

Post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) Factsheet for Students

Eligibility

To be eligible for post-completion OPT, you must:

- Currently be in valid F-1 status;
- Have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis at a U.S. college or university for one full academic year;
- Be in the final semester of or have completed your academic program; and,
- Apply no sooner than 90 days prior to the academic program completion date and no later than 60 days after the academic program completion date.

Process Overview

1. Attend OPT workshop.
2. Submit OPT application with all supporting documentation to International Student Services office (ISS)
OPT application can be downloaded from www.limcollege.edu/iss or requested via email at iss@limcollege.edu
3. Obtain a new form I-20 with OPT recommendation and a cover letter from ISS office
4. Assemble OPT packet
5. Mail OPT packet to USCIS
6. If approved, receive EAD card
7. Begin working

When to Apply

- 90 days before your academic program end date
- No later than 60 days after your academic program end date. USCIS must receive your application by this date.
- The USCIS processing time for OPT applications is approximately 3-4 months.

Choice of Start date

- You will request a specific date on which your OPT authorized employment should start.
- The requested start date can be any date between your academic program completion date and 60 days after that date.

OPT Application Packet Assembly

Prior to submitting the application to ISS office, ensure that you have all of the below documents as required in LIM's OPT APPLICATION:

1. OPT Request (page 1)
2. Acknowledgement of Responsibilities (page 2)
3. Academic Advisor's Certification (page 3)
4. Form G-1145 (instructions below)*
5. Form I-765 (instructions below)*
6. All previous Forms I-20 issued to you
7. Photocopies of any previously issued EAD cards (if applicable)
8. Photocopy of passport
9. Photocopy of F-1 visa
10. Form I-94 (retrieve it here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>)
11. Two passport style photographs (size: 2x2)*
12. \$410 Fee in the form of a check or money order payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"*

Travel & OPT

- Travel before the academic program end date and while OPT application is pending at USCIS is not recommended. However, if you have to travel, ensure that you have the following documents: valid passport, valid F-1 visa, most

recent form I-20 signed for travel, Notice of Action I-797C, current course schedule, and an unofficial transcript, proof of financial funding.

- Travel after the academic program's end date and while OPT application is pending is **highly** not recommended and should be undertaken at the student's risk. If you have to travel for an emergency, ensure that you have the following documents: valid passport, valid F-1 visa, most recent form I-20 signed for travel, proof that OPT application was pending at time of departure: Notice of Action I-797C.
- Travel after OPT is approved. Those F-1 students whose OPT application has been "APPROVED" may only reenter the US (as long as visa restrictions do not apply) to resume employment. This means that a student will need to have: valid passport, valid F-1 visa, an endorsed for travel/updated I-20, an approved EAD card, proof of employment received before departure,

The best general guidance is that a student who has both an EAD for post-completion OPT and a job or job offer should not experience difficulty reentering the United States. If either of these two conditions is missing, then the student is assuming risk.

Unemployment Limit

Students may not be unemployed or not performing appropriate employment for more than ninety (90) total days out of their OPT allotment. Students who accumulate more than 90 days jeopardize their lawful F-1 nonimmigrant status.

Acceptable Employment (SEVP OPT Policy Guidance [7.2.1])

- Regular paid employment
- Payment by multiple short-term multiple employers
- Work for hire
- Self-employed business owner
- Employment through an agency
- Unpaid interns and volunteers (students may work as volunteers or unpaid interns, where this practice does not violate any labor laws)

All employment must be at least 21 hours per week and directly related to the student's major field of study at LIM College.

Reporting requirements

Federal regulations require students on post-completion OPT to report any changes in employment and address within 10 days of the change.

- After your OPT is approved, **on the start date** of your OPT, you will receive an email from SEVP's email: do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov with instructions on how to create SEVP Portal Account. The portal is a new tool that F-1 students on OPT must use to report changes to their address, telephone number and employer information. Find out more about the portal: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help>. Note: this is a preferred reporting method.
- You may also choose to report OPT employment and change of address via ISS office by requesting OPT reporting form. Email iss@limcollege.edu to request the form.

Social Security Number (SSN)

You can apply for SSN at the time of applying for OPT by checking off the appropriate box and filling appropriate fields on Form I-765. Form I-765 is part of the OPT application packet (see above or see LIM's OPT Application).

H-1B Questions

LIM College ISS office staff is not able to provide you with legal advice about H-1B sponsorship. Students who are interested to find out more about applying for H-1B, should consult with an experienced immigration attorney and visit the following websites for more information: <https://www.uscis.gov/eir/visa-guide/h-1b-specialty-occupation/h-1b-visa>
<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/h-1b-status>
<http://www.myvisajobs.com/Reports/>

Please note that LIM College students are eligible to apply for H-1B only through the regular lottery. LIM College does not endorse any of the above websites.