

Duke University and Health System

Durham, North Carolina

Duke Visa Services
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Durham, NC 27708

Telephone: 919-681-8472
Facsimile: 919-681-8492
Email: visahelp@mc.duke.edu
Web: <https://visaservices.duke.edu>

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Application Checklist

Please read, complete, print this form, and present it with **all** the required OPT documents to your meeting with your Duke Visa Services (DVS) advisor. Any questions you may have can be discussed during the meeting.

Name Date of Birth:

I am applying for (select one):

You can discuss your OPT dates with your DVS advisor during the meeting

OPT Start date:

Full time

OPT End date:

Part time

*Expected Graduation Date:

Note: Ph.D. Students can choose between their defense date or the official graduation date

* **Employment on campus beyond this date MUST stop for post-completion OPT applicants.** You must wait for your EAD to be eligible for a staff or researcher position on campus.

I understand that I will not be able to begin my employment until my Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card is in my possession and the start date is valid.

Check that you have all the following materials needed for your OPT application:

- I-765 completed Passport Academic Advisor letter All prior I-20 forms Photos (2 passport size)
- Prior EAD (if applicable) Latest I-94 (www.cbp.gov/i94) Job offer letter (if applicable) Check \$410.00 Payable to **US Dept. of Homeland Security** G-1145 (optional) <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>

If you have an offer letter, please describe how the employment is related to your major field of studies.

I **understand** that any employment activity must be related only to **my major field of study**.

Please read the following information and check off each numbered item:

1. Degree completion requirement.

Failure to graduate as scheduled:

- may require filing an extension of stay and/or reinstatement;
- may result in the loss or the reduction of your OPT period if an extension is not properly filed

2. Tracking your application.

Using the receipt notice case number, you can track the status of your application at <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>. Please contact your DVS advisor and request the receipt notice prior to contacting USDHS.

3. Receiving the EAD.

Please report any mistakes on your EAD card *immediately* to your DVS advisor. If you choose DVS to receive your EAD and are unable to claim it in person, you may designate another individual to claim it. You can also provide your DVS advisor with your account number to a courier service such as FedEx and we will mail the EAD to your designated address.

4. Address and Employer reporting.

Duke sponsored F-1 students must report their address and their employer information during OPT period within 10 days of any change directly to - <https://visaservices.duke.edu/forms-documents/address-update>. The address must be an actual physical/ street location. PO Boxes are not permitted.

5. Employment.

- may not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment beginning from your EAD start date;
- must report any employment changes or terminations, or any changes in visa category (i.e. H-1B) within 10 days

6. Travel.

- signature on page 2 of your OPT I-20 must be revalidated every 6 months for travel;
- cannot reenter the U.S. during the approved OPT period unless you have documentation that confirms you are returning to resume prior work or to begin new work. The documents needed to reenter the U.S. are:
 - Valid passport with valid F-1 visa stamp*
 - New OPT I-20 issued with a travel signature less than six (6) months old
 - OPT EAD (work permit)
 - Job offer letter

**If you must apply for a new F-1 visa stamp during OPT, the burden is on you to show nonimmigrant intent in order to receive a new F-1 visa stamp from any U.S. Embassy or Consulate. This may be difficult if you have lucrative employment in the U.S. If your visa stamp is denied, DVS will not be able to assist you. It is also a risk to travel on OPT if there is an H-1B pending or approved for you. We recommend that you discuss potential travel plans with your employer.*

Students in the **Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM)** fields are eligible for an additional 24 months of work eligibility after the initial OPT period ends. Please refer to <https://visaservices.duke.edu/categories/f1/opt/stem-extension>

1. While on the STEM extension:

- your job must be related to your field of study;
- you must re-verify your employment, employer address, and your mailing address with DVS every 6 months - <https://visaservices.duke.edu/forms-documents/address-update>;
- you may change employers or have multiple employers during your STEM period, but all employers must be registered in E-verify;
- you may not accrue an additional 60 days of unemployment. You may have a combined total of 150 days of allowed unemployment between your regular OPT period and STEM OPT;
- if you have filed for a STEM extension with DHS before your initial OPT EAD expires, your employment is considered automatically extended for up to 180 days while the STEM application is pending. However, you should not travel internationally during this period;
- your employer must report your termination or departure from the company within 48 hours

I understand that the STEM application must be mailed to USCIS **before** the end date of my current EAD and within 60 days of

- the issue date of my STEM I-20. Failure to mail the application within the appropriate time frame will result in the loss of employment and the ability to change to another visa category.

- I understand that I can request to withdraw my OPT application if it has not been adjudicated. There is no guarantee a withdrawal will be granted by DHS and a refund on the application fee will not be possible.

- I understand it is my responsibility to review the information pertaining to OPT:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photo-examples.html>
https://visaservices.duke.edu/sites/default/files/Optional_Practical_Training_Travel_Checklist.pdf
<https://visaservices.duke.edu/employment/volunteer-activities>
<https://visaservices.duke.edu/employment/prospective-employers>

- I understand that by signing this document I affirm that I have maintained F-1 status throughout my program.

- I understand if USCIS receives my I-765 application after the designated filing deadline, the application will automatically be denied. DVS will NOT be able to reverse the denial.

Signature

Date