



## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM Optional Practical Training (OPT)

**Optional Practical Training (OPT)** is defined as “temporary employment for training directly relating to a student’s major area of study” and allows an approved student to receive an **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)** for work in the United States. OPT allows students to work up to 12 months after completion of the program of study. To qualify, students:

- Must complete at least 12 units at West Los Angeles College
- SEVIS record must have been ACTIVE for at least one year
- Resolve all fees and holds for current and prior semesters.



### STEP 1: CONFIRM GRADUATION ELIGIBILITY

Obtain an updated copy of your Comprehensive Student Education Plan (CSEP). To obtain a CSEP, schedule an appointment with the Counseling Division (Student Services Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor).



### STEP 2: DOWNLOAD AND REVIEW REQUIRED USCIS FORMS

Review the application instructions for Form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization) (<http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>). You should also gather the necessary application documents:



### STEP 3: GATHER REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Form I-94   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form I-765 Application Filing Fee (check or money order) | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of F1 Visa   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form I-20 with OPT “recommendation                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Passport  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport photos (2 x 2) taken within the past 30 days    | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Copy of Employment Authorization Document (EAD); if previously issued.</i> |



### STEP 4: SCHEDULE OPT APPOINTMENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

Request an OPT appointment by emailing [studentvisa@wla.edu](mailto:studentvisa@wla.edu). An advisor will review your request. If approved, the advisor will help prepare your OPT application and update your I-20 for Pre-Completion OPT, (c)(3)(A) OR Post-Completion OPT, (c)(3)(B).



### WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER FILING FOR OPT

**USCIS typically responds to OPT request between 2 to 4 months.** If approved for OPT, students may then begin employment/internship. If declined, the student is advised to meet with the International Student Program advisor to determine the next course of action.

**REVIEW NEXT PAGE FOR FOLLOW-UP INSTRUCTIONS**



## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER FILING FOR OPT

**USCIS typically responds to OPT request between 2 to 4 months.** You may not begin work unless approved by USCIS. If declined, the student is advised to meet with the International Student Program advisor to determine the next course of action.

**Reporting responsibilities:** All students approved for OPT must submit copies of:

- OPT Approval Letter (Form I-797C, Notice of Action)
- WLAC Employment Report (<http://www.wlac.edu/WLAC/media/documents/international/OPT-Employment-Report.pdf>)

The WLAC Employment Report must be submitted within 10 days of employment start date or changes in employment (i.e. end of employment, change in employment, addition of new employment). OPT Approved students may not exceed 90 days of unemployment throughout the OPT approval dates. Failure to report employment or satisfy the terms of employment will result in termination of the I-20 and OPT authorization.



## STUDENT – WLAC INTERNATIONAL ADVISOR MEETING

I met with a WLAC counselor and confirmed I will complete studies with completion of \_\_\_\_\_ semester. I understand that I am ineligible for future enrollment if applying or granted post-completion OPT.

I can apply up to 90 days before the end of my program and up to 60 days after my program end date. The International Student Program advisor recommends submitting the application at earliest eligibility.

I approve my advisor/DSO to adjust my I-20 program end date to \_\_\_\_\_. Once the I-20 completes, I cannot extend or transfer my I-20. I will begin my 60-day grace period.

I request an OPT approval date of \_\_\_\_\_; a date that is within 60 days of my program end date. I understand that it is USCIS that will set the approval eligibility date.

I understand that I am responsible for mailing Form I-765 and support documents within 30 days of I20 (with OPT "recommendation") date. Failure to submit within 30 days voids the I-20 for OPT application purposes.

I understand that Form I-765 application fee is non-refundable. I have followed the instructions provided by the advisor/DSO but have also independently verified the accuracy/completeness of my forms.

I understand that I am responsible for responding to USCIS's Request for Evidence (RFE) or Request for Information (RFI). I will contact my advisor/DSO if I am requiring assistance.

I understand that I must notify USCIS if I change my mailing address after submitting Form I-765. All responses from USCIS will arrive at the address I provided on Form I-765 unless I update USCIS.

I understand that I am ineligible for work unless I receive OPT approval from USCIS. Upon approval, I must immediately begin searching for employment that is directly related to my program of study.

I understand that my I-20 and the OPT application can be cancelled by my advisor/DSO if I (a) fail to complete my final semester in good standing, fail to report my employment, or exceed 90 days of unemployment.

SIGNATURE

DATE



**Note: Students on Post-Completion OPT do not qualify for LACCD's medical insurance.** Students are encouraged to contact Ascension Insurance Solutions ([www.4studenthealth.com/wlac](http://www.4studenthealth.com/wlac)) to explore the health insurance options.