



## OPT Application Process

### Milwaukee School of Engineering

#### Optional Practical Training (OPT)

All international students studying on an F-1 visa are eligible to work for **at least one year** after graduation in a field related to their degree by applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT is a benefit for F-1 students. It allows students to work off-campus in a job directly related to their major field of study. The purpose of OPT is for students to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the classroom to practical work experience in the U.S.

OPT is generally available for up to 12 months per degree level. DSOs assist MSOE F-1 students in the process of applying for OPT by recommending work authorization on their Form I-20s. The OPT application is processed by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Processing time can take up to three months. USCIS allows students to apply for OPT up to **90 days before program completion (check your Form I-20 for the exact date)**. Students may apply for OPT before receiving a full-time job offer.

Here are the steps:

#### To Apply:

In your final year at MSOE,

1. Attend the highly recommended **OPT Information Session**
2. Find out information about the eligibility requirements, application process, reporting requirements, employment options, and other issues regarding your OPT application
3. Start completing the **Form I-765** (Search for “Form I-765” and be sure you are on the [uscis.gov](https://uscis.gov) site, as the form is updated often)
4. Decide on a **Start Date** for your employment within 60 days of your graduation date
5. Complete the [OPT Form I-20 Request Form](#)
6. Gather your **documents** (list available at the Information Session and on OPT Form I-20 Request Form)
  - a. Your Form I-20 will be processed within five business days
  - b. Your application must be completed in order to be processed
7. Submit the Form I-765 to USCIS online and pay the non-refundable application fee
8. Wait for your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Card – Again, this takes about three months and you should start looking for a job while waiting for your EAD Card



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#### After you get a Job\*:

Email your assigned DSO the following information

- a. Your formal job offer letter
- b. Your personal email, phone number, and new physical address

#### After you get your EAD card\*\*:

1. Review the email sent by SEVIS about your SEVP Portal account
2. [Access SEVIS portal](#) and ensure that you have all the information saved accurately
  - a. Employer information
  - b. Updated physical address and phone number
3. Front and back pages of your EAD Card should be sent to [multiculturalaffairs@msoe.edu](mailto:multiculturalaffairs@msoe.edu)
4. Start working in the U.S. and building your professional portfolio

#### If you are [eligible](#) for a STEM OPT extension (two more years):

5. See [STEM OPT](#) for more information

\*You have 90 days of unemployment while on OPT, so if you don't find a job by your start date, it's ok! You will just lose time from your 12 months of working.

\*\*You cannot start working until you have your EAD card; the date on the card must be on or after the day you start work.

If you are on 12-month OPT after graduation, you must report your employment details and any other changes of status **within 10 days** of your OPT authorization start date on your EAD via the SEVP portal.

Report the following via the SEVP portal and let your assigned DSO know if you notice any issues (DSOs can help you update your record manually if necessary):

- Changes to your name, residence, or mailing address
- Any employment changes (ending a job, changing jobs, adding jobs like getting a part-time job or running your own LLC after securing your full-time primary job)
- Names and addresses of all OPT employers
- Start date and end date of all employment
- New immigration status (change to H-1B, for example)
- You decide to leave the U.S., so you will not start or continue OPT