

Optional Practical Training Request Form

- OPT instructions can be found at <http://louisville.edu/internationalcenter/iss/current-f1-j1-students/f-1-optional-practical-training-opt/f-1-optional-practical-training-opt>. More instructions are on the back of this form.
- Your Academic Advisor must sign this form before you submit it to the ISSS office (original signature required).
- Bring this form with all of the required documents for your OPT appointment with an ISSS advisor.
- USCIS must receive your complete OPT application within 30 days of the initial OPT I-20 being issued and within 60 days for the STEM extension.

Family Name/Surname:		Given Name:			
UofL ID#:		Date of Birth:	Telephone:		
Personal Email Address:		University Email Address:			
Have you been authorized for OPT in the past?		No	Yes - From : To :		
What degree level is this OPT for? Bachelor's Master's Ph.D.		What is your degree?			
If you have been authorized for OPT in the past, on which degree level was it based?		Bachelor's	Master's Ph.D.		
When do you expect to graduate?*		Type of OPT Employment? Pre-Completion Post-Completion* STEM Extension*			
Semester:	Year:	* The earliest you can submit the application is 90 days before you graduate or the EAD expires.			
Requested OPT Authorization Dates:		*Start Date :	End Date :		
*Start date must be within 60 days of your program completion date.					
<i>"I understand the responsibilities required for maintaining F-1 status during my period of OPT authorization as stated on the reverse and in the OPT Instructions.</i>					
Signature of Student:		Date:			
Academic Recommendation This section must be completed by your academic advisor. Undergraduates = College Advisor or Department Advisor Graduates = Faculty Advisor or Department Chair* *Some programs require the department chair to be notified as well.	Student's Major:		Second Major (if applicable):		
	Expected Completion Date:		Level of Study:		Bachelor's Master's Ph.D.
	Is student registered in current term? Yes No		Date of anticipated Graduation?		
	Has the student completed all required courses? Yes No		Comments:		
	<i>"I confirm that the information provided in this section is true and correct. I would like to recommend that this student be allowed to obtain Optional Practical Training in order to secure a position in his/her field of study."</i>				
	Optional Comments :				
	Advisor's Name:				
	Department :		Telephone:		
	Signature:		Email :		

Initial OPT Application Instructions & FAQ's

You are required to review the **OPT Application Guide** for complete instructions:

<http://louisville.edu/internationalcenter/iss/current-f1-j1-students/f-1-optional-practical-training-opt/f-1-optional-practical-training-opt>

When should I apply?

Apply as soon as you are eligible! It takes about three months (90 days) to receive your EAD from the USCIS. Expedites are not available.

- The earliest USCIS can receive the application is 90 days before the date of your program completion.
- The latest USCIS can receive the application is the 60th day following your completion date, assuming you do not leave the U.S.
- It can take up to two weeks to prepare the OPT application before sending to USCIS (especially for busy students!)

What is my "completion date"?

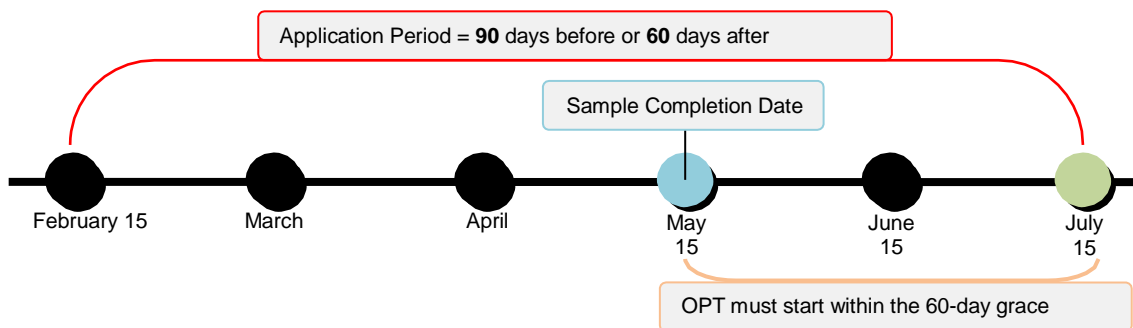
The "completion date" for OPT purposes is defined as follows:

- For **undergraduates**: graduation day of the semester in which degree requirements are fulfilled.
- For **Master's/Ph.D.**: thesis defense date or completion of program requirements.

What dates should I choose?

Your OPT start date must be within 60 days after your completion date. Your initial OPT end date will be 12 months later. See diagram below.

Sample Application Timeline. The dates on this sample may not correspond with the dates you will apply for OPT:



When can I start working?

You must wait until you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS and your start date has arrived to begin working. From your completion date, you cannot work on-campus or off-campus until you receive the EAD and your start date has arrived.

What counts as employment?

OPT is intended to enhance your academic program by providing a means to gain experience in your field of study. Work NOT related to your program of study is a violation of F-1 status. Students must work at least 20 hours a week in either a **paid or unpaid** position to qualify as employment for the initial OPT. You will need to be in a paid position for the STEM OPT extension. For more information on satisfying the employment requirement, please see our Qualifying OPT Instructions at <http://louisville.edu/internationalcenter/iss/current-f1-j1-students/f-1-optional-practical-training-opt/f-1-optional-practical-training-opt>

What happens if I cannot find a job?

During post-completion OPT, students may not accrue a total of more than 90 days of unemployment. See "What counts as employment?" question above on what you can do to satisfy the employment requirement. STEM Extension allows for an additional 60 days of unemployment for an aggregate of 150 days, if you are eligible for STEM.

What is my status while I am on OPT?

Students on OPT or with a pending OPT application are still in **F-1 status** and must maintain their F-1 status by following the employment and address reporting requirements. Students may remain in the U.S. while their OPT Application is pending.

Can I travel while I am on OPT?

Generally, yes, travel on OPT is possible, but students will need to time their re-entry and carry the correct documents upon re-entry to the U.S. Please refer to the OPT website for details and things to consider depending on the timing of your re-entry.

What if my visa has expired?

Students who plan to travel outside the U.S. will need a valid F-1 visa to re-enter the U.S. The ISSS website discusses important points and instructions on applying for a visa while on OPT.

What else do I have to do while I am on OPT?

You must **report your employment** and current residential address via <http://louisville.edu/internationalcenter/iss/current-f1-j1-students/on-line-documents/opt-personal-and-employer-information>. Any changes should be reported within 10 days.

What about health insurance?

Students who complete their program of study are no longer eligible for the Student Health Insurance Plan administered by the University Health Service.; however, you must still maintain health insurance while on OPT.