

## International Admissions

Peck Hall 208  
MTSU Box 120  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132  
o: (615) 904-8190 • f: (615) 494-8935  
mtsu.edu/intered



## Optional Practical Training

**Overview:** Optional Practical Training is defined in the regulations as “temporary employment for practical training” directly related to the student’s major area of study. Students can use it during or after their studies. There are 12 months of OPT given for each degree level (i.e. bachelors, masters, doctorate). Work experience can be paid or unpaid, but any and all positions must be related to the field of study.

**Eligibility:** To be eligible a student must have been enrolled for classes for at least one academic year (two regular semesters). Students with 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training lose eligibility for OPT.

**Pre-Completion OPT:** Authorization must begin and end prior to the completion of the degree. It is limited to part-time (20 hours or less) while school is in session or full-time (over 20 hours) when school is not in session.

**Post-Completion:** Full-time authorization must begin after completing all coursework requirements for the degree.

**Limited Unemployment:** During post-completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment; therefore, students may not accrue a combined total of more than 90 days of unemployment during the initial 12 months of post-completion authorization. Days of unemployment will be counted from either the start date requested or the date the employment authorization is adjudicated, whichever is later. If the 90-day unemployment is exceeded, students would be out of status and would need to leave the US since they would have no legal grounds for remaining in the United States.

**Note:** The 12-month period may be divided between pre-completion and post-completion; however, separate filings and separate fee payments are required. You **may not start working** until you receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the Department of Homeland Security. While OPT is pending, you are in legal F1 status.

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### Application Process:

Gather and complete all documents from the checklist located on the OPT Application Checklist and leave them at the front desk of the appropriate office. (Undergraduates at Peck Hall 208. Graduates at Ingram Building first floor.) Be sure all copies are clear and legible. Please do not send anything to US Citizenship and Immigration Services without a proper review by an international student advisor. The advisor will print a new I-20 with a recommendation for OPT. This must be included with your materials to USCIS. Your advisor will email you when your package is ready to be picked up with the new I-20.

You will sign your new I-20 form and make a copy. You will mail the copy with the OPT application documents. Do not mail the original I-20 form.

When preparing your documents, please remember:

- Form I-765 (found at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)) must be typewritten. Handwritten forms are not acceptable. Do not send form without speaking to an advisor first.
- On question # 20 eligibility is either (c) (3) (A) – Pre-completion **OR** (c) (3) (B) – Post-completion.
- Two photographs must be placed in a small envelope. On the back of the photo lightly print in pencil or felt-tip pen your name and your I-94 number.

### Guidelines for photos (passport style):

- plain white or off-white background – 2x2 inches in size
- taken within past 6 months
- unmounted color print on glossy, un-retouched paper
- head positioned directly facing the camera; eyes open, looking at camera; eyeglasses worn if normally used
- photo from slightly above top of hair to middle of chest – height of head should measure 1 to 1 3/8 inches
- head should be bare unless wearing a headdress required by a religious order to which you belong.

### Suggested photographers:

Walgreen's or other pharmacy store

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### Mail to USCIS Dallas Lockbox (two address options):

1. For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries

USCIS  
PO Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

2. For Express mail and courier deliveries

USCIS  
Attn: AOS  
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business  
Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067

**Job Offer:** When you have a job offer you must report the following information to [international@mtsu.edu](mailto:international@mtsu.edu):

- How is the employment related to your course of study (one or two sentences)
- Employer address
- Employer Name
- The day you actually start or started working there
- Supervisor name and email address or phone number

**Case status:** Once you have received your “Notice of Action” receipt, you can check the status of your case on the USCIS web page by using your receipt number: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

**Address changes:** Immigration documents are not forwarded by the postal service if you should move while your application is pending, so it is your responsibility to notify USCIS your new mailing address. The Customer Service contact is noted on your I-767 “Notice of Action” receipt. Changing address while an OPT application is pending can cause significant delays. If it is mailed to an “old” address, it will be returned to USCIS as “undeliverable” and ultimately destroyed.

**Notification of application receipt:** If you would like to receive notification via text message that your application has been received by USCIS, complete a G-1145 form (available from [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)) and include it with your application. This is an optional service provided by USCIS at no extra charge.

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### OPT Application Checklist

- Unofficial academic transcript
- Completed and signed Form I-765 - <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
- Photocopy or print out of I-94 record - Print from [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94)
- Photocopy of F-1 visa page from passport
- Photocopy of passport biographical page
- Photocopies of all previously issued I-20s
- Copy of EAD if previously authorized for OPT
- Two passport sized photos
- Money order or cashier's check payable to "US Department of Homeland Security"  
(Check Form I-765 instructions for the fee amount as this is subject to change. Do not pay the additional Biometric Fee.)

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**Optional Practical Training Application**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

MTSU Email: \_\_\_\_\_

SEVIS Number: \_\_\_\_\_

MTSU Student ID (M#): \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been authorized for OPT before:  No  Yes

If Yes: From \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been authorized for full-time CPT before:  No  Yes

If Yes: From \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

For which type of OPT are you applying:

Part-time Pre-Completion OPT (Up to 20 hours per week.)

Full-time Pre-Completion OPT (Over 20 hours per week. Only available during summer break)

Post-Completion OPT (After completion of the course of study or after completion of all course requirements for the degree. Please note that your post-completion OPT start date must be within the 60 day grace period following your program end date.)

Current I-20 Program End date (listed on front of I-20): \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Requested OPT Authorization Dates:

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ End date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

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**Employment Info**

Please complete the following if you have been already offered employment.

Employer's name:

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Employer's address:

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's name:

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Supervisor's email:

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### Important Note

Students engaging in initial F-1 post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during the initial post-completion OPT period. Students granted the 24-month STEM OPT extension may not accrue an aggregate of more than 150 days of unemployment during the total OPT period including any initial OPT and the 24-month OPT extension. Further, students engaging in F-1 post-completion must engage in at least 20 hours or more per week of employment that is directly related to the student's U.S. major of study. Lastly, unpaid internships may meet the OPT employment requirements if the internship is directly related to the student's U.S. major of study and the internship complies with all labor laws.

The student must be able to provide evidence that F-1 status was maintained during post-completion OPT. Evidence may include but is not limited to the following:

- A list of all employers the beneficiary has worked for under post-completion OPT and the periods the beneficiary worked for those employers;
- Copies of all pay records/stubs for the beneficiary from the starting date of post-completion OPT to the present time; and
- Evidence that the beneficiary worked at least 20 hours or more per week in a position is directly related to the beneficiary's U.S. major of study.