

F-1 students applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) must submit and assemble the following materials to International Student Services & Activities (ISSA) for processing.

Online Materials

- **OPT Application**
 - Go to <https://issalink.nd.edu> ; Click on the blue login button; sign in with your ND NetID and password; on the next screen, click on “F-1 Practical Training” in the left column; then in the drop-down list, select “Optional Practical Training Application.”
- **Academic Advisor Recommendation for OPT**
 - You will be asked on the OPT Online Application to submit the name and email address for your Academic Advisor. They will be sent an automatic request by ISSA for an OPT recommendation once you hit submit on the OPT Application.

OPT Application Materials (Bring these paper documents to ISSA)

- **Form I-765 – Application for Employment Authorization**
 - The Form I-765 is to be filled out online and printed. You must sign and date after printing.
 - Website: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf>
 - Please note: There is an option to file an I-765 form electronically with the USCIS, but this is only recommended in a few specific cases. Please do not select this option without checking first with ISSA.
- **I-765 filing fee**
 - Check or money order made out to the *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*, currently \$380.00 USD
- **Two passport style photos**
 - USCIS requires the photos to meet the standards outlined on the following sites: http://travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotoreq/pptphotoreq_5333.html and
- **Copy of most recent I-20**
- **Copy of valid Passport ID page** (and renewal page, if applicable)
- **Copy of I-94 card or printout of electronic I-94E**—Electronic form can be retrieved here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html>
- **Copy of current F-1 Visa**
- **Copies of any previously issued Employment Authorization Documents (EAD cards)**
--if applicable

Application Procedures

Step 1: Submit Online Materials

Your Academic Advisor will be automatically notified to fill out an online recommendation form when you submit the OPT Application. You are responsible to follow-up with that Advisor to ensure that the Recommendation form has been submitted.

Step 2: Submit completed Paper Application Materials to ISSA to check for accuracy

An ISSA advisor will verify your attendance at an OPT information session within the current academic year. Then the ISSA advisor will review your application materials for completion and accuracy. If the packet is incomplete or inaccurate, you will be asked to re-submit it .

Step 3: Sign New I-20 and get the Application Materials back for mailing to USCIS.

An ISSA advisor will prepare a new Form I-20 for you, which will contain the OPT dates and employment information provided on the application for OPT. You can sign and copy the I-20 and collect the completed application packet for you to mail.

Step 4: Mail Application to USCIS

ISSA will provide you with the address of the USCIS office that accepts OPT applications. It will be your responsibility to mail the packet promptly.

Processing Notes

- Applications for post-completion OPT must be received by USCIS prior to the end of the 60-day grace period following the completion of the student's academic program.
- Average USCIS processing time is approximately 3 months.
- OPT expediting is at the discretion of USCIS.
- If you are applying for OPT from an off-campus location or from outside the United States, you should contact ISSA at 574-631-3825.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Employment in the U.S. may not begin until you receive the EAD card and the start date on the card has been reached.

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