Optional Practical Training (OPT) Information

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is legal F-1 employment authorization which allows you to gain a maximum of 12 months of professional work experience in your field of study.

There are 2 types of OPT: “Pre-Completion OPT” (before graduation) and “Post-Completion OPT” (after graduation).

Both types of OPT must be recommended by the International Student Services Office and authorized by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) before you can begin working or re-enter the U.S. from another country after graduating.

Refer to USCIS regulation [8 C.F.R. 214.2 (f) (10) (ii)] for additional information.

You are eligible for OPT if you:

- Have been attending school full-time for one academic year (two semesters).
- Have not previously used your full 12-month OPT benefit on the same academic degree level.
- Have not previously used 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT).

As an F-1 student, you can be authorized for a maximum period of 12 months per educational level. You become eligible for another 12 months of practical training when you change to a higher educational level. It is important for you to plan how you want to “spend” your OPT.

Example: When you complete your Associate degree you are entitled to 12 months of OPT. Then, when you complete a Bachelor’s degree you are eligible for another 12 months of OPT. However, if you complete two Associate’s degrees, you will only have ONE 12 months of OPT.

Pre-Completion OPT

- Part-time during the semester

  OR

- Full-time during vacation periods

Pre-Completion OPT is calculated on a daily basis. Part-time employment (less than 20 hours per week) is deducted at 50 percent of the full-time rate.

Example: 4 months of part-time OPT is equal to two months of the total 12-month eligibility period.

Post-Completion OPT

Only after graduation

Always full-time

It is recommended for a 12-month period (unless you request a shorter time frame), minus any previously authorized period of OPT.
It is very important to consider the OPT application processing time when planning your start date with your employer or making travel plans. It is a long process which can take up to 90 days. To ensure that your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is ready to begin work or for travel, file your application early!

- For Pre-Completion OPT, you can apply after one academic year of full-time studies.
- For Post-Completion OPT, you can apply as early as 90 days before you have completed your program. The latest date to apply is 60 days after your last day of classes.

Note: If you miss these deadlines, in order not to violate your F-1 status, you must:

- leave the U.S. within 59 days of the completion of your studies
- be admitted to a new program of study or
- have an application pending for change of status to another non-immigrant status or adjustment of status to permanent resident

Step 1: Complete the OPT Request Form and submit all documents on the OPT Application Checklist to the International Student Services Office (ISSO).

Note: It is important to submit all documents together so we can review your application as quickly as possible. Incomplete documents will not be accepted.

Step 2: A DSO will review your OPT application packet and create a new I-20 for you with the OPT recommendation. The OPT I-20 will be ready for pick-up within 1 week.

Step 3: Apply to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) by mailing your OPT Recommendation Packet with all the appropriate documents to USCIS by priority mail (you should also request a certified mail return receipt). You must mail your OPT packet within 25 days from the date of your BMCC OPT I-20 issuance.

Note 1: If you suddenly get a job or need to travel, you may request “expeditious” processing on your application and submit a letter from your future employer or a photocopy of an airline ticket or reservation with your application. We cannot guarantee that USCIS will respond to your request.

Note 2: You must have your EAD (Employment Authorization Document) in your possession before you can begin working or before you travel and re-enter the U.S. from another country after graduation.
OPT Application Checklist

☐ $380 fee in the form of a money order or personal check, made out to: “U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services” or “USCIS”

☐ Two Green Card-type photos (2 inches x 2 inches), with a white/light background
  *Note: No headwear is allowed unless it is part of religious observation. Print your name and I-94 number on the back in pencil.*

  *Note: It is very important that you follow the instructions for completing the Form I-765 listed on the USCIS website.*

☐ FORM G-1145, completed; with 2 additional copies (download form from [http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf))

☐ FORM I-538 (for Liberal Arts majors only), signed

☐ Three photocopies of: all previous I-20s (including from language schools), your current I-94 card (both sides) or printout of Electronic I-94 information, visa, and personal pages of passport.

☐ Graduation Audit from the Registrar’s Office.

☐ Updated SEVIS I-20 (original document) with the OPT recommendation from BMCC’s DSO (international student advisor) who will assist you in completing the OPT packet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSO Staff</th>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Packet Complete</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Packet Incomplete</td>
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After your application packet has been reviewed by one of the International Student Services staff members, send by priority or certified mail (return receipt or tracking number requested) within 25 days from the date of your BMCC OPT I-20 issuance to:

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service**
**UCIS Dallas Lockbox**
**PO Box 660867**
**Dallas, TX 75266**

Other important information:
- Expect your EAD Work Authorization Card within 90 days. If you do not receive it within this time frame, consult with an ISSO representative.
- Submit your EAD work authorization and place of employment to the ISSO as soon as you receive a response.
- Immigration regulation allows ONLY 90 days of unemployment during the entire OPT period.
# Optional Practical Training Request Form

## Personal Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: ___________________________</th>
<th>Today’s Date (mm/dd/yyyy): ___________________________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Mailing Address:</td>
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(Street address)  (City)  (State)  (Zip Code)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone: ____________________</th>
<th>SEVIS #: ____________________</th>
<th>BMCC EMPL ID #: ____________________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major: ____________________</td>
<td>Passport Expiration Date: ____________________</td>
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By signing this form, I certify that I am in F-1 status and have attended school full-time for at least 2 consecutive semesters. I am requesting authorization for Optional Practical Training employment that is directly related to my major and commensurate or consistent with my educational level.

**Note:** Address provided must be in the United States, and must be valid for at least 3 months (until you receive the EAD card from USCIS). If you are planning to move within this time, please provide a family member or friend’s mailing address.

## Type of OPT

- [ ] Pre-Completion OPT
  - [ ] Full-time (only available during vacation periods)
  - [ ] Part-time (during Fall or Spring semesters)

- [ ] Post-Completion OPT
  - Available full-time after graduation.

**Requested Start Date:** ___________________________  **End Date:** ___________________________

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**Student’s Signature:** ___________________________  **Date:** ___________________________

**Note for Post-Completion OPT applicant:** The ISSO can recommend your start date to begin as early as the day after the last day of classes of your final semester of study at BMCC, or no later than 60 days from the last day of classes. The ending date will be no later than 12 months following the start date. However, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has the right to authorize your OPT for dates other than the ones you requested.