

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) PROCEDURE

When to Apply

Students who intend to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) must fill-out the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization. Students are able to submit the application 90 days prior to the completion of their program. For example, if your last day of your final quarter is June 08, you are recommended to apply as early as March 10. Students are also able to apply up to 60 days after the last day of your final quarter or program.

How to Apply

Please read the following instructions carefully. Although the Director of Student Services provides information and help with the process, the OPT application is your application. Horizon University (HU) does not approve the application or have the authority to influence the process. If there is a request for additional information by the USCIS, USCIS will notify you of the request and it is your responsibility to **respond to the request ON TIME!**

Please read the instruction provided below carefully and meet the Director of Student Services before filling out the application and starting the process.

STEP 1: Request your Final Quarter “Reduced Course Load” to the Registrar/PDSO (if applicable)

If you do not need to enroll full-time in your final quarter to graduate, please inform the Registrar and/or PDSO before submitting your OPT application.

Skip this step if your enrollment will still be full-time for immigration purposes.

Full-time for Undergraduate Students: 12 credits

Full-time for Graduate Students: 8 credits

STEP 2: Download the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization and Instructions from <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

STEP 3: Fill-Out Your OPT Application Form and gather the Following Documents

- Completed G-1145 Form (optional; This form will allow you to receive email/text message notifications for your application’s arrival at USCIS)
- Completed the I-765 Form
- Photocopy of all previously issued I-20s (pages 1 and 3) (pages 1 and 2 of the updated/redesigned I-20s)
- Photocopy of passport identification page

- Photocopy of F-1 visa page
- Two passport-style Photos
 - USCIS photo instructions (see the “Required Documentation” section on page 13)
 - Lightly print your name and your I-94 number in pencil or felt pen on the back of each photo.
 - The photos must have been taken within the last 30 days (do not use the same photos used for your F-1 visa application; USCIS might notice and will return the application).
 - The two photos should have a white background.
 - They should be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish, and be unmounted and unretouched.
 - The photos should show a passport-style, full-face image, with both ears visible.
 - The photos should be 2 by 2 inches, with the distance from the top of the head to just below the chin about 1 3/8 inches.
- Printout of your electronic I-94 information, which can be obtained at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/>
- Photocopy of previously issued EAD (if applicable)
- Pay the Form I-765 filing fee by money order, personal check, cashier’s check, or credit card using Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions. If you pay by check, you must make your check payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- OPT Start Date:
 - The “start date” is the date your work permission begins. You cannot work earlier than the start date, but you can start working later.
 - Your requested start date must be within 60 days after your program completion date. For example, if you graduate or complete your program June 8, your start date can be no later than August 7.
 - Changing the requested OPT dates after the application has been mailed to USCIS can be very difficult. Choose your dates carefully.

STEP 4: Submit Your Completed OPT Application to the Director of Student Services

Submit your completed OPT application (except the OPT fee) to the Director of Student Services. The Director of Student Services will review your application, note any items missing or needing to be changed, and the PDSO will issue a new, updated I-20 with an OPT recommendation printed on page 2. **Allow 7-10 business days for processing.** You will be notified by the Director of Student Services to pick up the application materials and the new I-20.

Step 5: Pick Up Your Application Form the Director of Student Services and mail it to USCIS

1. Review your application to make sure that it is complete.
 2. Sign your OPT-endorsed I-20 at the bottom of page 1 before photocopying it and mailing it to USCIS.
 3. Mail your application within **30 days** of the new OPT-endorsed I-20 being issued. **Late applications will be denied by USCIS.**
- Do not mail your original passport, I-94, or I-20.

- It is recommended you send your application by certified mail, return receipt requested.
- Mail the application to:
 - **For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries**
USCIS
PO Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036
 - **For Express Mail and Courier Service Deliveries**
USCIS
Attn: AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S.
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

After You Mail Your OPT Application to USCIS

USCIS will send you a receipt notice (I-797 Notice of Action) confirming receipt of your OPT application, assigning a “receipt date,” and assigning a receipt number. Carefully review the notice to make sure your name is spelled correctly. If it is not, contact the Director of Student Services immediately.

You may use the receipt number on your receipt notice to check the status of your application online. It is normal for your case status to say “initial review” for most of the 2-3 month processing period.

You may not begin employment until USCIS approves the OPT application and you have received your Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Authorized OPT dates will be on your EAD.

WARNING

You must report your practical training/employment to the Director of Student Services and/or PDSO. **If you do not report your practical training/employment to the Director of Student Services and/or PDSO, the U.S. government will terminate your F-1 SEVIS record 90 days after the OPT start date printed on your EAD card.** A terminated SEVIS record cancels the OPT authorization and requires you to leave the U.S.