Post-Completion OPT

Post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) is employment authorized to begin after a student's successful completion of studies and program end date.

General guidelines

- A student must be in lawful F-1 student status at the time of application
- A student must have been enrolled in a full course of study for at least one academic year/ or will have met this requirement by the time the post-completion OPT is requested to commence
- A student must have not engaged in more than 12 months of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) during the current degree level
- A student must not have been previously authorized for 12 months of OPT at the current degree level
- A student does not need to have a pending job offer letter to apply for post-completion OPT
- Employment may not begin until the OPT application has been approved by USCIS and the student has received his or her Employment Authorization Document (EAD card)
- The recommended employment start date must be after the student’s official program end date (usually commencement) and no later than the end of his or her 60 day grace period
- Employment must be within the student's field of study
- Students must work at least 20 hours per week on OPT in order to maintain F-1 status
- Students may have no more than 90 days of unemployment during the 12 month period for which OPT is authorized
- Students may hold multiple jobs on OPT, simultaneously if desired, as long as all employment held is within the student's field of study
- OPT employment may be paid or unpaid
- Note that on average it takes USCIS between 2 – 3 months to approve an OPT application and mail a student the EAD card.

Post-completion OPT timing considerations
Students may apply up to 90 days before their anticipated program end date and up to 60 days after their program end date. For most students, the program end date is defined as Ohio State's official commencement date - [University Calendar](#).

However, there are exceptions:

- **End of Semester Option (Graduate Students Only):** For immigration purposes, students participating in the university recognized "end of semester graduation" will have an official program end date reflecting the end of semester deadline established by the Graduate School.

- **Graduate students who have completed all coursework and anticipate completing their degree in one academic year, may apply for post-completion OPT prior to their commencement date.** These students may use as an end date the commencement date for any term after they are post-candidacy.

- **Graduate students may elect to use their thesis or dissertation defense date as the program end date.** To do so, students must submit a letter on departmental letterhead written by the academic advisor or department chair, confirming the defense date. This option is beneficial for students who have a job offer to begin prior to commencement.

- **May Session: Students who are completing all requirements for graduation in the May Session, will not be enrolling for any credits hours in the remainder of Summer Session, may use the May Session end date as the program end date when applying for OPT.** However, students in this situation may also choose to use the regular Summer Session commencement date as the program end date.

The post-completion OPT application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the Immigration Coordinator's signature on the properly endorsed Form I-20.

Travel warning: A student may not leave the U.S. after the program completion date has passed (after commencement) and re-enter to apply for post-completion OPT, even if the student is within his or her 60-day grace period.

**Students interested in applying for post-completion OPT, should do the following**

1. Attend an [OPT Workshop](#)
2. Obtain and complete the [Application Form – Post-Completion OPT](#)
3. Return completed application form and supporting documentation to us for review during our posted walk-in advising hours.
4. Obtain an updated Form I-20 endorsed for post-completion OPT
5. Sign the updated Form I-20 (Number 11,) prior to making the photocopy to be included in your application packet
6. Mail the completed application packet to USCIS within 30 days of the Form I-20 issuance date. Failure to do so will result in denial of the application.

**Student responsibilities while on post-completion OPT**

During the application process:

- Students must continue to meet all reporting requirements
  - Report to their DSO within 10 days of:
    - Legal name changes
    - A change in residential or mailing address (update the "current" address field through Buckeyelink)
- After the post-completion period has begun:
  - Students must provide us with a copy of his or her Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card
  - Students must report the following details regarding any and all employment held while on OPT:
    - Name of employer
    - Street address of employment
    - Employment start date
    - Changes in employer, including the new employer, address and start date
  - Loss of employment and unemployment: Students on post-completion OPT may accrue up to no more than 90 days of unemployment within the dates of the authorization, shown on the Employment Authorization Document (EAD). If a student exceeds the 90 day unemployment limit, he/she is no longer considered to be in maintenance of F-1 status.
  - Time spent outside the United States during post-completion OPT does count against the limit on unemployment, unless the student is employed and in an authorized period of leave from the employer, or if the student is traveling for his/her job.
  - Please keep in mind that when a student is approved by USCIS for post-completion OPT, the EAD is issued for the entire post-completion OPT period (typically equal to 12 months), not just for 90 days.

Please contact an immigration coordinator at iss@osu.edu to report any of the above-mentioned required information.

**Links**
Office of International Affairs – Post-completion OPT

- Application Form – Post-Completion OPT (c) (3) (B)
- Form I-765
- OPT Application Materials