

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Information Packet

GENERAL INFORMATION

- F-1 students who have been **full-time students in valid non-immigrant status** for one academic year are eligible for OPT.
- **Optional Practical Training** is: “temporary employment in a student’s field of study for purposes of gaining practical experience.”
- Students are allowed only twelve (12) months for full-time practical training for each degree level pursued.
- Students may only apply for OPT in their major area of study.
- Students may only begin their OPT employment after receiving an approval from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), in the form of an ID card, officially called an “EAD.”
- For comprehensive information on OPT, please visit: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/practical-training>

TWO COMMON TYPES OF OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

- **Pre-Completion:** While school is in session, provided that practical training does not exceed twenty (20) hours a week. (This will deplete your full-time benefit, however. Speak with the International Advisor for more information).
- **Post-Completion:** After completion of your course of study (**full-time only**).

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT POST-COMPLETION OPT

This type of practical training should be applied for **BEFORE** the completion of the course of study, but you can apply for it up to 60 days after you graduate. OPT must be full-time only for this option. Since the processing of this application by USCIS may take 90 days or longer, students are advised to apply well in advance of their proposed starting date.

OPT START DATE

F-1 students who have completed their course of study and who are not planning to continue with further studies in the next regular semester are **NOT** allowed to work during the 60-day grace period following their completion without authorization. If their OPT is to begin during this grace period, the student may only begin that OPT employment after receiving their EAD (Employment Authorization Document).

Remember that all F-1 students, regardless of the kind of OPT for which they are applying, are only allowed to begin OPT after receiving an EAD.

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LENGTH OF USCIS OPT APPLICATION REVIEW

The review by USCIS can take up to 90 days. You should receive your EAD at the address that you provide on form I-765.

After USCIS receives your application, USCIS will provide you with an appointment letter with the location of the nearest USCIS authorized fingerprint site. Please read the instructions in the appointment letter, and take it to USCIS authorized fingerprint site when you go to your fingerprint appointment.

TRAVEL DURING OPT

F-1 students are encouraged to consult with the Cairn International Student Advisor regarding travel issues. USCIS regulations require that F-1 students wishing to travel outside of the U. S. and then reenter to continue employment must:

- Present their most recent SEVIS I-20 endorsed for travel by the Cairn International Student Advisor with a valid signature, valid passport, and a valid F-1 Visa.
- Present a valid EAD.
- Present proof that they are returning to the U.S. to resume employment, such as a letter from your employer. This means that Immigration may turn back individuals attempting to reenter the U.S. if they have not yet located an OPT employer and have not yet begun their employment.

CHANGE OF EMPLOYER OR ADDRESS

If you change your address or employer while using OPT you must let the International Office know immediately. Report your new address to the International Office so that it can be updated in SEVIS.

For comprehensive information on OPT, please visit: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/practical-training>

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OPT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Instructions: Follow the directions below. Only check off the items when you have followed the directions fully. When all items are complete, bring all prepared items to the International Office. Contact the International Office if you need assistance or have questions.

Step 1: Cairn OPT Forms and Related Information

- Complete Cairn **OPT Form A - Optional Practical Training Student Request Form**.
 - Write your name and Cairn ID number on Cairn **OPT Form B**.
 - Take Cairn **OPT Form B** to the Cairn Registrar's Office. Ask the Registrar when you should come to pick up the completed form.
 - Pick up the completed Cairn **OPT Form B** (with information provided by the Registrar's Office, including Graduation Audit and Progress Report).
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STEP 2: Form I-765 and Related Information

- Complete **Form I-765**.
 - fill in all pertinent information (if unsure of something, ask International Advisor)
 - in item #16 on the form indicate the appropriate code:
 - Post-Completion (c)(3)(B)**
 - Pre-Completion (c)(3)(A)**
 - in item #16 on the form next to the code, type the eligibility category: **F-1 Optional Practical Training**
- Get a \$410 US check or money order, available for purchase at local post office, payable to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**.
- Make copies of *all* previously-issued **Forms I-20** you have received.
- Bring your **current SEVIS Form I-20**.
- Make a copy of your **I-94 card** (front and back), or print online at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>.
- Make a copy of the last **EAD**, if applicable.
- Make a copy of the **identification page(s) and visas** in your passport.
- Bring two (2) "passport style" **photos** (taken within the last 30 days). Write your name and A# (Admissions #, from I-94) on the back of each photo. **Lightly print** the information with a pen.

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Form A

OPT FORM A - OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING STUDENT REQUEST FORM

I certify that I am in F-1 status and have attended school full-time for at least nine months and am requesting authorization for optional practical training employment (OPT) that is directly related to my major and commensurate or consistent with my educational level.

I am applying to be approved for the OPT option listed below:

- Pre-Completion:** While school is in session, provided that practical training does not exceed twenty (20) hours a week. (This will deplete your full-time benefit, however. Speak with the International Advisor for more information).
- Post-Completion:** After completion of your course of study (**full-time only**).

NOTE: You may not exceed a total of 12 months of OPT for each degree level (Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctorate). *Full-time* curricular practical training in excess of one year eliminates one-year OPT for each degree level. Previous *part-time* curricular practical training does not affect OPT.

I am graduating in: _____, _____.
MONTH YEAR

I am applying for _____ optional practical training in _____
FULL-TIME/PART-TIME YOUR DEGREE PROGRAM

for _____ months, beginning on _____ / _____ / _____ and ending on _____ / _____ / _____.
NUMBER MM DD YY MM DD YY

By my signature I am certifying that I have fully read and understood the Cairn Optional Practical Training Information Packet and have provided accurate information above and in the forms provided.

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Name of Student (Please Print): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Fax: _____

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Form B

OPT FORM B

To: The Registrar's Office
From: Cairn International Student Advisor
RE: International Student Application for Optional Practical Training

In order for an international student to apply for Optional Practical Training (defined as a period of up to 12 months in which the student is authorized to work in the U.S. at a job directly related to his/her major), the following information is needed from the Registrar's Office.

Name of Student: _____ **Student ID #:** _____

The current academic status of the student:

Has the student been enrolled full-time during the past academic year (9 months of study) at Cairn?

(please attach a progress report for both "yes" and "no" answers)

Yes

No (if no, please explain why)

Will the student have completed all requirements for the degree by the end of this semester? (please attach a graduation audit for both "yes" and "no" answers)

Yes

No (if no, please explain why)

The expected date of completion of studies. (This is not graduation, but rather the last day of work for all classes. This could be the day of the last final or of the last deadline for papers, projects, etc.)

Date: _____

Explanation: _____

Signature of Registrar: _____

Name (Please Print): _____

Title: _____ Date: _____