

Optional Practical Training- Application Procedure

In order to participate in Optional Practical Training, a student must meet ALL of the following requirements:

- 1) Never have been in violation of their F-1 status
- 2) Must have been in valid F-1 status at UHV for one Academic year.
- 3) Be currently enrolled in the program indicated on Form I-20 and be in good academic standing
- 4) Employment must be in the United States
- 5) Post-Completion OPT: must apply within 60 days of completion of program.
- 6) Applied for Graduation prior to deadline for the OPT will follow.
- 7) Return by this form by Mail:

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON – VICTORIA
Attn: International Programs Office
3007 N BEN WILSON
VICTORIA, TX 77901

Or Email To: international@uhv.edu

Once all the above requirements have been met and this application packet is complete (Only use BLACK ink when completing the forms), please return copies to the International Office with the documents listed below:

- Copy of Signed Form I-765 (Obtain from the web: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf>)
- Copy of I-20 with OPT recommendation.
- Copies of All previous I-20's with any employment authorization on the last page
- Copy of I-94 card front and back
- Copy of Two (2) photographs, passport-type (do not take these yourself)
- Copy of Check or money order for \$380, payable to the **Department of Homeland Security**.
- Copy of your passport, visa, and the biographical page on your passport (with name and expiration)
- Copy of previous Employment Authorization Document (if applicable)
- Indicate date of graduation: _____
- Indicate OPT employment dates: Begin date: _____ End date: _____

Please read the statement below, sign your name, and date:

Processing time for the OPT application takes approximately 90 to 120 days. The International Office at UHV has no control over the processing time. Students should plan ahead and file the application accordingly.

It is recommended that students do not change their residence while the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is being processed. The EAD will not be forwarded by the postal service to the student's new address, and, consequently delays may occur. Lost employment time will not be credited to the student in this case.

Approximately 1 to 2 weeks after submission of the application, a Notice of Action from the USCIS will be sent informing the student that the application has been received and is being processed. The Notice of Action from has the Receipt Number (SRC0000000000), which can be used for on-line tracking. By using this Receipt Number the status of the application can be viewed at the website: <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do>

Note: Employment **may not** begin until the student has received the Employment Authorization Document.

If, at any time, I am found to be in violation of the U.S. statutes regarding my enrollment at UHV, I understand that my enrollment may be cancelled and no refund will be issued.

Student Signature / Date

UHV ID Number

Student Email Address

Current Mail Address: _____

Current Telephone Number: _____

Fall 2015

OPT Description for Students

An F-1 student may apply to the U.S. immigration service for authorization to be employed in practical training directly related to their major. Students typically graduate and then seek employment to “practice” what they have learned in their degree program. In addition to being directly related to their major, the OPT must be comparable to the level of the degree earned. For example, if a student earned a bachelor’s degree the type of employment would most likely be entry-level positions that may not have high pay levels. If a student earned a master’s degree, they would expect to earn a higher pay level than the bachelor-degree holder would, in a position that had more responsibility and authority, depending on your major of study.



There are two types of OPT:

- 1) Pre-completion OPT, before graduation, while studying for the degree, or
- 2) Post-completion OPT, after graduation. (***Preferred option***)

Pre-completion OPT is available for F-1 student’s participation:

- During the student’s annual vacation (Summer term) and at other times when school is not in session, if the student is currently enrolled, and is eligible for registration and intends to register for the next term or session, or
- While school is in session, provided that practical training does not exceed 20 hours a week while school is in session.
- Use of OPT is counted cumulatively. Only 12 total months of standard OPT is available to students. OPT done before a degree is completed will count toward the 12-month total and reduce time available after the degree is awarded.
- If program ends and there are months of eligible OPT remaining, student must re-apply for Post-completion OPT and pay the application fee again.

Post-completion OPT is available upon graduation:

- *Preferred option of OPT to optimize your work benefits.*
- 12 months of work during the OPT may be allowed during the 14-month period following graduation.
- Full time employment.
- You are eligible to begin OPT employment any time within the 60-day period following your graduation date, as long as it has been approved by the immigration service.

14-Month Period following Graduation			
December 11, 2015 - Graduation Day	December 12, 2015 – February 9, 2016 - 60-days after graduation Choose a day within this range for <u>employment start date</u>. * see next page for more information.	One year period following employment start date: 12 months	60-day grace period to prepare for departure or transfer to another program.

Here is an **example** for the 14-month OPT period if you choose **February 8, 2016** as the employment start date:

Before employment: Dec 11 th through Feb 7 th – Still maintaining F-1 status while you wait for employment start date.	Employment period: 2/8/2016 to 2/7/2017 – This time is spent either seeking employment* or working.	After employment ends: 2/8/2017 to 4/8/2017 – During the 60-day grace period, you may enter another program that you have previously been approved to, change to work visa that has been previously granted, or prepare for departure.
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Apply for OPT at least 30 days before your graduation date!

If you have a Texas driver's license, it may expire on your date of graduation unless your OPT has been approved by that date. You may not be able to renew the driver's license until you receive the Employment Authorization Document card with the approval dates from the Texas Service Center. If this happens you will be without a driver's license until you receive the card.

Choosing a Start Date*

You may have up to 90 days of unemployment during the year of OPT, and should begin seeking employment as early as possible, even before graduation. It can sometimes take more than 90 days to find employment. If you already have a job, you may want to choose an employment start date closer to your graduation. If you do not have employment opportunities yet, you may want to choose a date closer to the end of the 60-day period after graduation to begin employment and this will give you some extra time to seek employment. In any case, the choice is yours, and you must understand that the start date you choose will begin the countdown for the 90 days of unemployment that you are allowed to accumulate. If you do not find employment within that 90 days, the OPT will end, and you will have to make plans to depart the United States or transfer to another program or visa status. Additionally, it is most common to choose a Monday as most employers begin new hires on Monday's.



Searching for Employment

The university does not provide employment for OPT. The student seeks employment on their own. UHV is fortunate to have a Career Services department with staff who will work with students to prepare their resume, provide student access to employment databases we have purchased, and notify students about job fairs that are available. It is important that you contact Career Services now to see if they can look over your resume and whether they will be having any sessions on job interview skills. www.uhv.edu/careerservices. You may attend job fairs and workshops as a benefit of your enrollment at UHV. You do not have to wait until you are ready to graduate to attend these events. The Career Services office will help you with resume development and interview skills in addition to job search

opportunities. Students must contact them to schedule an appointment to discuss employment options. Be sure to let them know you are an international student and you intend to participate in Optional Practical Training.

In order to apply for OPT, students must email the *Application Procedure for OPT* form to international@uhv.edu , and in the Subject line write: **REQUEST FOR OPT.**

Include the following information:

FULL NAME:

UHV ID:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

Date of Expected Graduation from UHV:

Have you applied for Graduation from UHV?

Graduation application is available on your MyUHV student portal.

What is the Employment Date you have chosen?

Have you ever completed full-time Curricular Practical Training employment? If yes, list the dates.

Have previously participated in Optional Practical Training? If yes, list the dates.

Do you have a Social Security Number?

