



**AUBURN UNIVERSITY  
AT MONTGOMERY**

**OFFICE OF  
GLOBAL INITIATIVES**

## Optional Practical Training (OPT)

**\*\*NOTE:** *The following is intended for use by F-1 students who have been issued a recommendation for OPT by Auburn University at Montgomery and is offered by the university's Designated School Officials (DSOs) for informational purposes only. This document does not constitute legal advice. If you desire legal advice for your specific case, please consult a qualified immigration attorney.*

### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:**

- Be enrolled at Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM) for at least (1) one full academic year
- Be in active status with SEVIS
- Be making normal progress towards a degree

### **FORMS FOR ONLINE USCIS APPLICATION:**

- **Pay the \$390 non-refundable OPT fee**
- Create **MyUSCIS Online Account** to submit application
- Complete **I-765 Form**
- Digital copy of OPT Request I-20 issued by OGI (*Must be signed by student and DSO*)
- Digital copy of passport (front and back pages)
- Digital copy of I-94
- Digital 2x2 passport-style photo
  - **The photos must meet the following requirements:**
    - *Frame subject with full face, front view, eyes open*
    - *Photo must present full head from top of hair to bottom of chin and measure 1" to 1-3/8"*
    - *Center head within frame*
    - *Background should be plain white or off-white*
    - *Have a natural expression*
    - *Contain no distracting shadows on face or background*
- A debit or credit card to pay the US Department of Homeland Security's \$470 fee

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND HELPFUL HINTS DURING OPT:**

- You must work a minimum of **20 hours per week** in a position related to your field of study.
- You cannot exceed more than **90 days of unemployment** while on OPT. Days of unemployment prior to your EAD start date do not count towards the 90 days. It is your responsibility to keep records of your employment and any periods of unemployment.
- Avoid long absences from the US during the OPT period. Time spent outside of the US while

unemployed by a US employer counts toward your 90 days of unemployment. In most cases, re-entry to the U.S. will not be possible once students complete their program unless they have been approved for OPT, received their EAD card, and have a valid offer of employment letter. **Travel outside of the United States while an application is pending with USCIS is strongly discouraged.**

- You must not enter the U.S. in a status other than F-1. This may result in the loss of your OPT eligibility.

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

- A student can apply for full-time authorization during annual vacations.
- There are only 12 total months available and any training done before the degree is completed will count against the 12-month total and reduce time available after the degree is awarded.
- Each time you apply for OPT, you will pay the application fee again.

#### **PROCESSING TIME:**

- **The application processing time is usually 3 months.** You should apply no earlier than 90 days before the completion date on your I-20 but you should apply as early as possible.
- Within approximately 21 to 30 working days after USCIS receives your application, you will receive a “Notice of Action” (Form I-797C), verifying they have received your application for OPT. In the top left hand corner, you will see an SRC number that can be used to track the processing status of your application using the following link:  
<https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard/CaseStatus>.

**If you have any additional questions, please contact The Office of Global Initiatives at Auburn University at Montgomery.**

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