

International and Exchange Student Center
Pre-Completion OPT Information Guide

GENERAL INFORMATION

Pre-Completion OPT is Optional Practical Training authorized *before* the completion of a student's program of study. It permits F-1 students to gain work experience in their major field of study while pursuing their academic program. It can be authorized:

1. **Part time** (work 20 hrs. or less) Pre-completion OPT for eligible students who are still taking courses while school is in session.
2. **Full time** (work 21 hrs. or more) Pre-completion OPT during summer and winter vacation, if the student is currently enrolled, and is eligible for registration and intends to register for the next term or session. OR If Graduate student has completed all course requirements and has Thesis/final project/dissertation left to take.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Student must be in lawful F-1 student status at the time of application
- ✓ Student must have met the one full academic year as a full time student or will have met this requirement by the time the pre-completion OPT is requested to commence (The one full academic year need not necessarily have been completed while you were in F-1 status; if you completed the one-year requirement while in another valid nonimmigrant status and you are now in valid F-1 status, you are eligible to apply for OPT)
- ✓ Student must continue full time enrollment throughout the time spent on pre-completion OPT with the exception of summer and winter break
- ✓ Student must have not engaged in more than 12 months of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) during the current degree level
- ✓ Student must have not been authorized for 12 months of OPT at the current degree level
- ✓ Student does not need to have a pending job offer letter to apply for pre-completion OPT
- ✓ If government sponsored, it is the student's responsibility to contact his/her government sponsor to find out if he/she can be permitted to apply for Pre-completion OPT

APPLICATION DEADLINE

A student may file for Pre-completion OPT up to 90 days before the student completes a full academic year. If the student has already completed a full academic year, he or she may apply for OPT up to 90 days in advance of the requested Pre-completion OPT start date.

In addition, pre-completion OPT application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date on which the foreign student advisor entered the pre-completion OPT recommendation in SEVIS.

Note: *Once student mails Pre-completion OPT application to USCIS and USCIS receives it, USCIS will take 90-120 days approximately to process the request.*

APPLICATION PROCESS

- **STEP 1:** Student will email the following documents to iescrequest@csun.edu:
 - Student acknowledgement completed and signed**
(Please see acknowledgement on page 3 of this information guide)
 - COPY of completed Form I-765.** Please review instructions and download the form at www.uscis.gov.
 - This is an online fillable form. Please type or print legibly in black ink.
 - Answer all questions fully and accurately. If a question does not apply to you (for example, if you have not used any other names), type or print "N/A" unless otherwise directed. If your answer to a question which requires a numeric response is zero or none (for example, if you do not have a USCIS Online Account Number), type or print "None" unless otherwise directed.
 - Select "Permission to accept employment" box
 - Student's who do not have a Social Security Number (SSN), may now apply for a SSN when completing Form I-765. To apply for the SSN, complete Items #13a. and 14-17b.
 - Item #27: Type in the eligibility code(c)(3)(A)

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- Leave Items #28 - 31b. blank
 - Certification Section: Sign your name using a BLACK ink pen. Make sure your signature stays within the signature box without touching any words noted on the form
 - If you need extra space to complete any item within this application, use the space provided in Part 6. Additional Information or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.
- COPY of the most recent I-94 Departure Record**
 - COPY of completed Form G-1145.** Please download the form at www.uscis.gov.
 - Include evidence of having been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year at a college, university, conservatory, or seminary approved by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) for attendance by F-1 foreign students.**
 - COPY of your Passport Identification Page(s)**
 - Passport page(s) must show your name, photograph, date of birth, passport expiration and/or renewal date
 - Passport must be valid at least 6 months into the future.
 - COPY of all previously issued I-20's including OPT/CPT I-20s if you had OPT or CPT in the past.**
 - The student should ask previous schools for copies of I-20 if he/she does not have the originals.
 - COPY of front and back of any previously issued EAD(s).**

Please allow three weeks to review and recommend your Pre-completion OPT. An FSA will email you when the Pre-OPT I-20 has been issued and is ready for STEP 2.

➤ **STEP 2*:** The student will return to IESC to pick up the Pre-OPT I-20.

It is important for the student to review the Pre-OPT Checklist and ensure all documents are included in their packet. The Student will need to prepare and add the following documents to their application:

- 2 U.S. Passport-Style photographs** with small envelope.
 - Photos must meet U.S specifications (not taken in home country). Refer to I-765 instructions page 20 for photograph requirements.
 - The student must write his/her name and A-Number (if any) on back edge of each photo lightly in felt pen or pencil.
- The filing fee for form I-765 is \$410**
 - Payments by check or money order - \$410.00 payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" from a bank or other financial institution located in the United States and must be payable in U.S. currency.
 - Payments by credit card - Please see Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions, at www.uscis.gov/G-1450 for more information. (Do not submit this form or any payment to the IESC)
- Completed Form I-765** - USCIS will consider a photocopied, faxed, or scanned copy of the original, handwritten signature valid for filing purposes. The photocopy, fax, or scan must be of the original document containing the handwritten, **ink** signature
- Completed Form G-1145** - Please download the form at www.uscis.gov.
 - Complete Form G-1145 and attach it to the first page of your application, when filing Form I-765 at one of the USCIS Lockbox facilities, to receive an email and/or text message notifying you that your application has been received.
- Include evidence of having been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year at a college, university, conservatory, or seminary approved by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) for attendance by F-1 foreign students.**

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* At STEP 2, the student will receive the Pre-OPT I-20 and will be asked to sign their Pre-OPT I-20. **The student will be responsible for assembling the Pre-OPT Application Packet and mailing the packet to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox based on the address that is printed on the student's Form I-765.** For students living in California, please mail your packet to Arizona USCIS Lockbox Facility. For students living outside of California, please refer to the Form I-765 Application Instructions (www.uscis.gov) for the appropriate lockbox location.

Important: IESC does not require ANY fees for the services it provides to international students. No fees, under any circumstances, shall be submitted to IESC.

DURATION OF PRE-COMPLETION OPT

A student may be approved for up to a total of 12 months of OPT, including pre-completion and post-completion. If, for example, a student is approved for 6 months of Full-time pre-completion OPT, he/she will only be eligible to apply for 6 months of post-completion OPT after graduation.

Important! For every 2 months of part-time pre-completion OPT, 1 month is reduced for Post-completion OPT.

WHILE ON PRE-COMPLETION OPT

- ✓ Student is expected to maintain F1 status in good standing and eligible to continue attending CSUN.
- ✓ Once student receives the EAD card, he/she can start Pre-completion OPT and apply for a Social Security Number if needed. Student must send a scanned copy of the EAD card (front & back) to his/her FSA by college so that it is kept in the student's file.
- ✓ Student is not subject to the OPT unemployment. Student will lose the time requested but there are no other consequences.
- ✓ With an approved pre-completion OPT from USCIS, student must work in a job related to his/her field of study and may change employers as long as the employment is related to the student's field of study.

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE U.S.

There are no additional travel requirements for pre-completion OPT other than the ones already required for an F1 student. An F1 student will travel with a valid passport, valid F-1 visa, and I-20 form with a valid travel signature (not more than one year old).

Pre-Completion OPT Student Acknowledgement. I have read and understand all the information on Pre-completion OPT provided in the Pre-completion OPT Information Guide by the International and Exchange Student Center (IESC) at California State University, Northridge. I understand that I must receive my Pre-completion OPT approval before I begin my paid practical training. **For Government Sponsored students:** I understand that I must receive permission from my sponsoring government prior to engaging in Pre-completion OPT.

OPT requested for (choose one): Fall _____ Winter _____ Spring _____ Summer _____

Requested Pre-OPT START Date: _____ Requested Pre-OPT END Date: _____
(Dates must fall within semester that the student is requesting Pre-OPT)

OPT requested for (choose one): Part-Time Full-Time

Student Name: _____ CSUN ID: _____

U.S. Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Email address: _____ Phone number: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

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FOR IESC USE ONLY

Verified current U.S. Address
 Same major / _____ changed major to: _____
 Verified major in PS / SEVIS / Master Roster match
 Verified grad check filed (when applicable)
 Verified unofficial transcript in PS
 No other negative service indicators in PS
 If Government Sponsor student, notify Government sponsor via email
 Passport valid 6 months into future (expires _____)
 _____ needs passport renewal
 _____ passport renewal copy received _____
 I-20 valid (expires _____)
 Change DSO Name on PS I-20
 Add Pre-OPT in PS
 Add Pre-OPT in SEVIS and Print I-20
 Emailed student the application deadline and to come for STEP 2.
other: _____

Pre-OPT Docs were reviewed by (FSA Name): _____
Date that FSA entered the Pre-OPT recommendation in SEVIS: _____