

# Optional Practical Training (OPT)

## Understanding OPT Basics & Your Role

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# Who is this Presentation for?

- This PowerPoint Presentation is for ALL F-1 students thinking about applying for Practical Training
- You can reference this PowerPoint at anytime on TC3 Globa's web page

So...

## What is Practical Training?

- If you are an F-1 student, you have the option of applying to the USCIS work in the US by engaging in “practical training” during your program or after it ends.
- This is a period of time known as “Practical Training”.

# Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- An optional benefit for F-1 students that allows you to work in a non- student and/or off-campus job.
  - Extends F-1 student immigration status
  - Temporary work authorization for up to 12 months
  - Employment must be in a position related to your field of study
  - NOT employer specific. You can work anywhere in the U.S.

# Types of OPT Employment

Part-time = NO minimum; 20 hours maximum

Full-time = 20 hours minimum; NO maximum

# Eligibility for OPT

- To be eligible for OPT, a student must:
- Be in legal F-1 immigration status at the time of application
- Have been enrolled full-time for at least one academic year
- Not have been previously approved for 12 months of OPT at the same degree level

# Length of OPT

- Maximum
  - 12 months of full-time OPT per degree level

# How to Apply for OPT

1. Come to Global Office to pick up an OPT application packet
2. Meet with your academic advisor to have them recommend you for practical training
3. Get appointment and bring **entire completed OPT application** to Global
4. Receive a new I-20 with DSO recommendation
5. Mail new I-20 with the rest of your application
6. Wait 2-3 months for your EAD card. **Do not work while waiting.**

# Checking Your Status Online

- USCIS (U.S. Customs & Immigration Services) will send you a receipt (I-797). The case number it contains allows you to track your application.
- Recommendation: Include a Form G-1145-E with application that allows you to receive email notifications about your application

# While Your OPT is “Pending”

- You are advised travel and re-enter the US ONLY when necessary
- Travel with documentation of your pending OPT request
  - If possible, do not re-enter the US until you have received the EAD and have it with you. (EAD card + employer letter is even better.)

# If your OPT is Approved

- If approved, your EAD will either be mailed to you or you may be required to visit your local USCIS office to pick it up.
- You can begin employment once you have received your “Approval” notice and EAD.
- Once OPT has begun, you cannot be unemployed for more than 90 accumulated days.

# Now what? Travel on OPT

- You must not travel outside the US without all of the following:
  - Form 1-20, signed by a DSO within six months
  - Evidence of employment (letter)
  - Valid EAD card
  - Valid passport
  - Unexpired F-1 visa

# Studying While on OPT

- Recreational courses only permitted  
Non-degree-seeking, non-credit
- If you begin an new degree program at TC3 or elsewhere, your OPT is automatically terminated

# After OPT ends...

- 60-day “grace period”.

Either:

- Depart the US. Cannot re-enter with current I-20 any longer
- Request a new I-20 to begin a new program of study
- Transfer your SEVIS record to a new school
- Apply to *change status* to another category

# If Your OPT is “Denied”

- Denial letter will explain reasons for the denial (No option to appeal to a higher authority!)
- You may submit a ***motion to reopen*** or a ***motion to reconsider*** to the office that made the decision
- If you choose not to reopen and appeal the decision, you must return home as your I-20 has been completed

# Questions?

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