

STEPS ON HOW TO APPLY FOR OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

Step 1. Apply no more than 90 days before the date of graduation and no more than 60 days after graduation for OPT.

Important considerations: You will need to factor in at least 90 days to process the application for OPT in order to get your EAD (Employment Authorization Document). Remember, you do not need to have a job at the time you send your application to the USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) for OPT. After receiving your EAD card from the USCIS, you have up to 90 days to find employment and report the information to the college.

Step 2. Prepare the following documents from the checklist:

- A DEGREEWORKS report found in *my Tri-C Space* showing you are in your last semester before graduating.
- A completed USCIS [Form I-765](#) with a signature
The appropriate eligibility codes for question #16 on Form I-765 are listed below:
 - Pre-Completion OPT: (c)(3)(A)
 - Post-Completion OPT: (c)(3)(B)
- Two (2) photos which meet the specifications outlined in the I-765 instructions;
- A personal check or money order payable for \$410 to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security.” The fee amount for filing Form I-765 is located on the USCIS web page: <http://www.uscis.gov>.
- [I-94 record](#) form
- Photocopies of all previous Form I-20s
- A photocopy of the passport pages including the page with your picture and name and the most recent visa page. Do not send the original or copies of dependent documents.
- [Form G-1145](#), e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance, filled out (optional)

Step 3. Make an appointment with your International Student Advisor to receive a photocopy of the I-20 issued by Cuyahoga Community College with the OPT recommendation.

Step 4. Send all materials from step 2 & step 3 by USPS (United States Postal System) certified mail with return receipt or by FedEx/DHL/UPS to:

**For USPS:
USCIS
P.O. Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036**

**For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:
USCIS
Attn: NFB AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034**

Step 5. Expect to receive a receipt notice from USCIS within 30 days of sending your OPT application to your address.

Step 6. With the receipt notice, use the [online case status check](#) to track your application status.

Step 7. Get your EAD card and find employment.

SEVP recommends that you maintain evidence for each job documenting the position held, proof of the duration of that position, the job title, contact information for the student’s supervisor or manager, and a description of the work. If it is not clear from the job description that the work is related to the student’s degree, SEVP recommends that the student obtain a signed letter from his/her hiring official, supervisor, or manager stating how the student’s degree is related to the work performed.

Step 8. Provide the employer information to your International Student Advisor *and* upload employer information on your SEVP account (an email will be sent to you allowing you create a [SEVP OPT portal](#)).

Report changes in employment and your personal contact information (such as address, phone number, etc.) as soon as possible to your International Student Advisor. SEVP recommends that the student report any change within 10 business days of the change to avoid situations where a DHS official may determine the student is out of status.