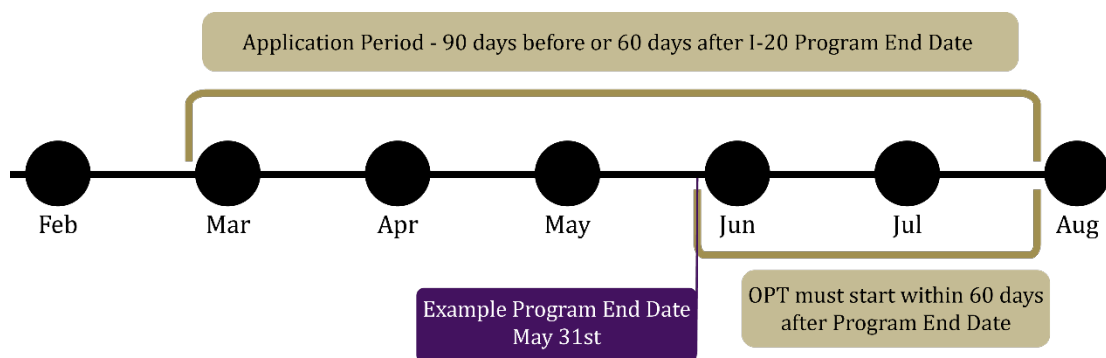


Applying for Optional Practical Training - OPT

OPT is employment authorized for F-1 students by USCIS to work in any area related to your field of study. At Butler Community College, OPT may be authorized for full-time, post-completion employment only. OPT can be authorized for a maximum total period of 12 months per educational level. If you have received OPT authorization at a degree level higher than associate degree, you are not eligible for OPT at Butler.

When to Apply:

This sample timeline shows a possible application timeline for OPT. USCIS must receive the OPT application packet within 30 days of a new I-20 with OPT recommendation being issued by Butler.



A student must have been in F-1 status for at least one full academic year and eligible to graduate. Students may not work until OPT is approved, an EAD card is received, and the start date on the EAD has been reached.

OPT Application Steps:

1. Complete an OPT Request Form and send it to an International Advisor.
2. Complete a degree check with your advisor to verify your expected date of completion of studies.
3. Gather the required documents (listed on the next page) to apply for OPT.
4. Create an account at www.uscis.gov.
5. Schedule an appointment with an International Advisor to apply for OPT. Bring all required documents.
Allow at least 1 hour to complete all application steps with the advisor. During the meeting the advisor will issue your OPT I-20 and guide you through the I-765 application and related documents. Do not apply by yourself.

Required OPT Application Documents:

- ☐ **Debit/credit card** to pay the **\$470.00** application fee online
- ☐ JPEG file of a **Passport-style photograph**, processed through Photo Tool*, taken recently
- ☐ Scanned PDF or JPEG of your **I-94**
- ☐ Scanned PDF or JPEG of your **passport**
- ☐ Scanned PDF files of any previously issued **EAD cards** (if applicable)
- ☐ Scanned PDF files of all issued **Forms I-20** showing previous CPT or OPT authorization (if applicable)
- ☐ Laptop with internet access, with all required files accessible, and power cord

Procedure for DSO:

1. Verify student's eligibility. (in F-1 status for at least 1 year, completing SEVIS program and academic degree)
2. Enter OPT recommendation in SEVIS within application eligibility timeline. Scan and email the I-20 (with student and DSO signatures) to the student. Student must apply for OPT with I-20 within 30 days.

Important Details About OPT

- You, the student, are responsible for all parts of filing an application for OPT with USCIS
- Any full-time curricular practical training (CPT) or any OPT done before a degree is completed will count against the 12 month total and reduce time available for Post-Completion OPT
- Employment while on OPT must be related to your field of study
- After completing OPT, you have 60 days to transfer to another school. If you do not transfer, your SEVIS record will automatically close as Completed after 60 days.

Reporting Requirements while on OPT

- Report to an International Advisor as soon as you receive your EAD card from USCIS, and confirm the dates of work authorization listed on the card.
- You must enter employment information (name and address of your employer) **within 10 days of employment**. You must also report this information to your International Advisor.
 - You cannot exceed 90 total days of unemployment while on OPT.
 - You must report any changes in your employment changes during OPT to an International Advisor, and enter updated employment information and dates in the SEVP Portal.
- You must report any change of name and/or address **within 10 days of that change**.
- You must contact an International Advisor if you end OPT earlier than the authorized end date.

NOTE: While authorized to do OPT, you are still monitored by Butler Community College concerning your F-1 visa status. All reports should be directed to this office and to the advisor who recommended your OPT.

Travel While on OPT

- Before receiving OPT authorization: It is better not to travel during this time. If an emergency arises, contact your advisor.
- Your I-20 must have a current signature for travel – no older than 6 months. You must have a current, valid EAD card. Your F-1 visa must be valid.

*Passport-Style Photograph & Photo Tool

- a) Photo must be a .jpeg file, and formatted following US State Department (DOS) standards
- b) We recommend taking the photo yourself. If you do, use the Photo Tool from the US DOS to adjust the photo if needed. Do not alter the photo in another program. Once the photo is adjusted in the Photo Tool and meets standards, it can be downloaded to use.
US Department of State Photo Tool: <https://tsg.phototool.state.gov/photo>