F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)
AFTER OR DURING COMPLETION OF STUDIES IN F-1 STATUS
(POST-COMPLETION OPT AND PRE-COMPLETION OPT)

**STEP ONE:**
- Read this OPT packet including the “Frequently Asked Questions.”
- Fill out and submit the **Request for OPT Recommendation** to OIIS (pages 9-10 of this packet).
- Download & complete the **USCIS Form I-765** (available at [http://www.uscis.gov/i-765](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765)). Follow our instructions on pages 2-3 to fill it in.

**STEP TWO:**
- If you have questions about the application or would like to speak with OIIS to review your application packet please make an appointment [here](#) with the DSO.
- The DSO will create and print out a new I-20 for you which will include our recommendation for your OPT. You will send a copy of this new I-20, after you sign it, with your application within 30 days of the date the DSO issued the new I-20 (issue date is on the lower right side of page 1 of the I-20).

**STEP THREE:**
- Mail the documents listed below to the USCIS at one of the addresses listed below be certified mail or federal express so that you have a tracking number. USCIS must receive your application no more than 60 days beyond the end date on your I-20 AND within 30 days of the I-20 issue date.
- Keep copies of everything you mail! You will get a receipt notice from USCIS in one month.

**Documents to be mailed:**
- [ ] 1. **Form G-1145** (This form should be on top of your application. USCIS will notify you via email and/or text message that they have accepted your application)
- [ ] 2. **Form I-765**
- [ ] 3. A copy of the new I-20 that the OIIS DSO gives you
- [ ] 4. A copy of your most recent I-94 record ([https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html))
- [ ] 5. A copy of the photo page of your passport with passport expiration date.
- [ ] 6. A copy of the F-1 visa page in your passport (even if expired) (Canadians won’t have this).
- [ ] 7. A copy of ALL previous I-20’s that have been issued to you (including those from high school).
- [ ] 8. A copy of your previous OPT card or other work card (EAD) if you have had one.
- [ ] 9. **If you are applying for the 17 month OPT extension**, you must also include a copy of your transcripts or diploma as long as it states the degree field.
- [ ] 10. Two passport type photographs. Print your name & SEVIS number in pencil or felt tip pen on the back of each photo. Put the photos in an envelope with the check/money order and attach it to the front of the I-765.
- [ ] 11. **Fee of $380**. Checks may be made payable to the “U.S. Department of Homeland Security.” You may send a money order or personal check, but do not send cash. Put the check in an envelope with the photos from above and attach it to the front of the I-765.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If mailing via the U.S. Postal Service including U.S.P.S. express mail:</th>
<th>If mailing via courier service (FedEx, UPS, DHL, etc.):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USCIS</td>
<td>USCIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.O. Box 660867</td>
<td>Attn: AOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas, Texas 75266</td>
<td>2501 S. State Highway 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business Suite 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lewisville, Texas 75067</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT FORM I-765

☐ Check first box “permission to accept employment” or “renewal” if you are applying for a 17 month extension; fill out lines 1 through 16 (17 if applicable); sign and date

☐ #3 Return Address: This must be an address at which you can receive mail for at least the next 3.5 months. You cannot put in a forwarding order on this address – the immigration service’s envelopes state “Do Not Forward.” If the card is sent to an address with a forwarding order, or if you cannot receive mail at the address you use, your card will be returned to the immigration service and destroyed. If you want to use a friend’s address, you need to make sure your name is on the mailbox. You may continue to use your Barnard mailbox address until mid-August, if you complete the “Keep Mailbox Open” form, available at www.barnard.edu/mail-print-services/mail/students/mail-forwarding-procedure. However, please realize that USCIS has, in the past, sent documents that have been “lost in the mail” and have never arrived. Barnard College cannot take responsibility for materials sent by USCIS and lost in the mail. We ask that you be sure to notify OIIS when your EAD card has arrived.

☐ #3 Return Address: Note: If the return mailing address you indicate on the I-765 is not located in New York, please check the chart on page 7 for the proper mailing address for your application.

☐ #10 Alien Registration Number: In most cases you will use your US Admission Record number found on the printout from www.cbp.gov/i94. It is usually an 11 digit number – sometimes the last 2 digits are separated by a space.

☐ #11 Previous employment authorization: The answer is “no” unless you have previously applied for an OPT card at this or any other institution. It is a “no” even if you have had CPT or an H1B visa. If you are applying for a 17-month extension, please answer “yes” and complete the related information.

☐ #16 Eligibility Categories: For F-1 OPT, fill out as follows:
   For POST-Completion (after graduating) OPT: “(c) (3) (B)”
   For PRE-Completion OPT: “(c) (3) (A)”
   For the 17 month extension of OPT (see FAQ #10 below): (c) (3) (C)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REMINDERS: Regulations while on F-1 OPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ REQUIRED UPDATES (ADDRESSES &amp; EMPLOYMENT). Immigration regulations REQUIRE that while you are on OPT, you MUST notify OIIS when you change your address AND/OR when you are NOT employed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAVELING ABROAD WHILE ON OPT:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ In order to re-enter the U.S. while you are on Optional Practical Training, you must have a valid passport, current F-1 visa stamp, I-20 signed within the last 6 months, the EAD (OPT work card), AND your job offer letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ NEVER ENTER the U.S. in any VISA STATUS OTHER THAN F-1 while on your OPT (it will invalidate your OPT)!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2
Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Do not write in this block.

Remarks

Action Block

Fee Stamp

Applicant is filing under §274a.12

Application Approved. Employment Authorized / Extended (Circle One) until

Subject to the following conditions:

[ ] Failed to establish eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (a) or (c).
[ ] Failed to establish economic necessity under 8 CFR 274a.12(c)(14), (18) and 8 CFR 214.2(i)

I am applying for:
[ ] Permission to accept employment.
[ ] Replacement (of last employment authorization document).
[ ] Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document).

1. Name (Family Name in CAPS) (First) (Middle) (Last)
   BEAR, Millie The Dancing

2. Other Names Used (include Maiden Name)

3. U.S. Mailing Address (Street Number and Name) (Apartment Number)
   3009 Broadway
   New York NY 10027

4. Country of Citizenship/Nationality
   United States

5. Place of Birth (Town or City) (State/Province) (Country)
   New York NY USA

6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)
   05/15/1952

7. Gender
   Female

8. Married Status
   Single

9. Social Security Number (Include all numbers you have ever used, if any)
   [If you do not have one, leave blank]

10. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or I-94 Number (if any)
    [1-94 card #]

11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?
    [ ] Yes (Complete the following questions.)
    [ ] No (Proceed to Question 12.)

Which USCIS Office?

Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)

Date(s)

12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S., on or about (mm/dd/yyyy)
    03/21/2015

13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S.
    JFK, New York

14. Status at Last Entry (A-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)
    F-1 Student

15. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.)
    F-1

16. Go to the “Who May File Form I-765” section of the instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. (For example, (a)(6), (c)(7)(ii), etc.)
    (C) (3) (B)

17. If you entered the eligibility category, (c)(3)(C), in Question 16 above, list your degree, your employer’s name is listed in E-Verify, and your employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in the space below.
    Degree:
    Employer’s Name as listed in E-Verify:
    Employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number: or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number

Certification

Your Certification: I certify, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the “Who May File Form I-765” section of the instructions and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in Question 16.

Signature

Date

Signature of Person Preparing Form If Other Than Above: I declare that this document was prepared by me at the request of the applicant and is based on all information of which I have any knowledge.

Print Name

Telephone Number

Date

Form I-765 08/06/14
Choosing Your Start Date

You are allowed to choose a start date any time within the 60 days of the completion of studies date on your I-20. There are many overlapping time constraints which affect your OPT application (see OPT time line illustrated below). When choosing the start date for your EAD card, the most important priorities to weigh are:

1. Choose the earliest day that you might want to start working (you cannot begin working until you receive your EAD from USCIS, nor can you start work before the start date on the EAD card).

2. If you want the latest possible day to start your work authorization, the latest day you may choose as your start date for the EAD card is 60 days after the completion of studies date on your I-20.

You must apply:
- No earlier than 90 days before the completion of studies date on your I-20 (for Post-Completion OPT) or 90 days before the end of the term (for Pre-Completion OPT).
- No later than 60 days after the completion of studies date on your I-20 (for Post-Completion OPT).

Example: if your completion date is June 1, 2016 you may not apply before March 3, 2016 and you may not apply after July 31, 2016.

REMEMBER: You may NOT change these dates after you apply for OPT.

Sample OPT timeline for May graduates
(For example only – your actual dates may be different than those listed here)

Apply 3/3/2016

60-day grace period

6/1/2016 7/31/2016

Program end date

You choose your OPT start date – any day within the 60 days of your program end date

12 months of OPT

Example: 7/1/2016 6/30/2017

Start Date End Date
## Where to File:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you live in (return address on I-765):</th>
<th>Mail your application to USCIS Dallas Lockbox:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, <strong>New York</strong>, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia</td>
<td>Via U.S. Postal Service: USCIS PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266 Via Express Mail (FedEx, UPS, DHL): USCIS, Attn: AOS 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you live in (return address on I-765):</th>
<th>Mail your application to USCIS Phoenix Lockbox:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Processing Timeline:

- Within a few weeks of mailing your documents you should receive a document from USCIS, acknowledging receipt of your application.
- Several weeks (up to 4-6 weeks) after that, you should receive an approval for your Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
- Approximately two weeks thereafter, you should receive your EAD.

The mail-in application procedure can take from 60-90 days. USCIS regulations provide that, in the event that an OPT application has NOT been processed within 90 days of receipt by USCIS, the applicant will be granted “interim employment authorization” by appearing in person at the local USCIS District Office with proof of identity and any notices received from the USCIS Service Center. Interim employment authorization is valid for 240 days or until USCIS has processed the original request for an EAD, whichever is earlier. If you have NOT received a response from USCIS within 90 days of sending your application, please contact OIIS.
F-1 OPT – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is F-1 Optional Practical Training?
Practical training is the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in your degree program to off-campus work in your major field (not your minor). OPT is authorized by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (U.S.C.I.S.). This authorization can take 2 to 3 months to obtain. The maximum amount of time granted to work on F-1 OPT status is 12 months per degree level plus a possible H1B cap gap extension OR a 17 month extension for those who qualify (see FAQ below). You may use some or all of the available 12 months of practical training during your course of study or save the full twelve months to use after you graduate.

2. What are the Eligibility Requirements for F-1 Optional Practical Training?
To be eligible to apply for optional practical training, you must: (1) have been a full time enrolled student in the U.S. for at least one academic year by the requested start date of your OPT, and (2) be in F-1 status when you apply.

3. If I complete one degree program, take 12 months of practical training, and then begin a second course of study, am I eligible for an additional 12 months of practical training?
Yes, you are eligible for a maximum of 12 months of full-time optional practical training employment while in F-1 status, for each degree level. e.g., 12 months for a Bachelor’s degree; 12 months for a Master’s degree; 12 months for a Ph.D. Think of it as a bank account of 12 months of work eligibility. Any time spent on Pre-Completion OPT will be deducted from your 12 months of eligibility and will shorten your time available from Post-Completion OPT.

4. How can I use optional practical training while I am still in my program?
You may use OPT while you are still in your degree program as follows: (1) part-time while school is in session, (2) full-time during annual vacation periods, and/or (3) full-time after you completed all course requirements for the degree and have a thesis requirement remaining. These periods of OPT used before you graduate will be deducted from the total allowable period of 12 months. Part-time OPT will be deducted at one-half the full-time rate.

5. How long does it take to get authorization for OPT and when should I apply?
Authorization for OPT is granted by U.S.C.I.S. and can take 2 - 3 months to obtain. Therefore it is important that you apply 3 months before the date you wish to start working. You may apply for POST-graduation OPT up to 90 days before your completion date and the immigration service MUST RECEIVE your application NO LATER THAN 60 days beyond your completion date or 60 days beyond the end date of your I-20 (WHICHEVER IS EARLIER) or, if you are an advanced graduate student, NO LATER THAN 60 days beyond the last day that you are registered as a student or the end date of your I-20 (WHICHEVER IS EARLIER). You cannot apply MORE than 120 days before the start date you choose. You MUST send your application within 30 days of getting the new I-20 from OIIS.

6. Do I need to have a job to apply for optional practical training?
You do NOT need to have a job offer before applying for the first 12 months of optional practical training. If your field qualifies you for the STEM extension, you DO have to have a job to apply.

7. Do I need to have a job while I am on optional practical training?
Yes. The regulations require that you do have employment while on your POST-graduation OPT period. You are only allowed to have a total of 90 days of unemployment in your 12 month period of OPT or 120 days if you apply for and receive the 17 month extension. While on POST-graduation OPT, you MUST update your employment information with OIIS.

8. Does the job I have while on OPT have to be paid employment, or can it be unpaid?
The employment does NOT have to be paid employment. Therefore, a student who is self-employed (including performance majors with regular “gigs”), interning or volunteering in a position directly related to the academic field would be considered “employed” for the purposes of OPT employment. If you are “self-employed,” keep careful records of all the work you do—it is supposed to be at least 20 hours per week.
9. Can I begin working before I receive the Employment Authorization Document?
You may NOT begin employment before you receive your EAD from U.S.C.I.S.; working before practical training has been authorized by the U.S.C.I.S. constitutes illegal employment that will jeopardize your legal status in the U.S.

10. Can I change employers while on OPT?
Regulations allow you to change employers during the period of authorized OPT as long as the new employment continues to be directly related to your field of study and commensurate with your educational level. You must report these change of employer to OIIS immediately.

11. Do I have to do anything with OIIS while I am on OPT?
Yes! Immigration regulations REQUIRE that while you are on POST-graduation OPT, you MUST report your employment and address information to OIIS.

12. Can I extend my OPT after the 12 months?
There are two types of extensions available: 1) a 17 month extension for those in certain fields (discussed below) and 2) an “H1B Cap Gap Extension” which extends your work authorization through to the start of your cap subject H1B visa if your OPT ends after your cap subject company has applied for a H1B for you but before the H1B starts on the following October 1st. This cap gap extension is available to all F-1 students using OPT in any field, as long as you have a pending or approved “cap subject” H1B application and the employer applied for in with a request for change of status as part of the application. The extension is automatic, you do not have to do anything at all to get the extension. “Cap Subject” refers to any H1B application that must be counted against the quota on H1B applications.

TRAVEL and OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

13. Now that I’ve turned in my application, can I travel outside the U.S. while I wait for the card to come?
Before you graduate: You should be able to get back in to the U.S. without the OPT card as long as it is still long enough in advance of your graduation (at least one month). If you are within a month of the end date of your I-20, be prepared to show all the documents you would need for OPT (listed below and in number 19 below).
After you graduate: No. We do not advise students to travel outside the country after graduation and before they have received their EAD card. After graduation, if you leave the country and do not have your EAD card and job offer letter there is a significantly higher risk that you will not be let back into the US. In order to re-enter the US after your graduate you must have the following documents with you: Your EAD card, your valid passport, your valid F-1 visa, your I-20 signed within the last six months, AND your job offer letter or proof of employment.

14. I want to leave the U.S. for a short time while my OPT application is in process, but I need to return before the card will arrive. I have a tourist visa (B2) that is valid for 10 years. Can’t I just enter the U.S. on my tourist visa while I’m waiting to get the EAD card, then start work with the card once I get it?
NO!! If you intend to continue working on your OPT, NEVER enter in any other immigration status except F-1. If you leave the U.S. and re-enter with a B status, and you will have lost your F-1 status and your OPT will be invalid!

15. What documents do I need to re-enter the U.S. while on OPT?
You will need your I-20 that has been endorsed on the travel line by OIIS within the last 6 months; the EAD card from U.S.C.I.S., your valid passport, your valid F-1 visa, AND your job offer letter or proof of employment.

16. What if I have applied for the 17 month extension but I have not yet received the card, can I travel out of the U.S.?
No, the immigration service advises that while you are waiting for the approval of the 17 month extension, you should NOT try to re-enter the country until you RECEIVE the new OPT card.

17. The visa stamp in my passport has expired, but I need to travel outside the U.S. while on OPT. Do I need to get a new visa stamp at an embassy?
If you are going to Canada or Mexico, and staying for less than 30 days, you could re-enter the U.S. on your expired F-1 visa stamp, with your I-94 card or print out, a valid passport, your EAD card (or receipt notice), an I-20 that has been signed by OIIS within the last 6 months, AND your job offer letter or proof of employment as long as: 1) you do not apply for a visa while in Canada and 2) you are NOT a national of Iran, Syria, Sudan, Cuba or North
Korea. **If you are traveling elsewhere**, you will need to go to a U.S. embassy or consulate and seek a new visa stamp. **Please make an appointment with OIIS** to discuss your visa application with an advisor as the consulates often change the requirements for visa applications for students on OPT.

18. **In what ways is my application to the embassy for a new visa stamp affected by being on Optional Practical Training?**

The risk of denial of an application for a renewed visa stamp for Optional Practical Training is significantly higher than while you are in your active student program. The F-1 student visa requires that the applicant must intend to return to the home country at the end of the program, and if the embassy official is not convinced of your intention to return home, the visa application will be denied. It is possible and many students on OPT get their F-1 visa stamps renewed. You do have to be careful to demonstrate non-immigrant intent.

19. **What documents do I need to show at the embassy for a new visa stamp under OPT?**

You need to take a valid passport, the EAD card or receipt notice for your application, an I-20 created by OIIS for your OPT application, **AND your job offer letter or proof of employment**. The official job offer letter should sound temporary and not permanent. You should also be prepared to discuss how this job experience will apply to the job market in your home country, and how you intend to apply it there.

20. **Do I still need to get the travel line on my I-20 signed by OIIS during the year of OPT?**

Yes, during the OPT year, if you travel outside the U.S., you need to have the travel line signed every six months. If you are not located in NYC, mail the original I-20 to OIIS for endorsement, leaving plenty of time for mailing delays both ways.

**INFORMATION ON THE 17-MONTH “STEM” EXTENSION:**

21. **What is the 17 month STEM extension of OPT?**

The “STEM Extension” allows F-1 students on OPT who have received a degree in the fields listed below, referred to as “STEM” fields (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics), to apply for a one time 17-month extension of their regular 12 month OPT period. **You will NOT apply for 29 months up front.** The 17 month extension will allow students to have extended work authorization in case they do not get an H1B visa in their first year after graduating. Students who timely file an application for the 17-month OPT extension will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.

22. **I think I qualify, how do I apply for the 17 month extension?**

**FIRST:** Students graduating now with degrees in these fields will first apply for the regular 12 month period of OPT as usual.

**THEN, WITHIN 3 months of the end of your first 12 months of OPT:** If you meet the following criteria, you can apply through OIIS for your 17 month extension of your OPT during your first 12 months of OPT.

**CRITERIA FOR THE 17 MONTH EXTENSION:**

- Your employer must be enrolled in the “E-Verify” program (see information links below).
- You must have graduated in and be working in one of the fields listed below referred to as “STEM” fields
- You must have maintained status while on OPT

23. **What is considered a “STEM” field according to the US government?**


24. **What is “E-Verify”?**

E-Verify is an Internet-based system operated by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). E-Verify is currently free to employers and is available in all 50 states. E-Verify provides an automated link to federal databases to help employers determine employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security numbers. More information is available at: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

25. **Are there any other requirements while I am on the 17-month extension?**

In addition to filling out the OPT report form for changes in address or employment, students on the 17 month extension of OPT will have to complete a report to the school every six months while on the 17 month extension.
Application for Recommendation for Optional Practical Training

Student Information

FIRST NAME: __________________________ LAST NAME: __________________________

Preferred First Name: __________________________ Barnard ID #: __________________________

Barnard UNI: __________________________ Program Completion Date (mm/dd/yy): __________

Major Field of Study (if you major(s)/minor does NOT match what is on your I-20, list your major with an *** before it. i.e. *Psychology):

                       Minor/Second Major: __________________________

(Note: OPT only authorizes you to work in your primary major field of study)

Current Telephone: __________________________

E-mail address you will keep while on OPT: __________________________

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

☐ Pre-Completion OPT  ☐ Post-Completion OPT

Have you participated in Pre-Completion OPT before? ___Yes ___No

If yes: I worked from (mm/dd/yyyy) __________________________ to __________________________ *

OPT START DATE (mm/dd/yyyy): __________________________ OPT END DATE: __________________________

*Subtract any days worked through pre-completion OPT from your dates for post-completion OPT. Remember, you may only have 365 days total, including weekends. You MUST enter exact dates, i.e. 06/01/14 - 05/31/15.

If you currently have a job offer please complete the following AND attach your employment offer letter:

Employer Name: __________________________

Employer Address: __________________________

                      __________________________

If you do not have a job offer, describe your proposed employment as it relates to your field of study:

                      __________________________

                      __________________________

                      __________________________

** You will be notified via email when your new I-20 is ready to be picked up
Statement of Compliance

Barnard College is required by federal regulation to continue to maintain your SEVIS record for the full period of OPT.

By signing this form below, I certify that the above information is true and correct, and that I understand and will comply with the following SEVIS requirements:

- I have reported my current name, US address, and e-mail address on the front of this application form.
- I will report any change to my current name or address to Barnard's international student adviser within ten days of the change.
- I will report any changes in employment information (including periods of unemployment) to Barnard within ten days of the change.
- I understand that I cannot be unemployed for more than a total of 90 days in the aggregate during the 12-month period of post-completion OPT.
- I will have my I-20 endorsed for travel every six months.
- I understand all travel restrictions that apply before, during and after the period of OPT.
- I understand that I am responsible for maintaining the status of my F-1 visa during OPT.

(Student signature)  (Date)