

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

Practical Training must be directly related to your field of studies

--- after completion of studies (BUT, must be applied for BEFORE your actual completion date)

Procedures:

**--- when you begin your final semester,
get I-765 and substitute I-538 from the International Center**

**--- get a letter from your academic adviser stating that
practical training would be beneficial for you**

--- obtain two (2) photos of yourself taken no earlier than 30 days before application to USCIS. The color photos should be on a plain background; unmounted; printed on thin paper; glossy; and unretouched. The photos should show a front view of the full face, as is now used for visa applications. Your head should be bare unless you are wearing a headdress as required by a religious order to which you belong. The photo should be no larger than 2 x 2 inches, with the distance from the top of the head to just below the chin between 1 – 1 3/8 inches. Lightly print your name and SEVIS ID number on the back of each photo with a pencil.

[Take these directions with you to the photographer. If not done correctly, your application will be returned and needlessly delayed.]
{You may have OPT pictures taken at the International Center. The fee is \$10 for the 2 photos (cash or check). An appointment is necessary unless done at the same time as your OPT application appointment.}

--- complete form I-765 and substitute I-538

**--- make an appointment with Dr. Grouling or Jami Demuth
bring I-765,
substitute I-538,
current SEVIS I-20,
passport with visa and I-94,
letter from academic adviser (which may be sent to
Dr. Grouling in advance, directly by your adviser),
the 2 photos,
and a check for \$180 made out to Department of
Homeland Security (DHS)**

- submit application to USCIS Regional Service Center**
- get Employment Authorization Document (EAD)**
- take EAD to International Center so copy may be made for your file (or mail a copy if you have moved)**
- begin full-time employment any time AFTER you get your EAD and the starting date on the EAD has arrived**
- inform the International Center of your employer's name and location, as well as any change of address for yourself within 10 days of the change.**

Note: SEVIS regulations require you to report any changes of address or employer, including termination, to your school within 10 days of the date it happens; otherwise, it is a violation of status.

Note: Employment is limited to a maximum of 12 months, less any deductions for pre-completion practical training. (CPT or OPT)

Beyond Practical Training

Optional Practical Training (OPT), if approved by USCIS, extends your F-1 status up to one year beyond your graduation.

If you and your employer want to continue beyond the year of OPT, at least five months BEFORE your OPT expires, you must request a change of status to H-1 temporary worker. Your employer must also file a petition (I-129B) on your behalf as well as obtain an LCA (Labor Condition Application) from the US Dept. of Labor. If granted, you may be authorized to work in H status up to six years.

You will probably need to consult with an immigration lawyer for assistance. Consult the Telephone Yellow Pages for Attorneys and look for someone who does Immigration Law, especially a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA).

Any continuation beyond the six years would require petition to become a Permanent Resident of the U.S. You may want to consult an immigration lawyer for assistance.

(Rev., February, 2006)