

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

International Student Services
Pre-Approval Orientation

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
5001 N. Oak Trafficway, Kansas City, MO 64118
816-414-3720

- OPT is temporary employment that is directly related to an F-1 student's major area of study.
- OPT may be part time during regular semesters while a student is enrolled full time. This training will be deducted at half-time from the one-year opportunity.
- OPT may be full time during summer as long as the student enrolls in the following semester.
- OPT may be full time after a student has completed all course work. *Terms with remaining thesis or dissertation must be discussed with an International Student Services advisor.*
- OPT may be full time after graduation from the degree program.

What is Optional Practical Training?

- Students who have maintained lawful presence in the U.S. for at least nine (9) months.
- OPT opportunity must be in the student's field of study.
- Experience must be suited for the student's degree level.
- Students may apply for OPT whether or not they have a job.

Who is Eligible for OPT?

- After receiving approval from both academic advisor and dissertation committee supervisor (when applicable)
- Up to 120 days before graduation. (Completion of all degree requirements)
- No later than 10 business days before graduation
- Before starting employment

When May I Apply for OPT?

- Discuss all questions about OPT with an international student advisor after completing this presentation
- Complete the Advisor Recommendation Form and submit it with application materials to International Student Services
- Submit the following documents with your recommendation form:
 - Completed I-765 application
 - A **copy** of your **I-94 card** (front and back), **visa page** of your passport, **passport picture page**, copy of other Employment Authorization Document (**EAD**) if you have one, **two passport photos** (*No “glamour” or “photographer” shots*)
 - A check or money order for \$380 payable to Department of Homeland Security
- Expect at least 90 days for processing
- Mail application to the USCIS address provided on the application

How to Apply for OPT?

- Expect to receive an I-797 Receipt in the mail
 - Send a copy to International Student Services
 - Keep this receipt and use it to check the status of your application at:
<https://egov.uscis//cris/caseStatusSearchDisplay.do>
 - Use the number to report change of address when you call 800-375-5283
- Avoid travel outside the U.S. until you have received the EAD

While I am waiting for Approval

- After you receive your EAD
- On the start date indicated on the EAD
- After all degree requirements are completed
- If still working on dissertation or thesis, student must remain enrolled full time and may work full time until completion of thesis or dissertation or the EAD expiration date, whichever happens first



When May I Start Working?

- Consistently look for employment if you did not have a job when you applied for OPT
- Keep a record of your job search activities
- Report changes to your personal information within 10 days of the change to your international student advisor
 - The student's legal name, home or mailing address, or email address
 - Employer name or address

What Are My Responsibilities While on OPT?

- Report breaks between employment to your international student advisor
- Report changes of employment to your international student advisor
- Keep a record of all reports made to your international student advisor and how you made your reports
- File taxes with the IRS and state or states in which you live and work
 - Ask your employer about Form 515 (Tax withholding for non-resident entities)
 - File IRS Form 843 “A Claim for Refund and Request for Abatement” if you Social Security and Medicare have already been taken from you payroll.
 - If a student is working as self employed, he or she must complete form W-9 with the hiring company
 - Form 8843, Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals with a Medical Condition

*What Are My Responsibilities While on OPT?
(Cont.)*

Kinds of Jobs I Can Work and What to Report?

Situation	Student Reports to DSO
New job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Name of the employer ■ Start date of employment ■ Mailing address for the employer
Change to a new job (less than 10 days between jobs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Name of the previous employer ■ Ending date of the employment with the previous employer ■ Name of the employer ■ Start date of employment ■ Mailing address for the employer
Multiple short-term gigs in one period with less than 10 days between gigs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report at the beginning of the first gig and indicate "Multiple short term gigs"
Work for hire (start)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indicate "Self-employed work for hire" ■ Indicate the start date of the contract
Work for hire (ending more than 10 days between the end of one contract and the beginning of another contract or new job)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indicate "Self-employed work for hire." ■ Indicate you have no current contract ■ Ending date of the last contract worked
Self-employed business owner (start)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indicate "Self-employed business owner" ■ <i>Indicate business address</i> ■ Indicate date went into business
Self-employed business owner (end)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indicate "Self-employed business owner" ■ Indicate date business closed or student no longer worked for the business full time
Student decides to exit the U.S. and complete his or her F-1 status prior to the end date of OPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indicate "Completing OPT and exiting the United States" ■ Date of exit

My Reporting Responsibilities

Even volunteer work is acceptable.

- OPT is granted by degree level
- Students have a 60-day grace period after the OPT is completed to:
 - Begin a new academic program
 - Report a new visa status
 - Leave the U.S.

Other Features of OPT?

- I must complete all of my studies
- I must carefully plan my OPT application time frame with my international student advisor
- I must apply before my program end date
- Once my OPT application has been approved, it cannot be cancelled
- I must finish my thesis/dissertation before the EAD expiration date
- If I do not find a job within 90 days I must leave the U.S.
- If I start a new degree program, my OPT will automatically be cancelled
- I can't start work until I receive my EAD (work authorization)
- I have a 60-day grace period after completing my OPT to: report change of visa status, start a new degree program, or leave the U.S.

Things to Remember