Optional Practical Training (OPT) Work Authorization for F-1 Students

This packet contains everything you need to prepare your application for OPT. First, please review eligibility and deadlines:

Eligibility: Can I apply?
- Must be a full-time enrolled student for one academic year
- Employment must relate to your field of study
- Only 12 months of OPT is available for each degree earned. Once a higher degree is earned, OPT for a previous degree is lost. If you have used 12 months of OPT at the same or a higher degree level, you are not eligible
- 12 months of full-time CPT at your current degree level makes you ineligible for OPT

Deadlines: When do I apply?
- OPT applications must be filed with ISS no later than 45 days before the end of your grace period. (Each F1 student has a 60 day grace period following the completion date on your I-20).
- Applications should be filed early: as many as 90 days before the completion date on your I-20. No offer letter needed.
- *Graduate students may choose to use their defense date of the thesis, or the end of the term (completion date on the I-20).
- **PRE-COMPLETION: If you wish to use OPT for summer employment, apply 60-120 days before the start of your internship. Offer letter is not required, but is helpful.

Application Checklist: What do I need for my application?
- Academic Adviser Recommendation Form
- I-765 Form
- G-1145 Form
- Two U.S. passport-style photos taken within last 30 days. Print I-94 number & name on back.
- Copies of passport, visa, old I-20’s from Bucknell or previous schools, I-94 record (retrieve it here: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94) & any previous EAD (Employment Authorization Document issued by USCIS)
- Check or money order for $410 payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Instructions for completing the I-765 Form:
- Leave blank any numbers or lines if you’re unsure
- #11 (which has three lines) yes = ONLY IF you’ve ever had OPT before
- #13 the place where you passed through Immigration and Customs (Port of Entry)
- #16 Pre-completion? Your code is A. Post-completion (you’re graduating?) Your code is B. Applying for a 24 month STEM extension (one year after your first OPT): your code is C.

Maintain Status:
- Send updates of contact and work information within 10 days of a change and every 6 months regardless of change to Residential or mailing address, E-mail address, Employer name, or Employer address http://tinyurl.com/OPTnotice

How do I apply?
Read these materials, complete forms as instructed (do not staple!) and call 570-577-3794 to make an appointment with Jennifer Figueroa, Director of International Student Services (ISS). Or, you may consult Jennifer’s google calendar and self-schedule your appointment.

You need to read the material and complete the forms to the best of your ability before your meeting!
OPT Eligibility Checklist & Academic Adviser Recommendation

Student Section

Student Name: ___________________________________  Student E-mail: ________________________________

Degree earned: Bachelor’s  Master’s  Other  OPT type:  Pre-completion  Post-completion  Internship

Have you been continuously enrolled and in F1 status during the past academic year at Bucknell? __ Yes ___ No
When do you expect to graduate? ___/___/____

Have you ever had OPT previously? ___ Yes ___ No
If yes: dates of authorization ___/___/____ through ___/___/____
__ Part time  ___ Full-time

Degree level (please circle): Bachelors  Masters  PhD  Other: ___________________________

School: ______________________________________

Have you ever had CPT before? ___ Yes ___ No
If yes: dates of authorization ___/___/____ through ___/___/____
__ Part time  ___ Full-time

Degree level (please circle): Bachelors  Masters  PhD  Other: ___________________________

School: ______________________________________

Requested OPT Start Date: ___/___/____

*Fill out the following information for pre-completion only:
Requested end date: ___/___/____
Select one: ___ Full-time (21-40 hours per week) -OR- ___ Part-time (up to 20 hours per week)

Academic Adviser Recommendation

This form serves as confirmation from the academic department that this student is meeting the academic requirements needed for OPT eligibility. Please circle the number and fill in the information for the scenario that matches this student’s situation. (Option 1 is most common.)

1. [Post-Completion] This student will complete all required coursework for a degree in ___________________________ and is expected to earn that degree on ___/___/____. In order for the student to receive the full benefit of this education, it would be beneficial to gain related employment experience.

2. [Post-Completion] This graduate student is expected to defend his/her thesis on ___/___/____. This is the final requirement for earning a degree in ___________________________. In order for the student to receive the full benefit of this education, it would be beneficial to gain related employment experience.

3. [Pre-Completion] This student is earning a degree in ___________________________ and is expected to complete the degree on ___/___/____. The practical training to engage in employment related to the program of study. I consider such an experience beneficial to a student’s program of study.

Academic Advisor Name___________________________  Department______________________

E-mail ______________________________  Telephone __________________________

Academic Adviser’s Signature ______________________  Date ___/___/____

IMPORTANT NOTE: On-campus employment (including graduate assistantships) MUST END on the student’s I-20 completion date. This date is either: 1) the student’s graduation date, or 2) the graduate student’s thesis defense date.

Student: please return this page to the ISS office as part of your OPT application

Please return original completed form to Bucknell International Student Services
Elaine Langone Center 064  570-577-3794  ISS@Bucknell.edu
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