

ECC Optional Practical Training Application

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a form of temporary employment authorization that allows F-1 students to gain practical experience directly related to their major area of study. All OPT must be recommended by a DSO at Elgin Community College and all work done on OPT must be directly related to your major. Review the information at www.elgin.edu/international for information on eligibility.

Name: _____ Student ID: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____
Start Date at ECC: _____ Anticipated Graduation Date at ECC: _____
Program of Study: _____
Type of OPT Requested: _____ OPT Requested Start Date: _____

OPT Advising Appointment

Schedule an OPT advising appointment with the Center for Global Engagement and bring the required documents listed below. For purposes of the advising meeting with the DSO, please bring printed copies of the documents to the meeting. Send an email to international@elgin.edu to schedule your appointment.

Required Documentation

- ☐ [I-765, Application for Employment Authorization](#)
- ☐ A letter written by you to the DSO with a description of how your planned OPT relates to your program of study. This letter will be retained in your student file.
- ☐ A letter from your academic advisor indicates your current academic status and the expected completion date of your studies. Please request this letter at least 10 business days prior to your appointment with the Center for Global Engagement.
- ☐ One passport-size photo taken within the last 30 days. You cannot reuse an old visa or passport photo. The travel.state.gov website has a [Photo Tool](#) that can help verify that your photo meets USCIS requirements.
- ☐ Digital copy of Employment Authorization Document (EAD card, front and back). If you have not been issued an EAD, upload a copy of your passport.
- ☐ Most recent I-94
- ☐ Copy of F-1 visa
- ☐ Digital copies of any previously issued OPT/CPT I-20 documents, including any previously practical training undertaken at another U.S. institution.

A DSO will review your application and discuss what type of work you wish to engage in, confirm your OPT employment dates, and answer other questions you may have. If OPT is recommended, the DSO will issue a new I-20 document that reflects a recommendation for OPT and lists your requested employment dates.

Receiving Your OPT-Recommended I-20

Once you receive the new I-20 recommending OPT from the Center for Global Engagement, make sure you sign the I-20. The OPT application must be submitted to USCIS within 30 days of the DSO recommendation date listed on your I-20.

Submit Your I-765 OPT Application and Supporting Documentation Online

ECC strongly recommends that all F-1 students apply for OPT online. Filing instructions can be [found online](#). Visit the USCIS website at myaccount.uscis.gov and create an account if you do not already have one. After verifying your email, log in to proceed with the application. After logging in, select "File a Form Online" and choose "I-765, Application for Employment Authorization." Select the appropriate eligibility category:

- (c)(3)(A) for Pre-Completion OPT
- (c)(3)(B) for Post-Completion OPT

Enter all required personal and immigration information accurately. Pay the Form I-765 Filing fee using a credit, debit card, or ACH withdrawal drawn from a U.S. checking or savings account. Upload the required application materials. The following list of application materials is provided for convenience purposes and is not meant to replace official instructions from USCIS. Always refer to the official filing instructions on the [USCIS website](#).

Processing time varies but can take 60 to 120 days during peak season for the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card to be received. Employment must not begin until the EAD card is received from USCIS.

By signing below, I confirm that I understand the following:

- While participating in OPT, I remain an F-1 international student under the jurisdiction of the institution that issued my I-20. I must report any changes in name, address, employment, school transfer, or immigration status to the Center for Global Engagement.
- Traveling outside the U.S. during OPT requires an I-20 travel signature from the DSO.
- Pre-completion OPT: If I have not yet completed a full academic year, I can file Form I-765 up to 90 days before completing one year of enrollment. If I have completed a full academic year, I can file Form I-765 up to 120 days before my requested OPT start date.
- Post-completion OPT: I can file Form I-765 up to 90 days before my program end date and no later than 60 days after.
- USCIS must receive my Form I-765 within 30 days of the OPT recommendation in SEVIS (see page 1 of my I-20).
- If I move and do not update my address with USCIS, my EAD may be returned. To update my address, I must submit Form AR-11 online and notify the Center for Global Engagement.
- Once I receive my EAD card, I must send a copy to the Center for Global Engagement.
- My OPT employment must be directly related to my field of study and cannot begin until I have my EAD card and the start date has arrived.
- While on post-completion OPT, I must maintain F-1 status by engaging in full-time employment or volunteer work. I cannot accrue more than 90 days of unemployment. If I approach this limit, I will consult my DSO.

I certify that I have read and understand this form, and that the information I provide is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____