BMCC

International Student Services Office

Room S115N

212-776-7179

Borough of Manhattan Community College
The City University of New York

199 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007-1097
www.bmcc.cuny.edu

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Information

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is legal F-1 employment authorization which allows you to gain a maximum of 12 months of professional work experience in your field of study.

There are 2 types of OPT: "**Pre-Completion OPT**" (before graduation) and "**Post-Completion OPT**" (after graduation).

Both types of OPT must be recommended by the International Student Services Office **and** authorized by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) before you can begin working or re-enter the U.S. from another country after graduating.

Refer to USCIS regulation [8 C.F.R. 214.2 (f) (10) (ii)] for additional information.

You are eligible for OPT if you:

- Have been attending school full-time for one academic year (two semesters).
- Have not previously used your full 12-month OPT benefit on the same academic degree level.
- Have not previously used 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT).

As an F-1 student, you can be authorized for a maximum period of 12 months per educational level. You become eligible for another 12 months of practical training when you change to a higher educational level. It is important for you to plan how you want to "spend" your OPT.

*Example: When you complete your Associate degree you are entitled to 12 months of OPT. Then, when you complete a Bachelor's degree you are eligible for another 12 months of OPT. However, if you complete two Associate's degrees, you will only have **ONE** 12 months of OPT.*

Pre-Completion OPT

- Part-time during the semester

    OR

- Full-time during vacation periods

Pre-Completion OPT is calculated on a daily basis. Part-time employment (less than 20 hours per week) is deducted at 50 percent of the full-time rate.

Example: 4 months of part-time OPT is equal to two months of the total 12-month eligibility period.

Post-Completion OPT

Only after graduation

Always full-time

It is recommended for a 12-month period (unless you request a shorter time frame), minus any previously authorized period of OPT.

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Deadlines

It is very important to consider the OPT application processing time when planning your start date with your employer or making travel plans. It is a long process which can take up to 90 days. To ensure that your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is ready to begin work or for travel, file your application early!

- For Pre-Completion OPT, you can apply after one academic year of full-time studies.
- For Post–Completion OPT, you can apply as early as 90 days before you have completed your program. The latest date to apply is 60 days after your last day of classes.

Note: If you miss these deadlines, in order not to violate your F-1 status, you must:

- *leave the U.S. within 59 days of the completion of your studies*
- *be admitted to a new program of study or*
- *have an application pending for change of status to another non-immigrant status or adjustment of status to permanent resident*

How can I apply for OPT?

Step 1: Complete the OPT Request Form and submit all documents on the OPT Application Checklist to the International Student Services Office (ISSO).

Note: It is important to submit all documents together so we can review your application as quickly as possible. Incomplete documents will not be accepted.

Step 2: A DSO will review your OPT application packet and create a new I-20 for you with the OPT recommendation. The OPT I-20 will be ready for pick-up within 1 week.

Step 3: Apply to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) by mailing your OPT Recommendation Packet with all the appropriate documents to USCIS by priority mail (you should also request a certified mail return receipt). **You must mail your OPT packet within 25 days from the date of your BMCC OPT I-20 issuance.**

Note 1: If you suddenly get a job or need to travel, you may request "expeditious" processing on your application and submit a letter from your future employer or a photocopy of an airline ticket or reservation with your application. We cannot guarantee that USCIS will respond to your request.

Note 2: You must have your EAD (Employment Authorization Document) in your possession before you can begin working or before you travel and re-enter the U.S. from another country after graduation.

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Optional Practical Training Request Form

Personal Information

Name: _____ Today's Date (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

Local Mailing Address:

_____

(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

Email: _____

Phone: _____ SEVIS #: _____ BMCC EMPL ID #: _____

Major: _____ Passport Expiration Date: _____

By signing this form, I certify that I am in F-1 status and have attended school full-time for at least 2 consecutive semesters. I am requesting authorization for Optional Practical Training employment that is directly related to my major and commensurate or consistent with my educational level. Furthermore, upon approval of Optional Practical Training, I am responsible for creating, monitoring and updating SEVP Portal information.

Note: Address provided must be in the United States, and must be valid for at least 3 months (until you receive the EAD card from USCIS. We recommend adding your name on the mailbox to ensure delivery of EAD card. If you are planning to move within this time, please provide a family member or friend's mailing address.

Email address should be up to date. Once approved for Optional Practical Training, US government will email student login credentials to create and log into SEVP Portal.

Type of OPT

[ ] **Pre-Completion OPT**

[   ] Full-time (only available during vacation periods)
[   ] Part-time (during Fall or Spring semesters)

[ ] **Post-Completion OPT**

Available full-time after graduation.

Requested Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Student's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Note for Post-Completion OPT applicant: The ISSO can recommend your start date to begin as early as the day after the last day of classes of your final semester of study at BMCC, or no later than 60 days from the last day of classes. The ending date will be no later than 12 months following the start date. However, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has the right to authorize your OPT for dates other than the ones you requested.

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OPT Application Checklist

☐ **BMCC REQUIRMENTS**
Apply for Graduation
Your CUNYFirst printout indicating that you are "Pending" or "Approval" for graduation

☐ **USCIS REQUIRMENTS**
$410 fee in the form of a money order or personal check, made out to: "U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services" or "USCIS"

☐ Two Green Card-type photos (2 inches x2 inches), with a white/light background *Note: No headwear is allowed unless it is part of religious observation.* **Print your name, I-94 and SEVIS ID# from your BMCC I-20 on the back in pencil.**

☐ FORM I-765, typed; with 2 additional copies (download form:
http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf)
Note: It is very important that you follow the instructions for completing the Form I-765 listed on the USCIS website. **(Please type answers or print neatly in black ink)**

☐ FORM G-1145, with 2 additional copies (download form: http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf) *(Please type answers or print neatly in black ink)*

☐ FORM I-538 *(for Liberal Arts majors only)*, completed section A through 8 and signed

☐ **Three** photocopies of:
- All previous I-20s (including from language schools)
- your current I-94 card (both sides) or printout of electronic I-94 information from https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/i-94-instructions (I-94 retrieval)
- Visa and personal pages of passport.

☐ Updated SEVIS I-20 (original document) with the OPT recommendation from BMCC's DSO (international student advisor) who will assist you in completing the OPT packet.

ISSO Staff	
☐ Packet Complete:	DSO Initials:
☐ Packet Incomplete	Date Reviewed:

After your application packet has been reviewed by one of the International Student Services staff members, **send by priority or certified mail (return receipt or tracking number requested) within 25 days from the date of your BMCC OPT I-20 issuance to:**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service
UCIS Dallas Lockbox
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

Other important information:
- Expect your EAD Work Authorization Card within 90 days. If you do not receive it within this time frame, consult with an ISSO representative.
- Submit your EAD work authorization to the ISSO and create your SEVP Portal account.
- Immigration regulation allows ONLY 90 days of unemployment during the entire OPT period

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How to Report Updates on OPT

As of March 23, 2018, the US government has created SEVP Portal for students on Post-Completion OPT to submit the following updates directly to them:

- U.S home and mailing address
- U.S. telephone number
- Employer information
- Supervisor's name & contact information

In order to access the SEVP Portal, you will need your login credentials. The US government emails all students who have been approved for Post-Completion with information on how to create and log into their portal **once your OPT application is approved and the start date of your approved OPT time has passed.** Be on the lookout for an email from do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov. Once you have that email and follow their instructions, you should be able to log into the SEVP Portal.

SEVP PORTAL OVERVIEW

(Information as stated on US Department of Homeland Security's Study in the States website: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-overview)

The SEVP Portal makes it easier for F-1 students on Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) to meet their regulatory reporting requirements.

The portal allows international students the ability to report address, telephone and employer information to SEVP without relying upon their designated school official (DSO) to update their information. To use the SEVP Portal, students must confirm with their DSO that their email address is accurately saved in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

SEVP will email prospective SEVP Portal users important account creation information. However, the only emails the government will send students are related to the portal to create their SEVP Portal account or to reset their password. The sender of the email will be do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov. There is no cost associated with creating an account or accessing the portal.

The portal shares information with SEVIS but does not give students direct access to SEVIS. The SEVP Portal does not eliminate the need for a student to communicate with their DSO.

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Create an SEVP Portal Account

(Information as stated on US Department of Homeland Security's Study in the States website: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/create-an-sevp-portal-account)

The SEVP Portal makes it easier for F-1 students on Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) to meet their regulatory reporting requirements.

There are four basic steps for creating an account in the SEVP Portal:

1. SEVIS notifies the SEVP Portal of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) approval of the student's OPT or practical training; the portal emails the student instructions for creating a portal account.
2. Student receives the email which contains a link they must use to create the account. This link is unique to the student and cannot be shared or reused.
3. Student clicks the link in the email, enters their SEVIS ID and creates a password.
4. The SEVP Portal creates the student's user profile.
   More details about these steps are explained in the sections below. However, for screenshots and step-by-step instructions, please download and refer to the SEVP Portal User Guide and the SEVP Portal Videos.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SEVP PORTAL:

US Department of Homeland Security's Study in the States website:
https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help

-Includes info & videos on SEVP Portal help, creating an account, user password & user Guide