAD is issued students can reenter the U.S. to resume looking for a job
- After EAD is issued, students can only reenter the U.S. to resume employment
 - If OPT has been approved and students depart before getting a job, their OPT ends and they cannot reenter unless they have a written job offer.

OPT Extension: 17 months of additional OPT if degree and job is in: CIS, ENGR, MATH, Sciences (Tech, Physical, Medical, Biological); Employer must be enrolled in E-Verify.

**** IMPORTANT ****

Beginning on April 8, 2008, students who accumulate 90 days of unemployment will be considered out-of-status. Unemployment is defined as each day that students are not working at least 20 hours a week in jobs that are related to their degree programs.

The following types of employment situations are appropriate:

- Working part-time (at least 20 hours per week) or full-time.
- Working for more than one employer (all employment must be related to the degree program)
- Starting a business and being self-employed (part-time work not permitted--must be full-time)
- Using an employment agency (must be able to provide evidence showing at least 20 hours of work per week)
- Working in an unpaid position as a volunteer as long as it does not violate any labor laws (must be able to provide evidence showing at least 20 hours of work per week)
- Working for hire. In this situation, students perform a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. Students must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods and the name and address of the contracting company.

Students are urged to maintain evidence--for each job--of the position held, proof of the duration of that position, the job title, contact information for the student's supervisor or manager, and a description of the work.

Any changes in employment MUST be reported within 10 days to the International Office so that your SEVIS (immigration) record can be updated. This can be done by email. Remember, if we don't let USCIS know that you are working, SEVIS will automatically terminate your record after 90 days and you will be out-of-status.

Please use the following guidelines when reporting employment or changes in employment:

NEW JOB: Report name of employer, *start date of employment*, and mailing address for the employer

CHANGING TO ANOTHER JOB: Report name of the previous employer, *ending date of the previous employment*, name of the new employer, *start date of new employment*, and mailing address for the new employer.

WORK FOR HIRE: Report "self-employed work for hire and *start date of contract*

MORE THAN 10 DAYS OF EMPLOYMENT: Report "unemployed" and the *ending date of last job*

LEAVING US BEFORE OPT ENDS: Report "Completing OPT and exiting the US"; *include the exit date*