

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

Eligibility:

1. Must be in F-1 status and have completed two full time semesters of non-ESL courses.
2. Be in good academic standing with a GPA of 2.0 minimum.

Available Time Period:

1. Full time during summer vacation and holidays when school is not in session;
2. Part time during school sessions, training cannot exceed twenty hours per week;
3. Full time after graduation*. Most students use it at this time.
*Your application documents must be mailed 90 days before to at most 6 weeks after graduation.
**12 months of OPT is permitted at each educational level (AA, BA, MA, etc)
4. Associate level OPT cannot be "extended".

Application Procedures: (to apply for an EAD, Employment Authorization Document)

1. Download and complete USCIS form I-765. Leave blank anything you don't understand. (See back for instructions.) Download at www.uscis.gov see Forms Button and I-765 Pdf (Don't print official instructions)
2. Type a letter to USCIS, (consult with your academic or career counselor for ideas if needed). Request OPT and include exact work dates. Make the letter concise, professional, and pleasant. **Example:** "Dear Officer, I hope to work and get practical experience in (your major). (Add your ideas.) I wish to work (part or full) time from (mm/dd/yy) to (mm/dd/yyyy)."

**If Graduating - start date must be 60 calendar days or less after graduation.*

3. Make copies of your passport information and expiration pages, picture, and visa pages and both sides of your most recent I-94 card or record. Print record from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>
4. Make copies of both front (page 1) and signature (page 2) pages of EACH I-20 form issued to you by any school in the United States - **If Graduating – A copy of the Graduation Verification Form.*
5. \$410 in a check or money order made payable to; "Department of Homeland Security". Include your SEVIS ID/I-20 in the "memo" or "for" section.
6. Two 'green card'-style photos (write your I-20 number on backs) - see reverse or download instructions at: www.travel.state.gov and look for "Composition Photographs".
7. Obtain a **NEW I-20 from the International Coordinator** noted with your OPT request. You must make an appointment and bring items 1-6 above
8. **Mail all the application materials (1-7 above) WITHIN 14 DAYS (AFTER YOUR NEW I-20 IS DATED) to:**

To send documents through express mail or get a Signature that the mail was received (by a person), with FedEx, UPS, DHL or US Postal Service express or registered mail deliveries, mail to:

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

If using regular mail, and receipt signature is not desired mail to:

USCIS
PO Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680.

Processing takes 2-5 months. USCIS will send you a Receipt Letter in two to three weeks. If practical training is approved you will receive a Notice of Action Letter and an EAD card soon after the letter. If you receive a Request for Evidence letter come to the office.

The student is responsible for filing all immigration documents. Students should keep a copy of application materials. Complete and include a form G-1145 (see www.USCIS.gov Forms button) to receive a text or email that your application was received in Dallas (from there it will be forwarded to another office to complete processing).

Important Points To Remember:

1. All the documents **should be sent in the order listed**, with the check and photos on top so they are not lost. I-20s **should** be backwards chronologically (most recent on top) and for post completion OPT a copy of the graduation form should go behind the latest I-20. **The G-1145 should sit loose on top of the 'packet' of other documents.**
2. You do not need a job to apply for Optional Practical Training; however you **MUST** email the International Office the name and address of your company when you get your job
3. Once you receive your actual EAD card you may work, please get a copy to the International Office
4. You can apply for Social Security Card with your EAD, you do not need a new one if you have one

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Montgomery College

International Student Office

5. You **MUST WORK** at least 9 of your 12 months (you must start within 90 days of your EAD start date)
6. F-1 employees pay income taxes, but there are some taxes F1s do not pay - see the Tax Code
7. Follow normal F1 procedures for transfer to another institution.
8. To Travel outside of the US while on OPT you will need: your I-20 signed by an International Coordinator at Montgomery College, your EAD card, and a letter from your employer saying that you will be returning to continue your work (or a job offer letter if you have not started yet).
9. It may be difficult to re-new your F-1 visa after you graduate, even with your EAD card.
10. Your passport needs to be valid for the entire time of your OPT at the time you apply.
11. You must keep your address and telephone number current with the International Office.
12. Graduates may take part time classes but NOT start your "next level of education" program.
13. Students who use only part of their 12 months are able to use the other parts either BEFORE graduation OR if they complete another Associate-Level degree. A new 12 months is available at the Bachelor level and each level of education above that. STEM majors, ABOVE the Associate level only, can get an extension of their Post-Completion OPT (called the "STEM Extension").

HRK11/18.

Form I-765 Instructions

Part 1: Check Box on 1.a. "Initial permission to accept employment". Do not check 1.c., even if you have done it before.

Part 2: Complete all sections **except**:

8. Alien Registration Number
9. USCIS Online Account Number
- 21.C. Travel Document Number
27. Eligibility Category (Will be completed with your International Coordinator).
28. Through 31.b.

- Number 21.a. Form I-94 Arrival - Departure Record Number. Retrieve it from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94>
- Number 23. Write down the name of the airport or border port (Port of Entry) by which you entered the U.S. on your last arrival.
- Number 26. This number can be found on your upper left corner of your I-20.

Part 3: Complete all numbers that apply to you. Remember to **handwrite** your signature in black ink.

Part 4 through Part 6: Should be blank.

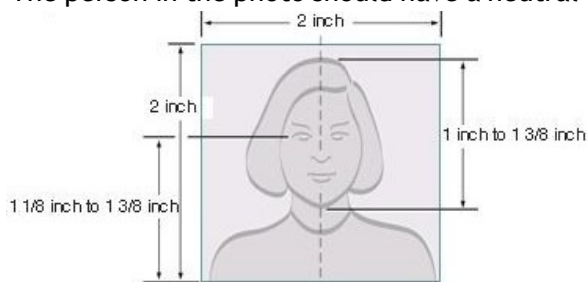
Remember to include and **send all pages of the form**, even the ones that were left blank, or did not apply to you. If you have any question about any of the parts, or the numbers in the form, leave them blank and complete them with your International Coordinator.

Photo guidelines for Form I-765

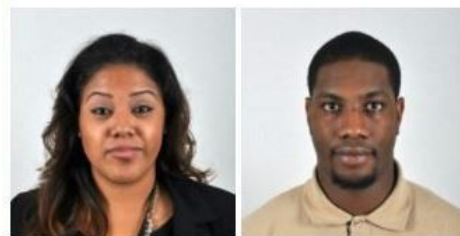
Applications to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requiring photos must be accompanied by the same style of full-face photograph as is used for visa applications, as described below. The photographs submitted to USCIS must be color photographs. **Two copies are required for I-765 applications.**

Starting November 1, 2016, **eyeglasses will no longer be allowed in visa photos.**

- Make sure the photo presents the full head from the top of the hair to the bottom of the chin
- Center the head with the frame
- The person in the photo should have a neutral expression and be facing the camera



PAPER PHOTO HEAD SIZE TEMPLATE



WELL COMPOSED PHOTO COMPOSITION EXAMPLES

* For more information on photo composition and requirements, visit <https://goo.gl/sUc61y>