

## **Optional Practical Training Instructions and Student Checklist**

All students in F-1 status are eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT) that allows for up to one year of paid employment in the United States after completion of studies. To be eligible to apply for Optional Practical Training you must have been a student for at least one academic year and be in good standing. You do not need a job offer to apply, however, you will need to have a US address in order to apply and receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

If you apply for OPT following graduation you may begin the application no sooner than 90 days before graduation, and no later than 60 days after your program end date. You must use the most recent form I-765 dated 04/08/08 or later. Allow 3-4 months to receive the EAD after you apply. You may not begin employment prior to the date stated on the EAD and you must complete work by the expiration date stated on the EAD.

### ***Checklist for Optional Practical Training:***

- Complete **Form I-765**, Application for Employment Authorization. The form contains all necessary instructions and the mailing address. For item 16 on the application be sure to include (c) (3) (B) as the eligibility category.
- See an International Student Advisor to be issued a **new I-20**. The new I-20 will include your recommendation for OPT, dates of employment, employer name and address if known.
- Two color photographs that comply with the size requirements and pose as instructed in Form I-765. Print your name and Alien Registration Number on the back in pencil.
- Check or money order for the current fee in US dollars. Make check payable to Department of Homeland Security. Always check for current fee as fees are subject to change.
- Photocopy of your passport identification page or other ID.
- Photocopies of your current I-20 (copy all I-20's in your possession if you have more than one), the new I-20 bearing certification for eligibility to apply for OPT and both sides of your I-94 (white card). You will keep the originals and submit the copies with the application for the EAD.
- If you have previously been approved for an EAD, photocopy the front and back of the card.
- Review all instructions and insure you have all necessary documents and that the information is accurate.
- Job search effort must be full time. Keep a detailed log of your employer contacts. Please note you may not accumulate more than 90 days unemployment during your one year of OPT.
- When you accept employment you must notify us of your employer name and your new address within 10 days.
- Travel – you may only travel and re-enter if your OPT is still pending or if you have a job. You will not be allowed to re-enter the U.S. if your OPT has been approved but you do not have a job.
- Mail your application to the District Service Center that has jurisdiction over your place of residence. As a student your current U.S. address is in Maine so you would mail it to:

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Vermont Service Center  
75 Lower Welden St.  
Saint Albans, Vermont 05479

(If your U.S. address is in another State use the address indicated in the instructions for Form I-765)

Your EAD will arrive by mail at your U.S. address. You may look for employment but may not start until the active date on the card. After you receive a job offer you may apply for the Social Security Number.

If you change your address from that listed on the application please notify our office of the change. You may also file Form AR-11, Alien Change of Address Card. If you travel while on OPT you will need to have a current Passport and a properly endorsed I-20 to return to the US.