

OPT

A Six Step Guide to Optional Practical Training: ISSI Form 211

****Use the checklists below to ensure completion of each step in the process****

Step 1

Obtaining the Application Packet and Scheduling an Appointment: This form is a part of the ISSI's OPT information packet. After obtaining the OPT packet at the ISSI or at www.issi.neu.edu/forms, the student should schedule an appointment with an international student advisor. Before the appointment the student should complete the following forms:

- Form I-765:** This form may be downloaded from: www.uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm. The student--to the best of his/her ability—needs to complete and sign in blue ink this *Application for Employment Authorization*. Please refer to ISSI form 209 for a complete set of guidelines on how to complete this application. For item number 16, the code for Eligibility Category should be entered as “(C) (3) (B)”.
- Form ISSI 210:** This form is a *Request for SEVIS I-20*, and is required since a student will be issued a new I-20 bearing the OPT recommendation. Please complete the required information.
- Form ISSI 217: Only for graduate students applying for pre-completion OPT**
- Form ISSI 133:** This form is the *Certification of Program Completion for International Students* that will confirm the expected date of program completion for those intending to engage in post-completion OPT.

Step 2

The Appointment: The student must bring the following to the appointment with the ISSI advisor:

- The completed I-765 form.
- The appropriate and completed ISSI forms.
- Current original passport
- Original I-94 form
- Current I-20 and all previous I-20s.

Step 3

Mailing the Application: After meeting with the international student advisor and obtaining a new I-20 with a recommendation for OPT, the student must assemble the following documents for mailing:

- Form I-765 (original).
- Check or money order for \$340 payable to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.
- Photocopy of Form I-94 (front and back).
- Photocopy of the new I-20 signed and dated with the recommendation for OPT on page 3.
- Photocopy of all previous I-20(s).
- Photocopy of previous Employment Authorization Card (EAC) if any.
- Two “full-frontal color passport style” photos are required. Follow the photo instructions given on the Department of State website at <http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotos/index.html> (see “Composition Checklist”/“Frequently Asked Question”). Print your name legibly on back of each photo.
- Photocopy of the biographical page of the passport.

- Photocopy of your most recent visa stamp.
- NSEERS (National Security Entry-Exit Registration System) registrants must include proof of special registration (consult an ISSI advisor for details).

Mail the above items by Certified Mail with return receipt to the USCIS service center that has jurisdiction over your district of residence as indicated on your form I-765. If you reside in Massachusetts send your application to:

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Vermont Service Center
75 Lower Welden Street
St. Albans, VT 05479**

Step 4

Processing Period for the OPT Application:

Receipt Notice (Form I-797): After the student has mailed the OPT application to the USCIS, he or she will receive a confirmation of receipt: Form I-797. *Please keep this form.* This confirmation notification contains a case number assigned to you by the USCIS that you can use to track your case status online at www.uscis.gov.

Address Changes: While the student's application is pending, any changes in address **must be reported to two different places:** 1) the ISSI; 2) the USCIS at the Immigration Service Center processing your OPT application (the student should include a copy of his/her Form I-797 in any correspondence with the USCIS). *It is vital to inform the ISSI and USCIS of the correct address in order to ensure the timely delivery of the student's EAC.*

IMPORTANT: Form AR-11 does not need to be filed except by students subject to special registration (NSEERS), who must notify the USCIS of their address changes by mailing Form AR-11SR to the address listed on that form (<http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/ar-11sr.htm>)

Step 5

Maintaining Status while on OPT:

EAC: After having received permission to work from the USCIS in the form of an Employment Authorization card, the student must **submit a copy of the card to the ISSI** for their records. *Students may work when and only when they have the EAC and only work within the dates specified on the employment card.*

Address Changes: Any **change of address must be reported within 10 days** to the ISSI. NSEERS students must notify the USCIS of their address changes by mailing Form AR-11SR to the address listed on that form (<http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/ar-11sr.htm>)

Reporting Employer Name and Address and Changes in Employer: Students must report the name and address of their employer, as well as any change of name and address of employer or interruption of their employment, to the ISSI as soon as optional practical training employment is secured or change in employer occurs.

Discontinuing OPT: If the student decides to discontinue his or her OPT, the ISSI must be informed as soon as possible.

Termination of OPT: If the student transfers to another school or begins studies toward a higher degree, the OPT will automatically be terminated.

Step 6 (for students on post-completion OPT only)

Travel Advisory:

Travel: Please refer to Form ISSI 216 - Travel Advisory for Student Engaged in Post-Completion Optional Practical Training