What is OPT:
Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a type of employment authorization for international students. OPT is training designed to give students real world experience in a job directly related to their major. OPT is for 12 months of employment, to be completed up to 14 months after program end date. Students must meet with an International Student Advisor (DSO) before applying for OPT.

Eligibility:
F-1 visa students who have been lawfully enrolled as full-time status students for at least one full academic year are eligible for OPT. Students who have only taken ESOL classes are not yet eligible. When on OPT, students are required to be working or volunteering in a field directly related to their program of study.

Exception:
F-1 visa students who have completed 12 or more months of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) are not eligible for OPT.

Pre-Completion and Post-Completion OPT:
Students can apply for pre-completion OPT to participate in part-time OPT before they graduate. Students can apply for post-completion OPT to participate in full-time OPT after they graduate. Pre- and post-completion OPT require separate applications and separate application fees. A student only has 12 months of OPT total, counting both pre- and post-completion OPT. Please see an International Student Advisor to discuss pre- and post-completion OPT.

Timeline for Applying for OPT:
Students can apply for post-completion OPT from 90 days before their graduation date until 60 days after their graduation date. It is strongly recommended to apply as close to 90 days before graduation as possible, as OPT applications can take many months for USCIS to process. Students can apply for pre-completion OPT during their program of study and after being lawfully enrolled as full-time status students for at least one full academic year.

Process for Applying for OPT:
- Attend an OPT workshop or meet with International Student Advisor (DSO) before applying for OPT to discuss questions about OPT and eligibility for OPT
- Meet with your Academic Advisor for a graduation check and apply for graduation. Forward the graduation application confirmation email to international@century.edu
- Complete all required student documents (see page 2)
- Make one hour appointment with International Student Advisor (DSO) and bring all completed student documents to appointment. At this appointment, the International Student Advisor (DSO) will request OPT in SEVIS and issue an updated Form I-20.
- Student immediately mails all documents to USCIS
- Student waits for response from USCIS and EAD card before starting work

See page 2 for required documents.
Required OPT Application Documents:

Student Completes:
  - Question 27: Fill in (c)(3)(A) for Pre-Completion OPT or (c)(3)(B) for Post-Completion OPT
  - Question 7.a. (Signature): Sign in ink and fit your signature inside the box. If your signature goes outside of the box, your application may be rejected. No electronic or typed signatures are allowed.
  - Include all pages of the form, even if left blank.
  - If a question does not apply to you (for example, if you have never been married and the question asks, “Provide the name of your current spouse”), type or print “N/A” unless otherwise directed; optional fields may be left blank.
- Completed Form G-1145 [www.uscis.gov/g-1145](http://www.uscis.gov/g-1145) Not required, but can be submitted to get text or email notification when USCIS accepts your application. If you include this form, clip it to the front of the application packet.
- Two passport photos (taken within the past 6 months)
- Photocopy of passport photo page
- Photocopy of F-1 visa document or I-797 Change of Status Approval Notice
- Photocopy of I-94 document
- Photocopy of Social Security Card (if applicable)
- Photocopy of both sides of previous Employment Authorization Document card (if applicable)

Century College International Student Advisor (DSO) Completes:
- Updated Form I-20 with OPT requested dates, remarks, DSO signature, and student signature

Student is responsible for mailing all application documents to the filing address listed at: [www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses)

Students are **strongly encouraged** to mail with a tracking number (through a courier service or USPS) in order to receive proof of delivery.

***Application materials must be received by USCIS within 30 days of DSO recommending OPT in SEVIS***

See page 3 for steps to take after you are approved for OPT.
Once You Are Approved for OPT:

Review Your EAD Card

- Carefully review your EAD (Employment Authorization Document) Card. Verify that your name is spelled correctly and all of your personal information is correct. Review the employment dates and remember, those are the only dates during which you can work. You may not start working until after you have received your EAD card and you have reached your start date on the EAD card.
- Send a copy of your EAD Card to your DSO to save to your student record: international@century.edu

Required Reporting: SEVP Portal Account

Use the SEVP Portal Account to report any changes to your address or employer within 10 days! Events to report include: start date, end date, new work location.

- You will receive an email from SEVP detailing how to set up your SEVP Portal Account.
- If you do not receive your notification:
  - Check your email junk/spam folders
  - Confirm with your DSO that the correct email address is in your SEVIS record
  - If the email on your record is incorrect, a DSO can submit a SEVIS correction

SEVP Portal Resources
- Create a SEVP Portal Account: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/create-an-sevp-portal-account

Unemployment

- Failure to report employer information in the SEVP Portal will be recorded as unemployment time! If you are struggling to enter information in the Portal, contact your DSO as soon as possible.
- After 90 days of unemployment your record will be auto-terminated, and you will start accruing unlawful presence in the United States.
- It is acceptable to work more than one job to meet the required numbers of hours per week for your OPT.
- If you are approaching 90 days of unemployment, know that you can volunteer 20 hours per week (in a position directly related to your field of study) to maintain your status.
  - Volunteer positions should be reported in SEVP Portal Account like other employment information. Record that it is a volunteer position
- Career Services at Century College can assist you in preparing for your job search: www.century.edu/careerservices

**Remember, your employment must be directly related to your program of study (major).**

Century College is a member of Minnesota State. We are an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer and educator. This document can be available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by calling 651.773.1745 or emailing access.center@century.edu.