

# 12 Month Initial Optional Practical Training Tutorial

Congratulations on graduating from UC Santa Barbara!

# What is the Initial 12 Month OPT?

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- Authorization given by USCIS to work up to 12 months in a field directly related to your degree
- Employment must be full-time (at least 20 hours per week).
- Employment must be commensurate with degree level.
  - For example, if you received a Master's degree, then you should apply for a job where a Master's degree is strongly desired.
- During OPT, you are still an F-1 student and your status is monitored by OISS.

# Am I Eligible to Apply?

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- Must be in valid F-1 status at the time of application
- Completed 1 full academic year (3 consecutive quarters at UCSB)
- Have not been approved for OPT before at your current education level
  - For example, if you've already done OPT after completing a Bachelor's degree, you cannot apply for OPT again if you complete another Bachelor's degree. You would be able to apply for OPT after completing a Master's or Doctorate's degree.
- Have not completed one year (365 days) of full time Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

# Timeline

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- Allowed to apply 90 days before the end of your program
- It takes 10 business days for OISS to process your application
- On average, USCIS takes 90-120 days to review and approve your application. OISS cannot request expedited review of your application.
  - It is possible that it will take USCIS less than or more than 90-120 days to approve your OPT application.
- OPT start date must fall within the 60 day grace period following completion of program.

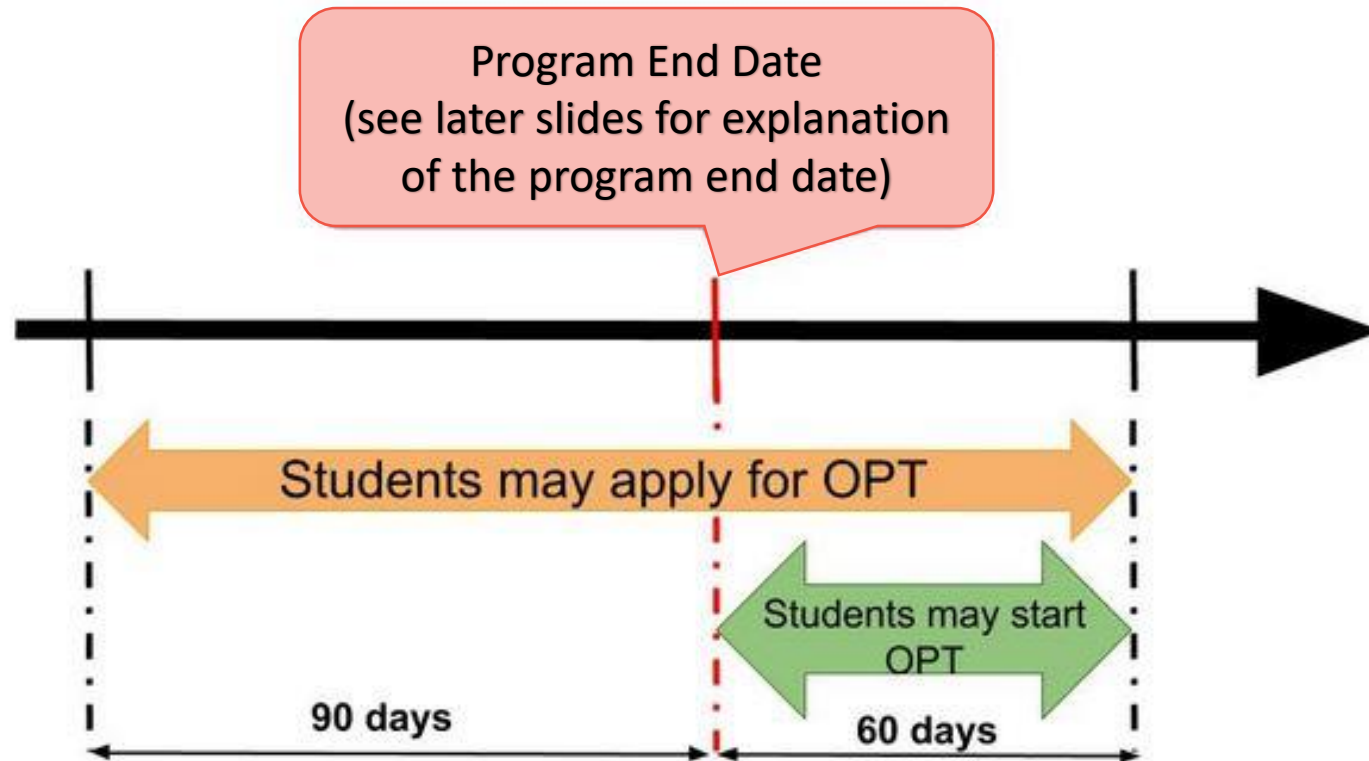
# Timeline

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- It is best to apply for OPT early, rather than waiting until your 60 day grace period has expired, in case there are any issues with your application.
- NOTE: If you leave the U.S. during your 60 day grace period and have not applied for OPT, you are NOT eligible to apply for OPT and cannot return to the U.S. in F-1 status.
- After successful completion of OPT, you receive a 60 day grace period.

# Timeline

## OPT Application Timeline



# How do I Apply For OPT with OISS?

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Submit an Optional Practical Training (OPT) Request through [UCSBGlobal](#). You will be asked to upload the following documents:

- Most recent I-94
  - <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>
- OISS Processing Fee Receipt
  - [http://oiss.sa.ucsb.edu/payment/OPT/OPT\\_Payment](http://oiss.sa.ucsb.edu/payment/OPT/OPT_Payment)

# UCSBGlobal: OPT Request

Things to keep in mind



# Requested OPT Start Date: Undergraduate Student

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- Your proposed OPT start date should be within 60 days of your program end date.
- Your program end date can be considered your expected graduation date, which is the last day of the quarter. For example, if you are graduating after Spring quarter, your program end date may be June 11<sup>th</sup>. So, your OPT start date should be within 60 days of this date.
- Your I-20's program end date will be updated to match your actual program end date.
- You cannot be employed on or off campus beyond your program end date until after your OPT authorization has been approved and you have received your EAD card.

# Requested OPT Start Date: Graduate Student

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- Your proposed OPT start date should be within 60 days of your program end date.
- As a graduate student, your program end date is very flexible. For example, the following options are acceptable:
  - Date of defense or final exam
  - Quarter end date
  - Any date within the quarter that you are registered to graduate
- Your chosen program end date does not have to match your date of defense, comprehensive exam date, or filing date.
- Your I-20's program end date will be updated to match your chosen program end date.
- **You cannot be employed on or off campus beyond your program end date that we are shortening your I-20 to until after your OPT authorization has been approved and you have received your EAD card and your OPT start date has arrived.**

# Other Than OISS, Who Must Approve My OPT Request?

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- In UCSBGlobal, you will be asked to indicate a “second approver” who will verify your expected program end date and ability to graduate. They will receive an email from OISS requesting their approval for your OPT Request.

## **Undergraduate Student**

- Must be approved by an advisor in the College of Letters and Science, Engineering, or Creative Studies.
- In UCSBGlobal, you will be able to select your college and enter their email address.
- The academic advisor will be asked to verify your expected program end date and that you have fulfilled all your formal degree requirements.

# Other Than OISS, Who Must Approve My OPT Request?

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- In UCSBGlobal, you will be asked to indicate a “second approver” who will verify your expected program end date and ability to graduate. They will receive an email from OISS requesting their approval for your OPT Request.

## Graduate Student

- Must be approved by a graduate student advisor, faculty member, or faculty advisor.
- In your UCSBGlobal request, you will be able to enter their email address.
- Your graduate advisor will be asked to verify your expected program end date. They are verifying that you have fulfilled all your formal degree requirements for your degree milestone except:
  - Final Examination and/or filing of doctoral dissertation or DMA supporting documents (all research and substantial draft must be completed) OR
  - Final Examination and/or filing of master's thesis (all research and substantial draft must be completed) OR master's comprehensive exam or project

# After Submitting the OPT Request in UCSBGlobal

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- An OISS advisor will review all your information and documents for accuracy. Your advisor will contact you if any corrections need to be made. You'll be able to submit the corrections through UCSBGlobal.
- Once your OPT Request has been approved, you will be provided with an updated I-20 with your OPT recommended dates on Page 2. You'll submit a copy of this new I-20, along with additional documents (listed later in this tutorial), to USCIS.
- **You must apply to USCIS within 30 days of the issue date printed on page 1 of your OPT I-20. Failure to do so will result in a denial of your OPT application.**

# Form I-765

How do I fill it in?

# Note About the Form I-765

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Please note that the guidance provided within this tutorial is an interpretation of the instructions published within the USCIS Instructions for Form I-765. The information provided in this tutorial is a supplement that we have created to answer any questions that may arise while completing the Form I-765. We urge all students to also review the guidance provided by USCIS: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>.

# The Online I-765

- OISS strongly recommends all students use the online filing for the I-765. The following information is provided as a guide to fill out the I-765. The online form through USCIS will walk you through the information you need to provide. This should only be started once you know you are ready to submit your online application through the USCIS website.
- You **MUST** have an I-20 with the OPT notation on page 2 from OISS **BEFORE** starting the online application through USCIS.
- If you prefer to mail your application rather than submit it online, please contact your OISS advisor for further assistance.
- Please look for the File Online button about halfway down this page: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
- You may need to create a USCIS Online Account before being able to submit your application
- The application will walk you through the process and indicate the documents you need to submit. This tutorial may include more documents than are required. Please only submit what USCIS asks you to submit in your online application.

Use the regulations and guidance currently in place to separate applications and petitions. This includes accepting and adjudicating fee waiver requests as provided under Adjudicator's Field Manual (AFM) Chapters [10.9 \(PDF, 2.86 MB\)](#) and [10.10 \(PDF, 2.86 MB\)](#).

For more information, please refer to the [Federal Register Notice](#), dated Jan. 29, 2021.

**Alert:** USCIS is implementing the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland's Sept. 11 preliminary injunction in Casa de Maryland Inc. et. al. v. Chad Wolf et. al.


This preliminary injunction provides limited injunctive relief to members of two organizations, CASA de Maryland (CASA) and the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP), in the application of the [Removal of 30-day Processing Provision for Asylum Applicant-Related Form I-765 Employment Authorization Applications Rule](#) and the [Asylum Application, Interview, and Employment Authorization for Applicants Rule](#) to Form I-589s and Form I-765s filed by asylum applicants who are also members of CASA or ASAP.

Please see the section on our [Form I-765](#) webpage, Preliminary Injunction Impacting CASA and ASAP members.

**Alert:** Applicants for Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Long-Term Resident Status: You must submit Form I-955 with your Form I-765. You may only apply for CNMI long-term resident status until Aug. 17, 2020.

[File Online](#)

Certain aliens who are in the United States may file Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, to request employment authorization and an [Employment Authorization Document](#) (EAD). Other aliens whose immigration status authorizes them to work in the United States without restrictions may also use Form I-765 to apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for an EAD that shows such authorization.

Update: Preliminary Injunction Impacting CASA and ASAP Members 


What This Form Can Help You Do

[Applying for an Employment Authorization Document](#)



# The Online I-765

Official website of the Department of Homeland Security [Here's how you know](#)

 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account ▾ Resources ▾ Sign Out

## I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

**Getting Started** ^

- Basis of eligibility
  - Reason for applying
  - Preparer and interpreter information
- About You ▾
- Evidence ▾
- Additional Information ▾
- Review and Submit ▾

What is your eligibility category?

**⚠** You can file your request online only for certain eligibility categories

If your eligibility category does not appear on the drop-down list, you must file a paper [Form I-765](#). If you submit online and are not eligible for one of the listed categories, your application may be denied.

c(3)(A) Student Pre-Completion OPT  
**c(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT**  
c(3)(C) STEM Extension

Make sure to select the C(3)(B) eligibility category!

# Important Information About Mailing Address

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It is important to note that the mailing address you indicate on this application is where all your important documents will be mailed. This includes your Employment Authorization Document (EAD Card) and Social Security Card (if you chose to receive one). If you are using your current mailing address, please make sure that you are staying in that home for at least 6 months after submitting your application to USCIS.

If you are using a friend or family member's mailing address, you will want a trusted individual who will look out for your important mail! They should write your name on a card taped to the inside of the mailbox so the mail carrier sees you can receive mail at their home.

Not sure about your future mailing address? You may want to look at a Post Office (PO) Box. For example, you can reserve a PO Box through USPS: <https://www.usps.com/manage/po-boxes.htm>

# Previous CPT or OPT authorizations

Official website of the Department of Homeland Security [Here's how you know](#)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account Resources Sign Out

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started

About You

**Evidence**

- 2 x 2 photo of you
- Form I-94
- Employment Authorization Document
- Previously authorized CPT or OPT**
- Form I-20

Additional Information

Review and Submit

### Previously Authorized CPT Or OPT

Upload evidence of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.

#### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

[Choose](#) or drop files here to upload

[Back](#) [Next](#)

Only upload I-20's that have CPT authorizations while you were at UCSB. As well as any previous OPT authorizations. Please be sure to upload pages 1 and 2 of your I-20's.

# Current UCSB OPT I-20

The screenshot shows the USCIS website interface for an I-765 application. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with the following items: "Getting Started", "About You", "Evidence" (expanded), "Additional Information", and "Review and Submit". Under "Evidence", the following items are listed: "2 x 2 photo of you", "Form I-94", "Employment Authorization Document", "Previously authorized CPT or OPT", and "Form I-20" (which is highlighted in blue). The main content area is titled "I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status" and includes the following text: "Upload a copy of the Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status endorsed by the Designated School Official (DSO). For the (c)(3)(B) eligibility category, your DSO must have entered the recommendation for OPT into your SEVIS record within 30 days of you submitting Form I-765. If you fail to do so, we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765." Below this text are "File requirements" listed as: "Clear and readable", "Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF", "No encrypted or password-protected files", "If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.", "Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses", and "Maximum size: 6MB per file". A dashed box contains the text "Choose or drop files here to upload". At the bottom of the page are two buttons: "Back" and "Next".

This is where you will upload your OPT I-20 issued by an OISS advisor AFTER you submitted your OPT request in UCSBGlobal

You must see an OPT recommendation on page 2 of the I-20 in order to apply for OPT

# Social Security Number

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Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?

- Yes  
 No

Back

Next

Only select yes if you have never been issued a Social Security Number (SSN) in the United States.

If you were ever issued an SSN, you do not need to apply for a new one. The SSN is yours for life.

# What Should I Upload to USCIS:

Preparing your OPT Application

# What Should Your Online Application to USCIS Include?

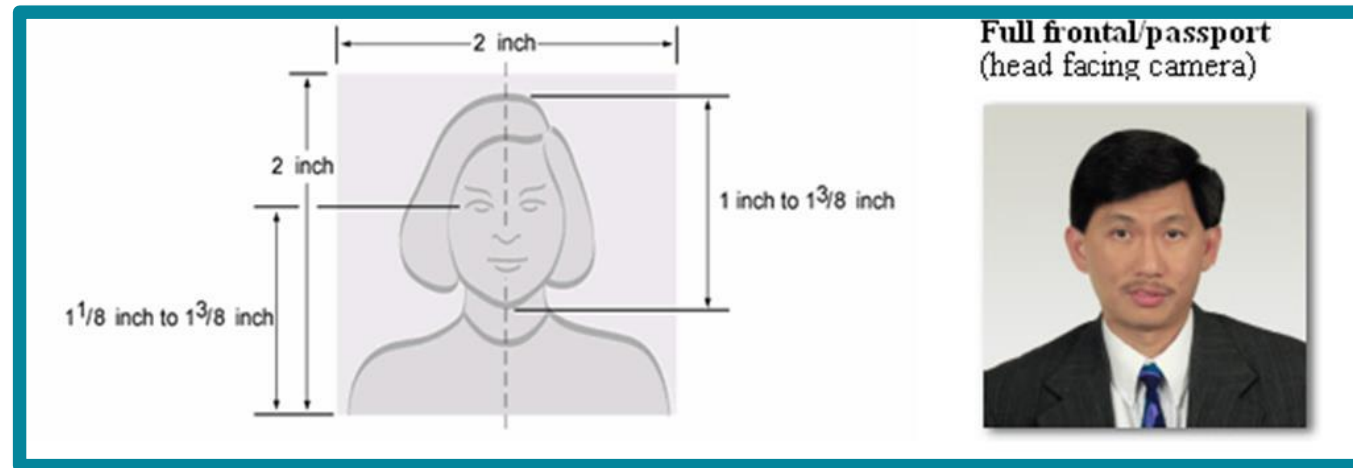
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When You Are Completing Your Online Application, Please Have Ready:

- OPT I-20 issued by an OISS advisor (you must see the OPT recommendation on page 2 of your OPT I-20)
- 2 Passport Size Photos
- A scan of your passport biography page
- I-94 record
- Scans of previous UCSB I-20's that have Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorizations
- A United States issued credit card

# U.S. Style Passport Photographs

- Two identical passport photographs
- Meet [U.S. standards](#) (2 inches x 2 inches)
- Photo of applicant only
- Taken within 30 days of application – do not use old photos!
- May not wear glasses in the photo





## Acceptable Photos



## Not Acceptable Photos



# **After Submitting Your OPT Application to USCIS**

What Should I Do?

# While Waiting for OPT EAD Approval

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- Patience is your best friend!
- You are still in F-1 student status.
- You are allowed (and strongly recommended) to stay in the United States while your OPT application is pending.
- It may take 90 – 120 days for USCIS to approve your EAD.
- You cannot work while you wait for approval; you are on a forced vacation!
- If your expected program completion date is delayed, you may lose time authorized for OPT. Please see OISS immediately if your graduation will be delayed!

# While Waiting for OPT EAD Approval

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- You can login to your USCIS online account to see any pertinent updates. You will also receive physical mail from USCIS so please make sure you are receiving the notices. If you do not receive physical mail, please contact USCIS to ensure your mailing address is correct.

# After Receiving the I-797 Receipt Notice by Mail

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- You will be mailed a receipt notice within 10 days after your application has been accepted by USCIS.
- The I-797 confirms that USCIS has officially received your OPT application. Keep a copy of this receipt notice.
- The I-797 will contain a receipt number that you may use to check the status of your application at <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>
- USCIS will also notify you via email after they receive your application
- Verify that name and mailing address are printed 100% correctly on receipt notice. If you notice an error, contact OISS for advice.

# I-797 Receipt Notice

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

I-797, Notice of Action

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**THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

RECEIPT NUMBER WDC-08-105- [REDACTED]	PRIORITY DATE	CASE TYPE I765 APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION
RECEIVED DATE March 3, 2008	APPLICANT [REDACTED]	
NOTICE DATE March 4, 2008	PAGE 1 of 1	

8540 COSTA VERDE BLVD [REDACTED]  
SAN DIEGO CA 92122

Notice Type: Receipt Notice  
Amount received: \$ 340.00  
Class requested: C031

**Receipt Notice.** This notice confirms that USCIS received your application or petition ("this case") as shown above. If any of the above information is incorrect, please immediately call 800-375-5283 to let us know. This will help avoid future problems.

This notice does not grant any immigration status or benefit. It is not even evidence that this case is still pending. It only shows that the application or petition was filed on the date shown.

**Processing time.** Processing times vary by kind of case. You can check our website at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) for our current "processing times" for this kind of case at the particular office to which this case is or becomes assigned. On our website "case status online" page, you can also view status or sign up to receive free e-mail updates as we complete key processing steps on this case. During most of the time this case is pending, however, our systems will show only that the case has been received, and the processing status will not have changed, because we will be working on other cases that were filed earlier than this one. We will notify you by mail, and show in our systems, when we make a decision on this case or if we need something from you. If you do not receive an initial decision or update from us within our current processing time, check our website or call 800-375-5283. Please save this notice, and any other notice we send you about this case, and please make and keep a copy of any papers you send us by any means, along with any proof of delivery to us. Please have all these papers with you if you contact us about this case.


**If this case is an I-130 Petition.** Filing and approval of a Form I-130, petition for Alien Relative, is only the first step in helping a relative immigrate to the United States. The beneficiaries of a petition must wait until a visa number is available before they can take the next step to apply for an immigrant visa or adjustment of status to lawful permanent residence. To best allocate resources, USCIS may wait to process forms I-130 until closer to the time when a visa number will become available, which may be years after the petition was filed. Nevertheless, USCIS processes forms I-130 in time not to delay relatives ability to take the next step toward permanent residence once a visa number does become available. If, before final action on the petition, you decide to withdraw your petition, your family relationship with the beneficiary ends, or you become a U.S. citizen, call 800-375-5283.

**Applications requiring biometrics.** In some types of cases USCIS requires biometrics. In such cases, USCIS will send you a SEPARATE appointment notice with a specific date, time and place for you to go to a USCIS Application Support Center (ASC) for biometric processing. You must WAIT for that separate appointment notice and take it (NOT this receipt notice) to your ASC appointment along with your photo identification. Acceptable kinds of photo identification are: a passport or national photo identification issued by your country, a drivers license, a military photo identification, or a state-issued photo identification card. If you receive more than one ASC appointment notice, even for different cases, take them both to the first appointment.

**If your address changes.** If your mailing address changes while your case is pending, call 800-375-5283 or use the "Online Change of Address" function on our website. Otherwise, you might not receive notice of our action on this case.

Please see the additional information on the back. You will be notified separately about any other cases you filed.

U.S. CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION SVC  
CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER  
P. O. BOX 30111  
LAGUNA NIGUEL CA 92607-0111  
Customer Service Telephone: (800) 375-5283



- The I-797 receipt notice indicates that USCIS has received your OPT application.
- Make note of your receipt number. You can use this to track your application's status at <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>
- Receipt number will usually start with YSC.

# After Your Online Case Status Reflects “Approved”

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- Your online case status will remain as “received” for ~3 – 4 months before being updated to “approved.”
- If someone else is receiving the EAD on your behalf, alert that person that a piece of mail should be arriving soon and to notify you as soon as it arrives. Remind the person to put the mail in a new envelope when mailing it to you.
- Take any steps possible to ensure delivery of your mail. If you live in an apartment complex, check that your name is on your mailbox. If you have roommates, alert them you are expecting something important.
- Do not notify USPS to hold mail, forward mail, or process a change of address until you receive the EAD card.
- The EAD card is typically mailed within 1-2 weeks of approval.



# After Receiving the I-797 Approval Notice and EAD Card

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- Make a copy of the Approval Notice and EAD card (front and back) for your records
- When you report your OPT employment to OISS for the first time through UCSB Global, include a scanned copy of your EAD card.
- The EAD card that will include your valid employment start and end dates.
- Remember: You are not authorized to begin employment until the start date on the EAD arrives, even if you have the card in hand.

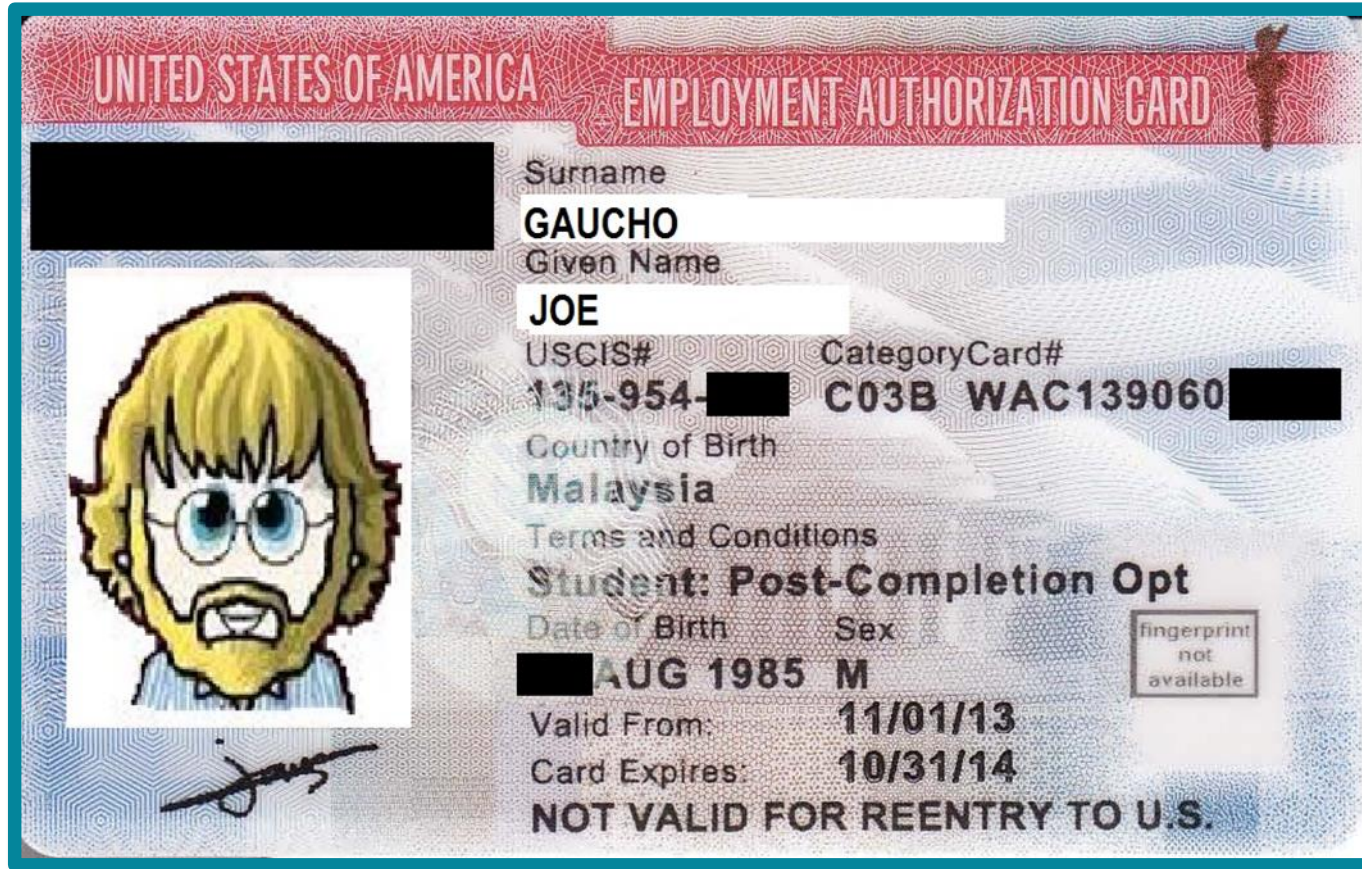


# What Should I Keep in Mind While Under OPT?

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- You are still on F-1 student status.
- You cannot enroll as a full-time student while on OPT except for classes recreational in nature. Any classes taken while under OPT cannot be applied towards a degree.
- You have an aggregate of 90 days from the start date of the EAD card to begin employment. If you do not, you may violate your status.
- If you have not used all 90 days of unemployment, you have a 60 day grace period after your EAD card expires to prepare to go home, transfer to a new school, or apply for a change of visa status.

# EAD Card



- Check your EAD card for accuracy!
- Please remember to submit a copy of your EAD card through UCSBGlobal when you first report your employment.

# If You Want to Withdraw From OPT

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- If you want to withdraw your OPT application after submission to USCIS and before it has been approved, contact OISS.
- If you want to withdraw from OPT after it has been approved, submit a Student Completion Form through UCSBGlobal.
  - Note that since your OPT has already been approved, you will have used an approved OPT at your applied education level (Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctorate). It will not be possible to pursue OPT at the same education level in the future.

**If I Encounter a Problem...**

What Should I Do?

# What if my OPT is Approved After my Grace Period Ends?

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- That's okay! As long as your OPT application has been received by USCIS before your 60 day grace period has ended, you will remain in active F-1 status while you wait for a decision on your OPT application.
- If your OPT is approved after your requested OPT start date, USCIS will automatically alter your OPT start date to the day your OPT was actually approved.
  - This means you will not accrue unemployment days until your OPT has been approved and the start date has arrived.
  - Please be aware that USCIS may not necessarily alter your OPT end date, so you may not receive a full year of OPT if you apply for OPT late.

# I Haven't Received My Receipt Notice Within 4 Weeks of Mailing my OPT Application. What Should I do?

- There are a few possible reasons your Receipt Notice has not arrived:
  - USCIS did not mail it yet. They may take up to 6 weeks to put a Receipt Notice in the mail after your application has been delivered.
  - Your Receipt Notice was “returned undeliverable.” This means the Post Office was unable to deliver the letter to your address and they mailed it back to USCIS. USCIS keeps it for a short time and then destroys it.
  - The Receipt Notice was lost permanently before delivery (e.g. delivered to the wrong address) or after delivery (e.g. accidentally discarded as junk mail).



# I Haven't Received My Receipt Notice Within 4 Weeks of Mailing my OPT Application. What Should I do?

- If you have not received your receipt notice after waiting for 4 weeks, start with these steps:
  - First, do what you can to determine whether the Receipt Notice has already been delivered. Double check stacks of mail and ask roommates, neighbors, the apartment complex manager, etc.
  - Email [lockboxsupport@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:lockboxsupport@uscis.dhs.gov) to inquire about the status of your receipt notice. Include your name, date of birth, and date your OPT application was delivered to USCIS.
  - Call the [USCIS National Customer Service Center](#) and ask for your receipt number. If you can obtain it, enter it at <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>. You can often gain helpful information this way.

# I Haven't Received My Receipt Notice Within 4 Weeks of Mailing my OPT Application. What Should I do?

- You may find that one or both of the previous steps solve your problem. For example:
  - USCIS might tell you the Receipt Notice was not mailed yet and to wait a little longer.
  - The Receipt Notice might have been returned undeliverable and USCIS still has it. Check that USCIS has the correct address on file, and if so, ask them to re-send it.
- Contact OISS in the following circumstances:
  - You followed the previous instructions and have not received an email reply after a week and you were unsuccessful in obtaining the receipt number by phone.
  - The mailing address on file with USCIS is no longer correct.



# I Received a Request for Evidence (RFE). What Should I Do?

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- Email OISS with a copy of the RFE so that we may help you provide the requested evidence to USCIS so that your OPT application may continue to be considered for approval.
- Some common examples of documents requested via RFE include but are not limited to:
  - A copy of your degree certificate
  - A copy of your transcripts
  - Request for new passport photos because the submitted photos didn't meet the requirements
  - Copies of your previous CPT I-20s, if you have done CPT before
  - A request for a new copy of your OPT I-20

# My OPT Application was Denied. What Should I Do?

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- If your OPT is denied, the duration of your legal F-1 status reverts to being defined as lasting through your current I-20's program end date plus the 60 days grace period.
- If you are still within the grace period, you may stay in the U.S. for the remainder of the 60 days.
- If the grace period has already ended, you should depart the U.S. as soon as possible.
- The chances for successfully appealing an I-765 denial are low. If you have questions about your OPT denial, contact OISS or private immigration attorney at once.

# My OPT Has Been Approved, But My EAD Card Hasn't Arrived

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- After about a week after your OPT has been approved, USCIS will send the EAD card using regular, first class mail.
- You can check the status of your delivery by entering your receipt number on the [USCIS Case Status website](#).
- If your EAD was returned undeliverable or lost in the mail, you can expect significant delay in obtaining the card. If you have a job offer, you may wish to contact your employer to make arrangements for delaying your start date. Remember, you may not work until you have the EAD in hand, even if the Case Status Online shows your case was approved.

# My OPT Has Been Approved, But My EAD Card Hasn't Arrived

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- If you suspect a problem in the delivery of your EAD:
  - First take any possible steps to determine whether the EAD has already been delivered to your address. Double check your stacks of mail and ask roommates, neighbors, the apartment complex manager, etc.
  - Call the [USCIS customer service number](#) and ask about the status of your EAD card delivery. Keep detailed records of your conversation with the customer service agent, including the date you called, any number the agent gave you, and the advice you were given.
  - Email OISS with a detailed account of the situation and steps you have already taken, including notes from your conversation with USCIS customer service. An OISS advisor will respond with advice.
- Please be aware there is usually little, if anything, that OISS can do to intervene in cases of an EAD not delivered. You may ultimately need to apply for a replacement of the lost card and pay the USCIS Filing fee again.

# What if There's a Mistake on my EAD card?

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- If there is any problem on your EAD, email a scanned copy of the card with a description of the exact problem (name misspelled, wrong dates, etc.) to OISS. An advisor will respond with advice.
- Remember, the dates on the card determine when USCIS has authorized you to work, even if they are not the dates for which you intended to apply.
- Again, if USCIS approves your EAD after the OPT start date you requested, the start date will be set as the date your OPT application was approved. USCIS will not adjust the end date; therefore, your OPT period will be less than 12 months. This is unfortunate, but not a mistake. There is no possible solution in this situation.

# **OPT Reporting Requirements, Employment Regulations, & Applying for the STEM OPT Extension**

# Requirements for Reporting Employment and Address Updates

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- In order to report updates to your address and employment, you will utilize [UCSBGlobal](#). **Any and all OPT reporting is required to be submitted through UCSBGlobal within 10 days of the change.**
- Once you have entered your employment information in UCSBGlobal, OISS will review the information and issue you a new I-20 showing your updated OPT employment.
- When your OPT employment authorization begins, you will also receive an email from USCIS with instructions to create a [SEVP Portal](#) account. You are welcome to set up an account, but all your required reporting will be done with OISS using UCSBGlobal.
- Please note SEVP and USCIS will never request payment for using the OPT portal. Please report any suspicious activity to OISS.

# Other Reporting Requirements

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## **Any of the following is required to be report to OISS through UCSBGlobal:**

- OPT employment information and changes (use the **OPT Employment Update** form)
- Personal address information and changes (use the **Personal Information Update** form)
- Early withdrawal from or completion of OPT, with plans to depart the U.S. (use the **Student Completion** form)
- Transfer to another U.S. school during or after OPT (use the **Transfer Out** form)
- Enrolling in a new degree program at UCSB after OPT (use the **Change in Degree Level** form)

**Note: If you make a legal change to your name, you must notify OISS by sending an email to [oiss@sa.ucsb.edu](mailto:oiss@sa.ucsb.edu) so that we can update your immigration record.**



# Employment Regulations

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- Full-time employment is required while on OPT, which is defined as over 20 hours per week.
- Employment can be paid or unpaid.
- If you wish to pursue a volunteer position and report it as OPT employment, please consult with an advisor at OISS.
- You may work for multiple employers, but all employment must be related to your UCSB degree.
- If requested by the US Department of Homeland Security, students must be prepared to provide evidence of employment. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the student to maintain evidence, for each job, of the position held, proof of the duration of that employment, the job title, contact information for the student's supervisor or manager, and a description of the work.

## Acceptable Types of Employment While On OPT

Full-Time Employer	Most common employment where you work for one company for 40 hours a week.
Multiple Employers	Student allowed to work for multiple employers but all employment <u>must</u> relate to UCSB degree
Multiple short-term employers (gigs for performing artists)	You should maintain a list of all gigs including dates and duration of gig (gigs should add up to at least 20 hours per week)
Self-employed	Strongly recommended student work with a lawyer when setting up their own business
Temp agency	Allowed but need to ensure working at least 20 hours a week
Unpaid/Internships	Check with the Human Resources department at company before accepting unpaid positions.

# Examples of Direct Relationship Between Degree and Employment

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- Your OPT Employment must be directly related to the degree you received at UC Santa Barbara.
- It is up to you to explain how your employment is directly related to your degree.
- You can refer to the program learning outcomes for your degree to help explain the relation
  - <https://www.assessment.ucsb.edu/learning-outcomes>

# Examples of Direct Relationship Between Degree and Employment

- The following examples are drawn from the Student Exchange Visitor Program's (SEVP) Policy guidance that was published by USCIS.
  - <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/optDirectlyRelatedGuidance.pdf>

## Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering

- I work full time as an Electrical Engineer at ABC Corp., a government contractor. In my job, I analyze client requirements for electrical systems and provide them with cost estimates of such systems. My work requires understanding of electrical circuit theory, which I studied in-depth at the University of ABC.

## Bachelor's Degree in Business

- I work full time as a Loan Officer at a mortgage company, Happy Homes, where I meet with clients and evaluate, authorize and recommend approval of loan applications. On a daily basis, I use the knowledge gained in my credit analysis, sales and marketing classes that I took as part of my major program of study.

# Examples of Direct Relationship Between Degree and Employment

## Master's Degree in Music

- I am working at a hospital playing the harp in patient rooms. I also conduct hands-on harp beginner workshops for long-term patients. On average, I work at the hospital 35 hours a week. My duties directly utilize the skills and knowledge I acquired from my coursework and degree in music therapy.

## PhD in Computer Science

- I am employed as a Computer and Information Research Scientist at ABC Research Institute. I work as part of a team of scientists and engineers that designs experiments to test the operation of various software systems. My work builds on research in complex algorithms and machine learning, which I studied as part of my dissertation.

# STEM Extension

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- A 24-month OPT extension is possible for graduates with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees as long as the following are met:
  - ✓ Degree must be on the current STEM Designated Degree Program List (available at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub/additional-resources/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension>)
  - ✓ Student's employer must be registered in the E-Verify program (<http://www.uscis.gov/everify>)
  - ✓ Employer must agree to the terms listed on the Form I-983
- Application for 24-month extension must be filed within **90 days before** the expiration date of the current OPT employment authorization.
- Instructions for applying can be found on our [website](#).

# Traveling Under OPT

What Documents Do I Need to Carry?

# Travel Outside of the United States

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- Traveling outside of the United States while your OPT application is being reviewed is strongly discouraged.
- Students with expired visas may find it extremely difficult to renew their F-1 visa for practical training purposes. Students on OPT are advised to plan carefully before leaving the U.S.
- Under OPT, travel signatures are only valid for 6 months.
- Once approved for OPT, you can travel outside the United States with the following:
  - ✓ Passport valid for at least 6 months after the re-entry date
  - ✓ Valid F-1 Visa
  - ✓ Valid OPT I-20 with employer information and travel signature on page 2
  - ✓ Valid EAD card
  - ✓ Job offer or employer verification letter



# Good luck!

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Good luck applying for OPT and searching for employment!

We hope you enjoy your experience working in the US in your field of study! Although you may no longer be studying at UCSB, OISS is still here to support you during your time on OPT. Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

**UC SANTA BARBARA**