F-1 WORKSHOP OPT FOR SP’21 GRADS

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F-1 International students are only eligible to seek employment under very limited circumstances. Students may not begin any type of employment without prior work authorization.

- **Volunteering and Unpaid Internships**
- **On-campus Employment**
- **Off-campus Employment**
  - Curricular Practical Training v.s. Optional Practical Training
    - Off-campus Employment - Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
    - Off-campus Employment - Optional Practical Training (OPT)
  - Off-campus Employment - Economic Hardship
  - STEM OPT Extension
  - H-1B Cap-Gap Extension

- **What Employers Should Know About Hiring International Students**
  (Developed by International Career Opportunities Network, NAFSA Region XII)

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STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING OPT

- What is OPT?
- Who is eligible?
- What types of jobs can I do?
- When do I have to find a job?
WHAT IS OPT?

Spring 2021 graduates:
Post Completion Optional Practical Training (c)(3)(B)

Work Authorization:
Employment eligibility after completion of degree

Duration:
Maximum 12 months (not guaranteed)
WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

• Academics: Are you graduating in Spring 2021?

• Immigration:
  • Do you have an active F-1 status during Spring 2021?
  • Did you study full time during Fall 2020, and are you enrolled full time or have received exceptions (FTE/RCL) for Spring 2021?

• Location: Are you currently in the U.S. or will be in the U.S. when you apply for OPT?

• Prior work authorization at SF State?
  • If you have done pre-completion OPT or more than 365 days of full time CPT, speak with a F-1 advisor
TYPES OF JOBS?

• What does not matter:
  • Employer (self employment, contract, consultant, etc)
  • Title (volunteer, intern, associate, etc)
  • Pay (unpaid, paid, stipend, etc)
  • Hours (any number of hours - Covid-19 exceptions)

• What matters:
  • Jobs related to your major
WHEN TO FIND A JOB?

Anytime between now and 90 days into your OPT time frame.

You do not need a job offer to apply for OPT.

• Yes, you can interview for jobs before OPT approval.

• No, you cannot begin working until OPT is approved and start date has begun.
STEP 2 – BEGIN APPLICATION

• Understanding Process Flow
• Understanding Process Timeline
• Understanding When to Apply (Safest Bet)
• Understanding How to Choose a Start Date
• What happens if?
• Understanding SF State Forms & Signatures
• Understanding USCIS Forms (Denial Reasons)
1. Student -> Major Academic Advisor (form request)
2. Major Academic Advisor -> Student (signed form)
3. Student -> OIP (signed form)
4. OIP -> Student (OPT requested I-20)
5. Student -> USCIS (Complete OPT application)
6. USCIS -> Student (Delivery Notice)
7. USCIS -> Student (OPT Approval Notice & EAD)
PROCESS TIMELINE

1. Student -> Major Academic Advisor (form request)
2. Major Academic Advisor -> Student (signed form)
3. Student -> OIP (signed form)
4. OIP -> Student (OPT requested I-20) | 10 business days
5. Student -> USCIS (Complete OPT application) | 2-3 days for delivery
6. USCIS -> Student (Delivery Notice) | 8-9 weeks for notice of delivery
7. USCIS -> Student (OPT Approval Notice & EAD) | 90-150 days for approval
WHEN TO APPLY

• First day OIP will accept signed OPT request forms for Spring 2021 graduates: Feb 25, 2021 (due to USCIS policy)
• Last day OIP will accept a signed OPT request form for Spring 2021 graduates: July 12, 2021 (due to USCIS policy)

OIP Recommendation: Apply Early
Reason: no downside for applying early as long as you will graduate, only apply later if you are not sure you will graduate
CHOOSE A START DATE

• Start date range: June 2, 2021 to July 31, 2021

• End date calculation: Add one year, minus one day.
  • For example, someone requesting a July 19, 2021 start date would have a July 18, 2022 end date.

OIP Recommendation: Later Start Date

Reason: USCIS delays could cause you to lose OPT days. Only benefit of choosing an earlier start date is if you already have a job offer that expects you to start in early June.
WHAT HAPPENS IF?

- You apply early with an early start date, and USCIS approves it early?
- You apply early with a late start date and USCIS approves it late?
- You apply late with an early start date and USCIS approves it early?
- You apply late with a late start date and USCIS approves it late?

- Status: OK. In legal F-1 status to stay in the U.S. and 1. wait for approval  2. have approved OPT waiting for start date to begin. Cannot work until OPT is approved and start date has begun.
- OPT Dates: Will lose OPT dates if USCIS process time takes too long
- 90 day unemployment day starts on first day of OPT start date
- 60 day grace period does not apply (only after OPT end date)
SAFEST BET

OIP Recommendation: Early application with a late start date

• Because:
  • You cannot change your start date once you apply for it.
  • Less likely you will lose OPT dates
    • OIP is unable to guarantee your application will be processed in time and you will not lose any OPT days.

• However:
  • OIP is not responsible for any job opportunity losses if companies refuse to offer positions due to later start date.
1. Download the OPT request form from OIP website
2. Fill out top portion on 1st page of the form with your start date, type of OPT (Post Completion OPT) and sign it.
3. Review 2nd page of the form, complete the quiz, and sign it.
4. Send form to major academic advisor for graduation verification & signature
5. Email signed form (2 signatures: student & academic advisor) to fl@sfsu.edu
USCIS FORMS

1. Download the current I-765 form from USCIS’s website
2. Review the I-765 instruction to fill out form and sign it
3. Prepare other application documents and filing fee
4. Make a copy of complete application for own reference
5. Mail application to USCIS WITH A TRACKING NUMBER right after you receive new I-20 and prepared copies for the application

OIP is unable to double check student paperwork. It is your responsibility to ensure you have filled out the forms correctly and provided all of the required documents to USCIS.
REASONS FOR DENIAL

• Timing:
  • Delayed application received date (USCIS received application more than 30 days of I-20 issuance date, etc)

• Incorrect/Missing Information:
  • Incorrect or Missing I-765 Information (no wet signature, provided digital signature instead of wet signature, etc)
  • Incorrect I-765 version (used outdated version found on google instead of USCIS website)
  • Incorrect or Missing Payment (incorrect credit card information – must be U.S. Credit card/ Incorrect amount / no signature on credit card authorization form, etc)
STEP 3 – WAIT TIME

- Understanding Your Status
- Keeping Important Documents
- Begin Job Search
- Insurance while on OPT
- Travel while waiting for OPT approval
UNDERSTANDING YOUR STATUS

• OK to wait in the U.S.
  • Not using 60 day grace period or 90 day unemployment days

• CANNOT work until you receive your EAD (typical rule)
  • Covid-19 exception- Approval Notice (not delivery receipt notice) grants work authorization

• Possible risk with traveling
IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

• Mail Carrier OPT Application Delivery Date
  • Keep proof of delivery

• OPT Pending Notice of Delivery
  • Ensure information is correct (name/address, etc)
  • Check your status- egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/

• SF State Grade Posting date (June 1, 2021)
  • Make sure you have passed your classes and graduated
BEGIN YOUR JOB SEARCH

Career Services & Leadership Development

Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management

CSLD
Online Career Platforms

- **Handshake**
  Career Platform

- **Big Interview**
  Interview Platform

- **Gator Connect**
  Mentoring Platform
ONLINE RESOURCES

Handouts
Job Search Websites
Linkedin Resources
Diversity Resources
Events

**CSLD PRESENTS...**
Spring 2021 Calendar of Events

***click on each event to see details***

02 04 06 08 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30

FEB
03 Employer Table Talk [3-4pm] 04 Resume & Cover Letter Tips [12-1pm] 11 Career as Community [12-1pm] 17 How to Navigate Virtual Fairs in Handshake [2-3pm] 18 Major & Career Exploration [12-1pm] 22 Meet the Firms [5-8pm] - Hosted by *BAP*

for Accounting, Finance, Decision Science + Info Systems majors

24 How to Land an Internship [12-1pm]
25 Professional Branding [12-1pm]

MAR
03 Employer Table Talk [3-4pm] 04 Is Grad School Right for Me? [12-1pm] 11 Strategies for Success at a Virtual Fair [12-1pm] 18 Resume and Cover Letter Tips [12-1pm]

Virtual Job Search [12-1pm]

APR
02 How To Navigate Virtual Fairs in Handshake [11am-12pm]
05 How To Navigate Virtual Fairs in Handshake [3-4pm]
06 Networking for introverts [12-1pm]
07 Employer Table Talk [3-4pm]
08 Virtual Career and Internship Fair [10am-3pm]
13 Perfecting the Interview [12-1pm]
20 Job Search Strategies [12-1pm]

CareerEDGE Workshops

Workshops designed to give you an EDGE in your career development. Participate in at least 6 workshops to:
- Receive a CareerEDGE Certificate of Completion
- Be Entered to win one (1) of five (5) Amazon eGift Cards (value of each eGift Card = $250)

To be eligible, you must be a current SF State student, attend and be present in six (6) or more CareerEDGE workshops for at least 45 minutes per workshop. Winners will be announced and notified by May 17, 2021.

Workshop Details
View list of CareerEDGE Workshops below and create your own schedule. All workshops will be presented virtually via Zoom. For more information and to RSVP click on the workshop title. Please refer to Your Career Plan to continue in your career development at SF State.

At the end of every CareerEDGE workshop, 2 current students who are present for at least 45 minutes will be randomly chosen to win an Amazon eGift Card = $25.

Amazon eGift Card Giveaways

CareerEDGE Certificate of Completion

CSLD welcomes persons with disabilities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request. If you would like reasonable accommodations for this event, please call 650-358-TALK or email stdifficulties as soon as possible so arrangements can be made.

Career Services & Leadership Development

**AMAZON EGIFT CARD GIVEAWAYS**
BEGIN JOB SEARCH

• Review CSLD resources to update resume/cover letter
• Schedule meeting to update resume/cover letter
• Begin applying for jobs/ interviewing

Employer questions:

• Do you have work authorization in the U.S.? A: Yes
  • You will have approved OPT to work in the U.S.
• Do I need sponsorship? A: Depends
  • Are you interested in sponsorship? Pros and cons
INSURANCE WHILE ON OPT

• No purchase requirements
• Many employers provide insurance coverage
• SF State Insurance for students on OPT
  • Edibility only up to 30 days after current insurance end date
  • Spring 2021 insurance end date: May 31, 2021
• Contact CSS Eligibility Team for more information
  <csseligibilityteam@relationinsurance.com>
TRAVEL WHILE WAITING FOR OPT APPROVAL

• Can you travel?
  • Not recommended

• If you enter the country on another type of status, you will lose your OPT application.
STEP 4 – MAINTAIN STATUS ON OPT

- Important Dates & Documents
- SEVP portal
- New OPT I-20
- 90 day unemployment period
- Employment Information Folder
- Travel
- Other Information
IMPORTANT DATES & DOCUMENTS

Dates:
- OPT requested start date
- Actual EAD Start Date

Documents:
- OPT Approval Notice
- EAD
- SSN
- Updated OPT approved I-20 with employer information
SEVP PORTAL

• You are on F-1 Status while on OPT. Email f1@sfsu.edu for help.

• USCIS will send you a SEVP portal log in email a couple days after your OPT start date.

• You must report your employment directly on the portal within 10 days (use template on oip website).

• SEVP will automatically terminate your I-20 and end your OPT if no employment is reported on portal beyond 90 days.
NEW OPT APPROVED I-20

- If your employer requires an updated OPT approved I-20 with the employer information
  - Fill out a New I-20 Request Form
  - Email it to f1@sfsu.edu
- Keep all prior versions of your I-20s
90 DAY UNEMPLOYMENT PERIOD

• Begins once your OPT is approved and start date as begin and no employment is reported on SEVP portal
• Starts counting on day of EAD start date if no employment is reported on SEVP portal
• Accumulation of 90 days through all approved OPT days (not just first 90 days)
EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION FOLDER

What would a USCIS auditor need to know?

- Keep all (digital) records of
  - Job offers (supervisor information/ hours/pay)
  - Job posting (duties and responsibilities)
  - Job hours (time sheets)
  - SEVP portal templates
  - Any other relevant information
TRAVEL

• Can you travel?
  • Maybe?
• If you enter the country on another type of status, you will lose your OPT.
OTHER INFORMATION

• You are not allowed to enroll in academic courses while on Post-Completion OPT
  • Yes: non-academic credit-bearing for-fun courses are ok
  • No: academic or certificate courses are not ok
• Your SF State Email will be cancelled after you graduate, use your personal email (view oip website for steps to update your email)
• File your U.S. Taxes
STEP 5 – END OF OPT

• (Prior to EAD end date) Exceeding 90 day unemployment days
• Choosing to end OPT early
• Completing OPT - 60 day grace period
  • Leave the U.S.
  • Transfer to another school
• Applying for STEM OPT if eligible (90 days before end of OPT)
EXCEEDING 90 DAY UNEMPLOYMENT DAYS

• PRIOR TO OPT END DATE: your records will be automatically completed if there is no employment reported for 90 days.

• You do not have a 60 day grace period if you use up your unemployment days.

• Leave the U.S. before your 90 days of unemployment is completed.

• Email f1@sfsu.edu to confirm the date you have left the U.S. and that you will not be returning to the U.S. with your SF State I-20 and OPT status. OIP will terminate your OPT status due to authorized withdraw from OPT program.
CHOOSING TO END OPT EARLY

If you plan to end OPT early and will leave the U.S.:

1. Reporting employment end date on SEVP
2. Leave the U.S. and email f1@sfsu.edu to confirm the date you have left the U.S. and that you will not be returning to the U.S. with your SF State I-20 and OPT status. OIP will terminate your OPT status due to authorized withdraw from OPT program.

If you plan to end OPT early and begin a new program:

1. Reporting employment end date on SEVP
2. Fill out the transfer out request form along with an admission letter and email to f1@sfsu.edu. Your OPT will be ended early and your SEVIS records will be transferred to a new school.
COMPLETING OPT
60 DAY GRACE PERIOD

• If you complete your entire OPT time frame and do not have more than 90 days of unemployment, you are eligible for a 60 day grace period.

• You may choose to leave the U.S. during your grace period or transfer to a new school.
APPLYING FOR STEM OPT EXTENSION

- STEM OPT Extension (c)(3)(C): 24 month work authorization extension for specific STEM majors.

- All STEM majors apply for OPT (c)(3)(B) during their last semester at SF State.

- ELIGIBLE STEM majors may apply for STEM OPT Extension (c)(3)(C) 90 days before their OPT (c)(3)(B) expires. It is not an automatic extension.

- Eligibility: Program CIP Code & Employer qualifications (e-verify/ full time, etc)

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<td><strong>EDUCATION LEVEL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>START OF CLASSES</strong></td>
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<td>27 AUGUST 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAM START/END DATE</strong></td>
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<td>27 AUGUST 2018 - 31 DECEMBER 2018</td>
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STEPS FOR STEM OPT EXTENSION

1. Find a job that meets STEM OPT Employer requirements
2. Fill out USCIS STEM OPT Extension paperwork
3. Fill out OIP STEM OPT Extension paperwork
4. Email paperwork to f1@sfsu.edu 90 days before your OPT end date
5. Prepare STEM OPT Application while waiting for new I-20
6. Mail STEM OPT application to USCIS
7. Wait for STEM OPT notices (pending and approval)
   • Can work up to 180 days beyond OPT EAD end date if STEM OPT is pending
   • Cannot apply for STEM OPT Extension if application is received beyond OPT end date.
RECAP

- OIP Website – start process
  - OPT information page
  - OPT workshop page
- CSLD Website – find jobs
  - Handshake & Big Interview
  - Resume & Cover Letter Resources
- USCIS Website – check status
- SEVP Website – report job
QUESTIONS?

• Email fl@sfsu.edu

• Phone Advising Hours
  • oip.sfsu.edu/fladvisor
    • Tuesday & Thursday
      • 9:30AM to 11:30AM
    • Monday through Friday
      • 2PM to 4PM

No appointment needed!