

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a good opportunity for students in certificate programs to work in the United States (in their field of study) for up to one year after completing their certificate. English Language students are not eligible for OPT.

Requirements of Applying for OPT:

- You must have been in F-1 status for at least one academic year (three quarters).
- You must have been studying in one (or more) certificate programs for at least one academic year (three quarters).
- Your I-20 must indicate a certificate program name in section 5 (not *Second Language Learning*).
- Your application may not be mailed more than 90 days prior to completing one academic year of certificate studies.
- Your application must be mailed before you complete your certificate.
- Your requested dates for OPT must not exceed 12 months.
- Your requested dates for OPT must begin within 60 days of completing your certificate.
- Your requested dates for OPT must finish within 14 months of completing your certificate.

Step 1:

- Visit the Enrollment Services office in rooms 236/238 to pick up OPT application form.
It can take the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) several months to process an OPT application. Regardless of your requested start date, **you may not begin OPT until you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from BCIS**. Your OPT end date will remain the same even if you receive your EAD late. The good news, though, is if you have waited 90 days and have not received an EAD, you may visit the local BCIS office in San Bernardino to obtain a temporary EAD and you may begin work immediately. The BCIS office in San Bernardino is located at 655 W. Rialto Avenue and their phone number is (909) 386-3200.
- Find out the name of the coordinator of your certificate program and confirm the exact date when you will complete your certificate and have your advisor e-mail Tammy Gelow at tammyg@ucr.edu with your student ID number, your full name as it appears on your passport, the name of your certificate and the date of completion.
- Complete the Enrollment Form for Certificate Programs in the back of the current UC Riverside Extension schedule or from the Enrollment Services office in rooms 236/238. Take this form to Student Services and pay the \$50 certificate program fee.

Step 2: Please bring the following to the Enrollment Services offices in rooms 236/238:

- Inform the Immigration Advisor of the date you would like your OPT to begin
- Passport: We will photocopy your bio page, visa, and I-94 (front and back)
- Current I-20 (and previous I-20s if necessary to show you've studied for 3 quarters). We will make photocopies
- Two passport-style photographs
- \$340 check or money order payable to *US Department of Homeland Security*
- Receipt for payment of the certificate program fee
- Completed form I-765
 - Question 3: Enter your mailing address in the United States.
 - Question 9: If you do not have a Social Security number, leave this blank.
 - Question 10: Enter your I-94 number, which is printed on the white card stapled in your passport.
 - Question 13: Enter the city where your international flight landed in the United States.
 - Question 16: (c) (3) (B)

Step 3: Enrollment Services office will contact you by e-mail to come in and complete the OPT application process. (This step cannot be completed until the Enrollment Services office has received an email from your certificate coordinator.)

- Meet with the Enrollment Services staff to confirm your certificate completion date and your OPT eligibility dates
- We will create a new I-20 for you
- Sign your new I-20, which includes OPT notation on page three

Once your application is completed and you have signed your I-20, we will mail your application to USCIS for processing. Your receipt should be mailed to you within 4-6 weeks.