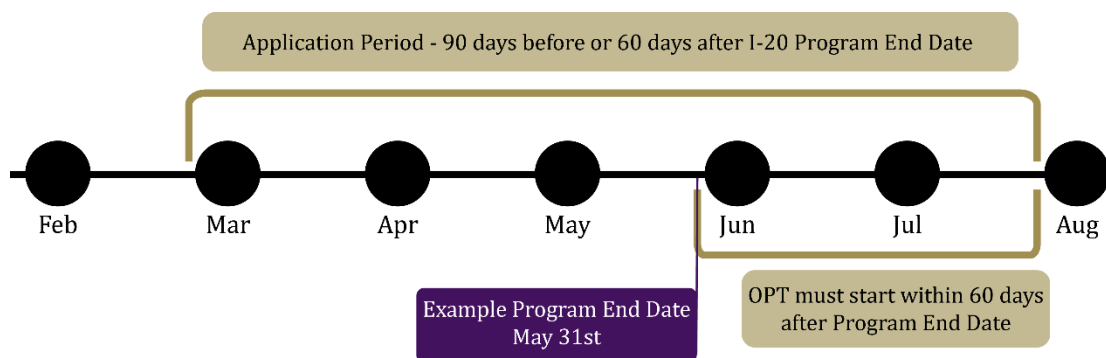# Applying for Optional Practical Training - OPT

OPT is work authorized by USCIS for professional employment in an F-1 student's field of study that is not part of the academic curriculum. At Butler Community College, OPT may be authorized for full-time, post-completion employment only. OPT can be authorized for a maximum total period of 12 months per each educational level. If you have received OPT authorization at a degree level higher than associate degree, you are not eligible for OPT at Butler.

When to Apply:

This sample timeline shows a possible application timeline for OPT. USCIS must receive the OPT application packet within 30 days of a new I-20 with OPT recommendation being issued by Butler.

Application Period - 90 days before or 60 days after I-20 Program End Date

| Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug |

Example Program End Date May 31st

OPT must start within 60 days after Program End Date

A student must have been in F-1 status for at least one full academic year. Student may **not** work until OPT approval is obtained, an EAD card is received, and the start date on the EAD has been reached.

Application Requirements and Steps:

1. Complete an OPT Request Form and send it to an International Advisor.
2. Complete a degree check with your advisor to verify your expected date of completion of studies.
3. Gather the required documents (listed on the next page) to apply for OPT.
4. Meet with an International Advisor to apply for OPT. Bring all required documents. **Allow at least 1 hour** to complete all application steps with the advisor.
   - Applying by mail: The advisor will assist you in verifying all application documents and assembling your OPT application packet. Then you will need to mail the application packet to USCIS.
   - Applying online: You will create a UCSIS account online and during the meeting the advisor will guide you to submit the I-765 application and upload documents. Filing online allows the application packet to be received immediately. Do not apply by yourself.

* Student is responsible for ensuring that they are using current forms. *

Visit https://www.uscis.gov/forms to download the most current forms.

Email: international@butlercc.edu ● Phone: (316) 322-3230 or (316) 323-6241 or (316) 323-6227
International Student Office ● Butler Community College ● 901 S Haverhill Rd ● El Dorado, Kansas 67042

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Required OPT Application Documents:

Applying by Mail

- ❑ **$410.00** application fee (Check or money order payable to US Department of Homeland Security)
- ❑ **Form G-1145**, E-Notification Form, completed. Staple on top of Form I-765 and other documentation.
- ❑ **Form I-765**, Application for Employment Authorization, completed, marked with code "**(c) (3) (B)**" for Item Number 27 for post-completion OPT. An Employment Authorization Document [EAD] will be mailed to the address you use on this form. USCIS will not forward mail to a new address if you move.
- ❑ Two **photographs**, taken recently (see filing instructions for details).
  - a) Print name & I-94 number in pencil on back of photo
  - b) USCIS recommends placing the photos in a plastic Z*iploc*®-style sandwich baggie
  - c) Do NOT put a staple through the photos
  - d) Do NOT trim the photo
- ❑ Copies of your **visa**, **I-94**, and **passport**
- ❑ Copy of **Form I-20 with DSO recommendation for OPT on page 2** (this will be issued by an International Advisor when you are ready to apply for OPT)
- ❑ Copies of any previously issued **EAD cards** (if applicable)
- ❑ Copies of all issued **Forms I-20** showing previous CPT or OPT authorization (if applicable)

Applying Online

- ❑ **Debit/credit card** to pay the **$410.00** application fee online
- ❑ *Recommended* – Completed **Form I-765**, Application for Employment Authorization, marked with code "**(c) (3) (B)**" for Item Number 27 for post-completion OPT. This form will be completed online, but it is helpful to go through the questions on the paper form beforehand.
  An Employment Authorization Document [EAD] will be mailed to the address you use on this form. USCIS will not forward mail to a new address if you move.
- ❑ Digital file of a **Passport-style photograph**, taken recently
  - a) Photo must be a .jpeg file, and formatted following US State Department (DOS) standards
  - b) If you take the photo yourself, use the Photo Tool from the US DOS to adjust the photo if needed. Do not alter the photo in another program. Once the photo is adjusted in the Photo Tool and meets standards, it can be downloaded to use
    US Department of State Photo Tool: https://tsg.phototool.state.gov/photo
- ❑ Scanned PDF files of your **visa**, **I-94**, and **passport** (each must be a separate PDF)
- ❑ Scanned PDF files of **Form I-20 with DSO recommendation for OPT on page 2** (this will be issued by an International Advisor when you are ready to apply for OPT)
- ❑ Scanned PDF files of any previously issued **EAD cards** (if applicable)
- ❑ Scanned PDF files of all issued **Forms I-20** showing previous CPT or OPT authorization (if applicable)
- ❑ Laptop with internet access and access to all required files listed above

Procedure for DSO:

1. Verify student's eligibility. (in F-1 status for at least 1 year, completing SEVIS program and academic degree)
2. Enter OPT recommendation in SEVIS within application eligibility timeline, before 60 days after student's SEVIS Program End Date. Student must apply for OPT within 30 days of recommendation. Print and sign the new I-20 with recommendation. Return to student to include in OPT application.

<u>Mailed Applications</u>

Student should mail application packet to the following address:

For US Postal Service (USPS) deliveries:	For overnight/courier deliveries (i.e. Fed-Ex, UPS, etc.)
USCIS	**USCIS**
P.O. Box 805373	**Attn: I-765 C03**
Chicago, IL 60680	**131 South Dearborn – 3rd Floor**
	Chicago, IL 60603-5517

NOTE: It is <u>highly</u> recommended that you retain copies of all documents sent to and received from the USCIS. Mail the application in a traceable manner, (e.g., certified, return receipt)

Important Details About OPT

- You, the student, are responsible for all parts of filing an application for OPT with USCIS
- Any full-time curricular practical training (CPT) or any OPT done before a degree is completed will count against the 12 month total and reduce time available for Post-Completion OPT
- Employment while on OPT must be related to your field of study
- After completing OPT, you have 60 days to transfer to another school. If you do not transfer, your SEVIS record will automatically close as Completed after 60 days.

Reporting Requirements while on OPT

- Report to an International Advisor as soon as you receive your EAD card from USCIS, and confirm the dates of work authorization listed on the card.
- You must enter employment information (name and address of your employer) **within 10 days of employment**. You must also report this information to your International Advisor.
  - o You cannot exceed 90 total days of unemployment while on OPT.
  - o You must report any changes in your employment changes during OPT to an International Advisor, and enter updated employment information and dates in the SEVP Portal.
- You must report any change of name and/or address **within 10 days of that change.**
- You must contact an International Advisor if you end OPT earlier than the authorized end date.

  <u>NOTE</u>: While authorized to do OPT, you are still monitored by Butler Community College concerning your F-1 visa status. All reports should be directed to this office and to the advisor who recommended your OPT.

Travel While on OPT

- <u>Before receiving OPT authorization</u>: It is better not to travel during this time. If an emergency arises, contact your advisor.
- Your I-20 must have a current signature for travel – no older than 6 months. You must have a current, valid EAD card. Your F-1 visa must be valid.

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