OPT WORKSHOP

F-1 International Students

Global Engagement Office
Brooks 221
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

- What is OPT?
- OPT Facts
- Types of OPT
  - Pre-Completion
  - Post-Completion
  - STEM Extension OPT
- Applying for OPT
- OPT Reporting & Travel Requirements
WHAT IS OPT?

Optional practical training
(8CFR214.2(f)(10)(ii)

- **temporary employment authorization**
- work experience (on- or off-campus)
- **directly related** to their area of study
- Available to all majors
- 12 Months of work
OPT FACTS

- Eligible to apply if:
  
  ○ Completed and maintained F-1 status at least **one full academic year** of study (Fall and Spring semesters only*)
  
  ○ You have not exceeded 12 months of full-time CPT
  
  ○ You do NOT have a job before you apply.

*summer semesters are considered vacation time for international students and do NOT count toward full academic year of study.
OPT PROCESS

1. Application
2. Approval
3. EAD card
4. Work
TYPES OF OPT
OPT: PRE-COMPLETION

WHEN?

● **BEFORE** graduation or program completion

● **AFTER** completing your first year of full time study (fall and spring semesters)

● **Apply 90 days** before you want to begin working
OPT: PRE-COMPLETION

- **Enrolled full-time** (12 credits undergraduate/6-9 credits graduate).
  - Only *work 20 hours per week Fall & Spring*
  - During breaks from school- 37.5 hours

- **Deducts time away** from the 12 months period of OPT *(50% rate).*
  - Ex. 4 months pre-OPT = 2 months post-OPT; only 10 months of post-OPT available
When? Apply **BEFORE** you graduate

- 90 days before your graduation or completion date/final semester of study
- No later than 60 days after program end date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Application Date</th>
<th>Recommended Deadline</th>
<th>End of 60 day Grace period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>9/16/2019</td>
<td>12/17</td>
<td>2/14/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>2/17/2020</td>
<td>5/14/2020</td>
<td>07/14/2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPLYING FOR OPT**

*One OPT authorization* per degree level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>OPT Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>12 months OPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>12 months OPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>12 months OPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM Majors</td>
<td>24 month- OPT extension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPLYING FOR OPT

CHOOSE YOUR OPT START DATE

Your start date must fall within **60 days** after your program end date

- Program End Date: **12/15/2019**
- OPT Start date: Between **12/16/2019** - **2/15/2020**

What to consider:

- Do you still need to find an employer after graduation?
- Will you need to move?
APPLYING FOR OPT

PREPARE **ALL documents** BEFORE YOUR GEO APPOINTMENT

- OPT Application (advisor)
- Completed **I-765 Application Form**
- Copy of Passport and Visa
- I-94 ([www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94))
- Two [passport-regulation photos](#) (less than 30 days old)
- Previous jobs? EAD card/documents
- A personal check, money order, or cashiers check for **$410**, payable to *Department of Homeland Security*
- **G-1145 e-Notification application**
FORM I-765

- **Part 1**
  - #1a “Initial permission to accept employment”

- **Part 2**
  - #5 US Mailing Address
    - 5a “Global Engagement Office Samford University”
  - #7a-e Physical Address: You
  - #13-17 Social Security
  - #21-26 Immigration documents (I-94, passport, I-20)

- **Line 27**
  - Post-completion code: (c) (3) (b)
  - STEM Extension code: (c) (3) (c)
OPT: PROCESSING TIME

- USCIS may require **up to 90 days (or more)** for processing.
- Processing times may be verified at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).
- DON’T WAIT!!
- Processing will take longer closer to graduation.
APPLYING FOR OPT

FINAL STEPS:

● Make an **appointment with Mrs. Beck**

● Bring **ALL documents** to GEO
  ○ OPT Application (advisor)
  ○ Completed [I-765 Application Form](#)
  ○ Copy of Passport and Visa
  ○ I-94 ([www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94))
  ○ Two [passport-regulation photos](#) (less than 30 days old)
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  ○ [G-1145 e-Notification application](#)
APPLYING FOR OPT

- **During appointment:**
  - Sign your new I-20
  - Set up shipment through [eShipGlobal.com](http://eShipGlobal.com)

- GEO will mail your completed application packet to USCIS

- If you do not graduate by the expected program end date on your **OPT endorsed I-20**, contact the GEO Office **BEFORE your I-20 expires.**
AFTER THE MAILING...NOW WHAT?

1. Your check will be cashed

1. You will receive **an e-Notification** (2 or 3 weeks) from USCIS including:
   - case number
   - website
   - customer service phone number
APPROVAL DECISION...NOW WHAT?

GEO receives Employment Authorization (EAD) card

You will be notified by **SU email to:**

- Pick up the EAD card
- Sign the Employment Regulations agreement
- Set up your OPT Portal account
Reporting, Volunteering and Travel Requirements while on OPT
ADDRESS UPDATE

Update your **address** within **TEN days** of moving:

1. Complete the Change of Address online:
   [www.uscis.gov/addresschange](http://www.uscis.gov/addresschange)

2. Banner portal: [https://portal.samford.edu](https://portal.samford.edu)

3. Complete the **Student Request** on the GEO website:
   - SUID
   - full name
   - new address
   - telephone number
   - Choose “Other”: Specify- Contact Information update
FINDING A JOB

- E-Verified Employer? **YES** or **NO**
- Volunteer? **YES**
  - Directly related to major
  - At least 20 hours or more weekly
  - Submit a Letter of Commitment
I GOT A JOB!

• Email jlbeck@Samford.edu to inform. Include an employment letter with the job description and relevant details (see Sample Employment Letter on the website).

• Report your employment information on your OPT Portal:

  Employer Name, Address and email
  Date Began/Started
  Date Ended/Stopped
  Supervisor's Name, Email, Tel #
EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS

Review the Regulations carefully!
GEO website:  [Employment Regulations]

- May not exceed **90 total days** of unemployment

- Work **at least 20 hours** or more per week
TRAVEL DURING OPT

● Always risks!! Review the Travel Information on the GEO website

● To return to US:
  ○ Valid Passport (valid at least 6 months beyond entry date)
  ○ Valid F-1 Visa
  ○ I-20 with Valid travel signature (6 months from date signed)
  ○ Employment Authorization Document (EAD card)
  ○ Letter of Employment
  ○ 2-3 recent pay stubs (if already employed)

● *Dependents must have their own I-20, passport, F2 visa and copy of the F1s I-20, OPT card and employment letter
STEM OPT EXTENSION

Eligibility:

● **Completed** a STEM degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics
  ○ *See Department of Homeland Security (DHS) STEM Designated Degree Program List* [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm)

● **Currently participating** in a 12-month post-completion OPT based upon a STEM degree

● **Working for a U.S. employer**
  ○ Job directly related to the student's major
  ○ *E-verified employer* [http://www.uscis.gov/E-verify](http://www.uscis.gov/E-verify)
STEM OPT EXTENSION

- **Maintaining** F-1 status
- Did **NOT** receive a previous STEM OPT Extension
I’VE DECIDED NOT TO APPLY FOR OPT

- **During your 60 day grace-period**, you have time to:
  - Start a new program at Samford or another school
    - Transfer or update records at Samford or another school with acceptance into your new program prior to the end of grace period
  - Take care of matters in the U.S. and depart
  - You *may not* work or study during the 60 day grace-period
OPT QUESTIONS?
CONTACT THE
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT OFFICE

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International Student & Scholar Coordinator
jlbeck@samford.edu
(205) 726-4334

General Questions
geo@samford.edu