



East Central University

Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What is Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

- Pre-Completion OPT is temporary employment available to F-1 students prior to completion of the course of study (i.e. prior to the program end date on the I-20).
- The employment must be directly related to the student's field of study and commensurate with the student's education level.
- A student may be eligible for up to 12 months of OPT per degree level. Therefore, time in Pre-OPT is deducted from Post-OPT. Example: If a student is approved for 3 months of Pre-OPT, they will have 9 months remaining under Post-OPT.
- A student will become eligible for another 12 months of OPT when he/she completes a higher educational level. A student must receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card from the USCIS Service Center and the start date on the EAD card must arrive before they may begin their OPT employment.
- Students on Pre-OPT are no longer eligible for on-campus employment until the Pre-OPT approval ends.

Who is eligible to apply for Pre-Completion OPT?

- An F-1 student who has completed full-time enrollment for at least one Fall and one Spring semester or who is within 90 days of doing so.
- A student who still has coursework remaining to complete his/her educational objective or degree program is limited to 20 hours per week of Pre-Completion OPT during the Fall and Spring semesters.
- All students may apply for full-time Pre-Completion during annual vacation (summer) and other official breaks.
- Students may apply up to 120 days prior to their requested Pre-Completion OPT start date as long as they are within 90 days of attaining a complete academic year of full-time enrollment or they have already attained it.
- Students who work full-time for 12+ months on Curricular Practical Training (CPT) are not eligible for OPT.

How does Pre-Completion OPT differ from Post-Completion OPT?

- Pre-Completion OPT occurs before the I-20 program end date.
- Days of unemployment do not accrue during Pre-Completion OPT.
- A student may not be able to work full-time (see the section above).
- If a student does not graduate by their I-20 program end date, they may request an F-1 Extension of Stay.
- Students are **not** eligible to apply for the 17-month extension of OPT.
- Students are **not** eligible for the H-1B CAP GAP fix.

How do I apply for Pre-Completion OPT?

1. Speak with the International Student Services Office to discuss your intention to pursue OPT. After this discussion, an OPT administration fee of \$100 will be placed on your account. This fee will need to be paid and any past balance owed to the University will also need to be paid before you will be permitted to move forward with the OPT process.

2. **Obtain Int'l Office Recommendation**

To receive the new Pre-OPT I-20, submit the following to the Int'l Office:

- F-1 Pre-Completion OPT Agreement Form

3. **Mail the OPT Pre-Completion Application**

Once the Int'l Office recommendation is on the new I-20, the student must mail a complete application to the appropriate USCIS Service Center. The application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the new I-20 issuance. USCIS will review the Pre-Completion OPT application (this can take several months). If the application is approved, USCIS will issue an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

The following documents must be sent to the USCIS Service Center:

- New I-20 showing Pre-OPT recommendation on page 2
- i-765 form (see last page)
- Photocopies of the passport, visa, I-94 and most recently issued I-20 for the student and any F-2 dependents
- MONEY ORDER for filing the I-765 [filing fee](#) payable to "*U.S. Department of Homeland Security*"
- 2 identical immigration color style passport photographs: (can be obtained at Walgreens)
 - Using a non-smearing pen or pencil, write on the back of BOTH photos your:
 - first and last name, date of birth, and I-94 number

Where can I get more information about OPT?

- Visit the following website at www.uscis.gov to track OPT application. For more information about OPT policies visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/practical-training/>. Once your OPT has been approved by USCIS, you'll be contacted by SEVP to create your [SEVP Portal](#) account. More information about the SEVP Portal can be found here <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help>. (Note: Make sure the Int'l Office has your correct e-mail address on your SEVIS record.)

Where do I mail my OPT documents?

- If you choose to file online, then it's as simple as uploading your documents to your USCIS account. However, if you file via snail mail, check the [USCIS Direct Filing Address](#) webpage for the most current postal location.

DO NOT MAIL THIS WITH YOUR OPT APPLICATION



International Student Services Office
1100 E 14th St, PMB E-1, Ada, OK 74820
Phone: 580-559-5669 Fax: 580-559-5755

East Central University *Pre-Completion OPT Agreement Statement*

Purpose of Form: This form must be completed by all F-1 students applying for Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). *Note: Student's on Pre-OPT are not allowed to work on campus until Pre-OPT ends.*

Deadlines: The application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of receiving the new Pre-OPT I-20.

To be completed by Student

All students must read and sign the Student Responsibility Statement on the reserve side of this form. All students should review the materials for Pre-Completion OPT before applying. **Note: For most students, Post-Completion OPT is a much better option.**

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

ECU ID#: _____ Cell#: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Degree Level: _____ Major: _____

Anticipated Date of Completion of Degree Requirements: _____

Requested PRE-OPT Start Date: _____ Requested OPT End Date: _____

Full-Time (Over 20 hours per week) OR, Part-Time (20 hours per week or less)

All students must read and sign the Student Responsibility Statement.

Student Responsibility Statement

By signing this form, I certify that the information provided is true and accurate; I understand the rules and regulations concerning my engagement in Pre-OPT and agree to all required conditions.

Responsibilities:

- I understand that my address must be updated within 10 days of moving.
- I understand that I am required to report any changes of employer name, address, or interruption of employment through within 10 days of the change.
- I understand that if my immigration status changes, I am required to send ISPS copies of my new documents within 10 days.
- I understand that I must provide ISPS with a legible copy of the EAD card when I receive it.
- I understand that failure to comply could result in loss of my non-immigrant status and that if this occurs.
- I understand that I may not work on-campus once my EAD card is valid and the start date on the EAD has arrived, even if I have yet to find OPT employment.
- I understand that the last day I will be eligible for on-campus employment will be the day before my requested Pre-OPT start date even if I have yet to find OPT employment. I may be eligible to resume on campus employment following completion of my Pre-OPT authorization period.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to properly file my application within 30 days of receiving the new I-20.
- I understand that Pre-OPT will be terminated if I transfer to another school or begin study at another educational level.
- I understand that I must seek employment directly related to my major and it must commensurate with my education level.
- I understand that if I decide to travel while on Pre-OPT I must have a valid I-20 signed by a DSO within one year prior to reentering the U.S., an unexpired EAD, a valid passport, a valid employment letter, and a valid F-1 visa stamp to be readmitted to the U.S. The employment letter should contain salary information, a statement that the employment is temporary, and verification that I will be employed after returning from travel.
- I understand that once the Pre-OPT application has been sent to SEVP, it may not be possible to cancel or edit it.
- I understand that it is not recommended that I withdraw my i-765 application at any time during OPT without first consulting with an ISPS advisor, because doing so could negatively affect my non-immigrant status.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to stay informed about changing regulations that may impact my OPT and F-1 status.
- I understand that if I am currently employed as a graduate assistant, it is my responsibility to discuss the financial consequences of ending this assistantship with my on-campus employing department.

Signature: _____ Date: _____