Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) Online Workshop
What is OPT?

- Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a type of employment authorization approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for eligible F-1 students interested in engaging in employment in the U.S. directly related to their major field of study after their degree completion.

- F-1 students may be eligible for an initial 12 months of OPT per higher degree level achieved.

- Applicants do not need an employment offer to apply for OPT.
Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible, F-1 students:

- Must have maintained valid F-1 status for at least one academic year.
- Must not have had 12-months of OPT authorization for the same degree level.
- Must not have accrued 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization for the same degree level.
  - *Part-time CPT authorization does not affect OPT eligibility.*
  - *Heavy CPT usage (either part-time or full-time) can cause your OPT application to be subject to additional scrutiny.*
- Must be completing a UCLA degree program in the next 90 days.
- USCIS must receive the OPT application by the end of the 60 day grace period.
- Must be within the U.S. at the time they submit their OPT application to USCIS.
**How To Apply**

**Application Process**

**STEP 1:** Review the entire OPT Workshop PDF on the Dashew Website and/or attend the OPT Webinar

**STEP 2:** Pay the $40 Dashew Center OPT Administrative Processing Fee*

**STEP 3:** Submit OPT I-20 request documentation to the Dashew Center

**STEP 4:** Receive OPT I-20 from the Dashew Center

**STEP 5:** Prepare and complete OPT application forms and supporting documents

**STEP 6:** Submit OPT application to USCIS for processing

*Effective 09/05/2023, the Dashew Center OPT Administrative Fee will be $340.
When To Apply

- Students may request an OPT I-20 from the Dashew Center as early as 90 days before their program completion date (as confirmed on your Verification of Degree Completion Form).

- It is highly recommended that students submit their OPT I-20 request to the Dashew Center 3 months before their requested OPT start date.

- USCIS requires approximately 3+ months to approve an OPT application. You can check recent processing times on USCIS’s website.
OPT I-20 Request Procedures

To request an OPT I-20, please:

- Update your email address in MyUCLA (make sure that you will have access to this email address after graduation, because it will be listed in your F-1 SEVIS record and used to create your SEVP Portal account)

And email the following to dcissf1unit@saonet.ucla.edu:

- $40 OPT Administrative Processing Fee payment confirmation*
- OPT I-20 Request Form
- Verification of Degree Completion Form (signed by college academic advisor)
- OPTIONAL F-1 Document Shipping Request Form (only required if you would like a paper-format OPT I-20 shipped to your address)

Your OPT I-20 will be issued within 10 business days of a completed submission request.

*Effective 09/05/2023, the Dashew Center OPT Administrative Fee will be $340.
You must choose your OPT start date to request your updated OPT I-20.

Please indicate your requested OPT start date on your OPT I-20 Request form.
OPT Start and End Dates

- Students must choose their OPT start date before submitting their OPT I-20 request.

- Requested OPT start date must fall within the 60-day grace period, based on the end date of your Degree Verification Form.

- If you find after submitting your application that you will not complete your degree on time or do not wish to move forward with your application, contact the Dashew Center or schedule an appointment with an International Counselor for more details.

NOTE: Graduate students may set their program completion date to their defense date, filing date, or the official quarter end date.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Completion</th>
<th>Program End Date</th>
<th>OPT Start Date Window</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Quarter 2023</td>
<td>12/15/2023</td>
<td>12/16/2023 – 02/13/2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter Quarter 2024</td>
<td>03/22/2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law School Spring 2024</td>
<td>05/10/2024</td>
<td>05/11/2024 – 07/09/2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Quarter 2024</td>
<td>06/14/2024</td>
<td>06/15/2024 – 08/13/2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(earliest submission to the Dashew Center: 03/16/2024)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Select any date within this period as your OPT Start Date.
Application Timeline

Apply up to 3 months before Program Completion date

90 days

Program Completion date

Program Completion date
Apply up to 3 months before Program Completion date

90 days before Program Completion date

Program Completion date

60 days

Requested OPT start date must fall within the 60-day grace period
Application Timeline

Apply up to 3 months before Program Completion date

90 days

Program Completion date

60 days

Requested OPT start date must fall within the 60-day grace period

12 months

OPT End Date
Application Timeline

Apply up to 3 months before Program Completion date

Program Completion date

90 days

Requested OPT start date must fall within the 60-day grace period

12 months

OPT End Date

60 days

Students must depart the U.S., transfer, begin a new degree program, or change visa status by this date

Grace period: Students may remain in the U.S. but may not continue employment
Verification of Degree Completion

This form must be signed by an Academic Advisor.

Your Academic Advisor must confirm your expected program completion date.

Dashew Center staff are not academic advisors.

Electronic signatures will be accepted.

Undergraduate students must be enrolled in at least one degree-required course taken on campus during their final quarter.
What does the OPT Administrative Processing Fee cover?

The Dashew Center OPT Administrative Processing Fee pays for systems required by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to maintain a student’s F-1 SEVIS record during their OPT period.

SEVIS maintenance fees are covered for currently enrolled UCLA students through enrollment fees. Since students will not be enrolled at UCLA during their OPT period, they will be charged an OPT Administrative Processing Fee by the Dashew Center, as SEVIS record maintenance is still required during a student’s OPT and STEM OPT Extension period to allow the Dashew Center to process F-1 benefits such as travel authorization, I-20 requests, STEM OPT Extension and Cap Gap requests, and OPT employment and address updates.

Students are required to pay the Dashew Center OPT Administrative Processing Fee each time they apply for Post-Completion OPT or STEM OPT Extension per degree level.

Note: Effective 09/05/2023, the Dashew Center OPT Administrative Fee will be $340.
The Dashew Center OPT Administrative Processing Fee for the initial 12-Month Post-Completion OPT application is $40.00

To Pay the fee:

- Log in to your Dashew Center account
- Click on the ‘Pay’ link for ‘F-1 OPT: Initial 12-Months’

Note: Effective 09/05/2023, the Dashew Center OPT Administrative Fee will be $340.
OPT Administrative Processing Fee

- Follow the instructions on the payment site to pay the OPT Administrative Processing Fee by debit or credit card.

- To review your payment submission, click on ‘My Payments’ and a record of your payment submission will appear.

Note: Effective 09/05/2023, the Dashew Center OPT Administrative Fee will be $340.
Receipt of your payment will be sent to your email address from UCLA Corporate Financial Services.

A copy of your payment receipt is required for your OPT I-20 Request.

Note: Effective 09/05/2023, the Dashew Center OPT Administrative Fee will be $340.
After you submit your OPT I-20 Request documents to the Dashew Center via email, an F-1 Counselor will issue your electronic or paper OPT I-20.

- Students that would like a paper-format I-20 shipped to their address must submit a completed [F-1 Document Shipping Request Form](#) with their OPT I-20 request documents.

Once you receive your OPT I-20, please sign (with wet-ink signature *only*) and date the student attestation section at the bottom of page 1 of the OPT I-20. Next, make a copy of pages 1 and 2 to include with your OPT application.

Prepare your OPT application for submission to USCIS by following the [OPT Application: Preparation and Mailing Instructions](#).

- USCIS must receive your OPT application within 30 days of your OPT I-20 issue date (as indicated on page 1 of your OPT I-20), and within the 60-day grace period (whichever deadline comes first).
Once you submit your completed OPT application online, you will be issued an application receipt number and will be able to access your application receipt notice through your MyUSCIS account.

Your EAD card will be mailed to the U.S. mailing address provided on your I-765 Form.

If you would like information about USCIS’ Premium Processing of OPT applications, please see here.

Students can file their application online or via mail. While online submission does not speed up USCIS’s processing time, there are some significant benefits such as:

- No shipping delays
- Receive receipt notice of your application immediately
- Receive USCIS notices online, and sign up for email/text notifications
- Track and review your application after submission
- Pay fees online
- Respond to requests for evidence online
- Send USCIS secure messages about your case
- Upload additional documentation to application after submission
OPT Application Materials (if mailing to USCIS)

- I-765 Form

- 2 U.S. style passport photos – Photos must have been taken within 3 months of your OPT application submission. Write your name and SEVIS ID number on back of each photo.

- $410 check or money order made payable to ‘U.S. Department of Homeland Security’ – Write your date of birth and SEVIS ID number on the front of the check in the memo section

- 1 copy of your I-94 Admission Record
  - Electronic I-94: Print record from U.S. Customs and Border Protection website, or
  - Paper I-94: Copy both front and back sides

- 1 copy of your passport biographical page

- 1 copy of pages 1 and 2 of OPT I-20 (with your wet-ink signature)

- 1 copy of all CPT I-20s (if applicable)

- 1 copy of any previous F-1 I-20s and/or J-1 DS-2019s with SEVIS ID numbers that are different than your current SEVIS ID (if applicable)

- 1 copy of any other previous U.S. employment authorization documents (e.g. EAD card), if applicable

Note: If you would like information about USCIS’ Premium Processing of OPT applications, please see [here](#).
Please type and print the I-765 Form, or if completing by hand, use black ink only!

![I-765 Form](image-url)
I am applying for (select only one box):

1.a. ☒ Initial permission to accept employment.

1.b. ☐ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.

NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to Replacement for Card Error in the What is the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.

1.c. ☐ Renewal of my permission to accept employment. (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)
I - 765 Form

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)  
BRUIN

1.b. Given Name (First Name)  
Joe

1.c. Middle Name

Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames used on legal documents. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in Part 6. Additional Information.

2.a. Family Name (Last Name)

2.b. Given Name (First Name)

2.c. Middle Name
- This address **must** be an address in the U.S.
- Your EAD card will be shipped to the address you provide here.
- This mailing address must be valid for at least 4 months into the future from your OPT application submission date to USCIS.
- This address may be a residential, commercial, or P.O. Box address.

If you listed a ‘U.S. Mailing Address’ that is NOT your current, physical address, select “No,” provide the name of someone who resides at that address in the ‘In Care of Name’ field, 5.a., and complete #7.a – 7.d.

This address will determine which USCIS filing location to send your application (See Slide 45 for details).
If you answered “No” for Question #6, please provide your physical address here.
If you have ever applied for benefits from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, you may have an A-Number (also known as a USCIS-Number).

F-1 students usually do not have a USCIS Online Account Number.
Check “No” if you have never applied for an EAD from USCIS.

Check “Yes” if you have previously applied for an EAD. You must provide copies of your previous EADs.

This question does not apply to previous on-campus employment or CPT.

Answer #10 and 11:

10. Gender
   - Male
   - Female

11. Marital Status
   - Single
   - Married
   - Divorced
   - Widowed

12. Have you previously filed Form I-765?
   - Yes
   - No
If you currently have a Social Security Number (SSN), enter the number here.

If you currently have a Social Security Number (SSN), check ‘Yes.’

If you do not have a Social Security Number (SSN), check ‘No.’

13.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?

   □ Yes  □ No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 13.a., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 13.a., provide the information requested in Item Number 13.b.

13.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known).
If you would like to apply for a new or replacement Social Security Number card with your OPT application, please check ‘Yes’ for Questions #14 & 15 and complete #16.a. - 17.b.

- If you are applying for a replacement Social Security Card, you will retain the same Social Security Number.

You will receive your Social Security Card in the mail 2 weeks after you receive your EAD card.

Check ‘No’ for Questions #14 & 15 if you do not want a new or replacement Social Security Card and skip #16.a. – 17.b.
List all countries of citizenship, as applicable.

Please submit copies of all country passports if you have more than one country of citizenship.

Provide your birth city/town/village and state/province

List the name of the country as it was named when you were born, even if its name has changed.

Make sure your Date of Birth is in the correct format: MONTH/DAY/YEAR (01/31/1998 not 31/01/1998)
Enter the information directly from your passport.

Your most recent U.S. entry date can be found on your I-94 Admission Record.

• If your most recent entry date on your I-94 and admission stamp do not match, please use the date on the I-94 Admission Record.

The name of the Port of Entry city from your most recent entry can be found on your most recent admission stamp or Travel History.

Enter your I-94 Admission Record Number here.

This should match the country of citizenship on your I-20.

Enter immigration status at your last arrival and current immigration status (for most applicants, this should be ‘F-1 Student’ for both).

You can find your SEVIS number on the top left side of your current I-20.
Sample Electronic I-94 Admission Record

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America’s Borders

Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number: 123456789 11
Most Recent Date of Entry: 2017 January 02
Class of Admission: F1
Admit Until Date: D/S
Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname: BRUIN
First (Given) Name: JOE
Birth Date: 1996 January 01
Passport Number: A123456789
Country of Issuance: Bruinland

Retrieve a copy of your Electronic I-94 Admission Record on the CBP Website:

https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#!/home
### I-94 Travel History Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Departure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Document Number**: [Redacted]

**Document Country of Issuance**: [Redacted]

**Date of Last Entry to the U.S.**

**Place of Last Entry**

**I-94 Travel History**: [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/history-search](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/history-search)
Use the code (c)(3)(B) for post-completion OPT

Skip questions 28 – 31.b.
Select 1.a. to indicate that you have read and understood the questions.

Provide your information as requested.
 Applicant's Declaration and Certification

Copies of any documents I have submitted are exact photocopies of unaltered, original documents, and I understand that USCIS may require that I submit original documents to USCIS at a later date. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information from any and all of my records that USCIS may need to determine my eligibility for the immigration benefit that I seek.

I furthermore authorize release of information contained in this application, in supporting documents, and in my USCIS records, to other entities and persons where necessary for the administration and enforcement of U.S. immigration law.

I understand that USCIS may require me to appear for an appointment to take my biometrics (fingerprints, photograph, and/or signature) and, at that time, if I am required to provide biometrics, I will be required to sign an oath reaffirming that:

1) I reviewed and understood all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application; and

2) All of this information was complete, true, and correct at the time of filing.

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that all of the information in my application and any document submitted with it were provided or authorized by me, that I reviewed and understand all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application and that all of this information is complete, true, and correct.

Applicant's Signature

7.a. Applicant's Signature

7.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

NOTE TO ALL APPLICANTS: If you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents listed in the Instructions, USCIS may deny your application.

Provide your original wet signature and the date of the signature. Electronic (not digital) signatures are also currently accepted by USCIS for COVID-19 accommodations.

Read the entire declaration carefully.
Part 6 needs to be completed ONLY if:

- You have previously had other SEVIS IDs (different than your current SEVIS ID)
- You have ever been authorized for CPT or OPT

If neither of these apply to you, leave Part 6 blank and you are done with the I-765
If you have been previously authorized for CPT:

Copy this ‘Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number’ for previous CPT authorization

If you have had previous CPT authorization, please list all periods of part-time or full-time CPT, the appropriate degree objective, the employer’s name, and dates.

Please submit copies of any/all CPT I-20s.
If you were previously authorized for OPT:

Copy this ‘Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number’ for previous OPT authorization

Please list any periods of authorized part-time or full-time OPT, and the appropriate degree objective(s).

Please submit copies of any/all EAD cards.

(you may need to contact your previous schools if you are missing any of this information)
If you previously attended UCLA or another U.S. institution in F, J or M status and were issued a SEVIS ID number that is different from your current SEVIS ID:

Please list all previously used SEVIS numbers from all previous F/J/M programs in the U.S., including high school, short stays, community colleges, or previous I-20s at UCLA.

Please submit copies of those I-20s and DS-2019s.

(you may need to contact your previous school(s) if you are missing any of this information)

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### Part 6. Additional Information

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page Number</th>
<th>Part Number</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You have completed the I-765 Form!

Review all the information on the form for accuracy. You must submit ALL 7 pages of the I-765 to USCIS.

Make a copy of your completed I-765 application to keep for your records, in case there is a problem with the application.
USCIS accepts the following payment methods for the $410 I-765 Form filing fee:

- **Personal Check**: Use a check from your personal debit/bank account. Funds will be drawn directly from your personal bank account.

  Note: Providing a personal check with insufficient funds or a Canadian check will result in the denial of your application.

- **Cashier’s Check**: Go to your local bank (where you have your debit account) and request a Cashier’s Check. A Cashier’s Check is a draft guarantee drawn from your bank’s own funds. Your bank will withdraw funds from your personal account to create the Cashier’s Check.

- **Money Order**: A money order can be purchased at a U.S. post office, Western Union or CVS/pharmacy. Cash will need to be exchanged to obtain a money order for a specified amount.

  Note: the Dashew Center recommends using a Personal Check or Cashier’s Check. A Personal Check or Cashier’s Check can be tracked, and are more secure payment methods since they are guaranteed by a bank.
$410 Filing Fee

Sample

Joe Bruin
12345 Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90095

Pay to the order of: **U.S Department of Homeland Security**

Four Hundred Ten and 00/100

DOB: 01/01/1996
SEVIS ID#: N0000000000

Write your Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY) and your SEVIS ID # in the memo section.

Note: Do **NOT** write on the back of your Personal Check or Cashier’s Check.
U.S. Style Passport Photos

Photo Requirements

- Photo must be new and recent (taken within 3 months of your OPT application submission)
- Photo cannot be the same photo used for your F-1 Visa or Passport
- Photo must be 2 inches by 2 inches
- White background only
- Neutral expression only
- Eyes and ears must be visible
- No glasses or eyewear
- Photos must be on photo stock paper and pre-cut (to 2 inches by 2 inches)

Recommended locations to have your photo taken:

Campus Photo Studio
Ackerman Union A-Level
310-206-8433

FedEx Office Ship & Ship Center
Westwood Location:
10924 Weyburn Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90024 • 310-443-5501

Wilshire South Location:
1520 Westwood Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90024 • 310-475-0789

Write LAST NAME, First Name and SEVIS ID Number on back side of photos.
Once you have prepared all of your OPT application forms and supporting documents using the [OPT Application: Preparation and Mailing Instructions](#), please ship your application to the USCIS Chicago Lockbox location.

- Please ship your application to USCIS using a courier service with mail tracking.

- If you need USCIS’ phone number to process your OPT application shipment, please use: **800-375-5283**
After OPT Application Submission to USCIS

- Applicants will receive an I-797 Notice of Action Receipt Notice from USCIS after the OPT application was received by USCIS.

- Applicants can check the status of their OPT application online using the receipt number in their I-797 Notice of Action Receipt Notice. USCIS Case Status: [https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do](https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do)

- Applicants will receive a Notice of Approval from USCIS approximately 3+ months from the date their OPT application was received by USCIS.

- Applicants will receive First Class mail containing their Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card after the request has been approved by USCIS. Check your address using the USPS Zip-Code Lookup tool.

- Once your OPT application has been approved and your OPT start date has been reached, you will receive an email from SEVP with a link to create a SEVP Portal account. Follow the instructions provided in the email to create your account. If you are locked out of your SEVP Portal account, email [OPT@saonet.ucla.edu](mailto:OPT@saonet.ucla.edu) with your full name and UID for assistance.
After you receive your EAD card, submit PDF copies of the front and back of your card to OPT@saonet.ucla.edu (include your UID in your email)
EAD Card Restrictions

- Students may not begin employment until they have received their Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card and the start date as indicated on the EAD card has been reached.

- Students may not continue working beyond the end date of the EAD card.

**Exception:** Students with a timely filed, pending 24-month OPT STEM Extension application or a valid Cap-Gap I-20 may continue employment beyond their OPT end date without receiving a new EAD card. For more information, please review the STEM OPT workshop.
Address and Mailing of EAD Card

We recommend that you provide a mailing address for your OPT application that will be valid for at least 4 months from your application submission date.

- If you move before receiving the EAD card you may risk losing your EAD card in the mail, even if you file a change of address with USCIS after submitting your OPT application to USCIS for processing.
- U.S. Postal Service (USPS) does not forward federal mail, even if you request mail forwarding services from USPS.
- If you must change address, you can file form AR-11 with USCIS online or login to your MyUSCIS account to do so.

What do I do if I lost my EAD card?
Apply for a replacement EAD card from USCIS online, which will require a new I-765 form, $410.00 filing fee, and supporting documents. Contact USCIS and USPS if lost in the mail, then request a new EAD card from USCIS.
OPT Employment Restriction

- Students on OPT have a total of **90 cumulative calendar days** (including weekends and holidays) of allowed unemployment time during their 12-month OPT period that begins on the start date of their EAD card if employment has not been reported to the SEVP Portal.

- Exceeding 90 days of unemployment will end the OPT period and you must depart the U.S. Please schedule an appointment with a Dashew Center F-1 Counselor or email **OPT@saonet.ucla.edu** prior to this happening to discuss options.

- OPT employment **must be directly related to the student’s degree program/major field of study**. OPT employment must be appropriate for the student’s degree level.
Who determines if my OPT employment is related to my degree?

- U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) leaves this discretion to students to determine. Should DHS audit your OPT employment and find that your employment is not related to your degree, you will be in violation of your F-1 status.

- Working in a field that is not related to your degree (e.g. major) is considered unauthorized employment and is a serious violation of your F-1 Status, which may negatively impact future immigration benefits in the U.S.

- You can refer to the learning outcomes of your degree program listed on your department’s website.
**OPT Employment Types**

- **Paid Employment:** A student may work part time (at least 20 hours per week), or full-time.

- **Multiple Employers:** A student may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to the student’s degree program. Employment for 1 employer must be at least 20 hours per week.

- **Short-term multiple employers:**
  A student, such as a musician or other type of performing artist, may work for multiple short term employers (gigs). The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration. Employment must be at least 20 hours per week.

- **Work for Hire (Contractual):** This is commonly referred to as 1099 employment, where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than employment relationship. If requested by DHS, the student must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract period and the name and address of the contracting company. Employment must be at least 20 hours per week.
OPT Employment Types

- **Self-Employed Business Owner:** A student on OPT may start a business and be self-employed. The student must be able to prove that they have the proper business licenses and are actively engaged in a business related to the student’s degree program. Employment must be at least 20 hours per week.

- **Employment Through an Agency or Consulting firm:**
  A student on OPT must be able to provide evidence showing they worked at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.

- **Unpaid Employment:** A student may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern, where this practice does not violate any U.S. labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week. A student must be able to provide evidence acquired from the student’s employer to verify that the student worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment.

*The Dashew Center recommends obtaining job verification documentation for all employment (dates, hours, duties, and other pertinent information)*
Submit Copy of EAD Card to the Dashew Center

- Email copies of the front and back sides of your EAD card to: OPT@saonet.ucla.edu

F-1 students on OPT are required to report the following information during their OPT period within 10 days of any change through the SEVP Portal:

1. **OPT Employment Status**
   - Job title and detailed description of how the job is related to your degree
   - Start and end dates of employment
   - Part-time (up to 20 hours/week) or Full-time (more than 20 hours/week) employment
   - Company name, address, and phone number

2. **Update Contact Information**
   - Verify residential address and U.S. telephone number
Resetting Portal Account

Within 72 hours of the OPT start date listed on the EAD card, you should receive an email with instructions to access your SEVP Portal for the first time.

If you do not receive an email, please contact the Dashew Center promptly at OPT@saonet.ucla.edu
Updated I-20 Requests

- Students may request an updated I-20 from the Dashew Center after they receive their EAD card in the mail. An updated I-20 is not required to maintain F-1 status, but is highly recommended if a student will be traveling internationally and re-entering the U.S. after their program completion date.

  - The updated I-20 will show a student’s OPT status as ‘APPROVED’ on page 2 and will include employment information that has been reported through the SEVP Portal.

- To request an updated I-20, please send an email with your full name and UID with the following documents attached to OPT@saonet.ucla.edu:
  - Completed I-20 Request Form
  - Copies of the front and back of your EAD card
  - Completed F-1 Document Shipping Request Form (only required if you would like a paper-format I-20 shipped to you)
Cap Gap I-20: Transition to H-1B

- Cap Gap – a period in which a student’s F-1 status and OPT authorization is automatically extended by USCIS to bridge the gap between the end of their F-1 status and the start of their H-1B status.

- The most common situation occurs when a student’s OPT ends in the Spring or Summer and their F-1 status expires 60 days later, leaving a gap of several months before the start of the student’s H-1B status on October 1.

- If granted by USCIS, the Cap Gap I-20 will automatically extend a student’s F-1 status and OPT authorization without requiring a new EAD card.
Cap Gap I-20 Request

- The Cap Gap is available to F-1 students in all fields of study engaging in OPT with pending or approved cap-subject H-1B petitions.

- To request a Cap-Gap I-20:
  1. Report any/all OPT employment through the SEVP Portal
  2. Send an email with your full name and UID with the following documents to OPT@saonet.ucla.edu
     - Completed I-20 Request Form
     - Copy of H-1B Receipt Notice or Approval Notice from USCIS (I-797A or I-797C)
     - Copy of front and back of EAD Card
     - Completed F-1 Document Shipping Request Form (only required if you would like a paper-format I-20 from the Dashew Center shipped to you)
International Travel

Dashew Center does not recommend traveling outside of the U.S. while their OPT application is pending with USCIS. Traveling outside the U.S. in the grace period prior to OPT approval could result in OPT being denied.

Documents required to re-enter the U.S. in valid F-1 status AFTER OPT has been approved and EAD card received:

- **Valid Passport** (with at least 6 months validity from re-entry date)
- **Valid F-1 Visa**
- **Endorsed OPT I-20** (each travel authorization signature is valid for 6 months from the date it was last signed and must be valid at the time of entry to the U.S.)
- **EAD Card**
- **Proof of Employment or Offer Letter** (Verification document from an employer verifying your job title, job duties, duration and start date of employment written on company letterhead)
F-1 students engaging in OPT will still hold F-1 status in the U.S.

The Dashew Center will maintain an F-1 student’s SEVIS record during their approved OPT period.

F-1 students may continue to request services from the Dashew Center such as advising appointments, support letters and travel authorization during their approved OPT period.

F-1 students engaging in OPT are still required to obtain a travel signature from the Dashew Center on their I-20 to re-enter the U.S. in valid F-1 status after traveling abroad.

Each travel authorization signature is valid for 6 months from the date it was last signed and must be valid at the time of entry to the U.S.
Questions?

Please attend our OPT Webinar
Email us at dcissf1unit@saonet.ucla.edu