

# Optional Practical Training Request Form



## Office of International Affairs

204 North Lexington Avenue, Wilmore, Kentucky 40390 | Larabee Morris LM302  
859.858.2386 | Ext. 2386 | [international.services@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:international.services@asburyseminary.edu)

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) permit students in F-1 status to work in the United States for the purpose of obtaining relevant work experience in their field of study. This benefit is called Optional Practical Training (OPT), and the work must be in the student's field of study. One year of OPT is available for a student's continuous time as an F-1 student, and is available at every degree level (i.e., one year after master's and one year after Ph.D., during or immediately after the completion of the degree). The time authorized by USCIS will be deducted regardless of whether you take advantage of OPT or not.

Optional practical training falls into two categories:

1. Pre-Completion OPT
  - Full or part-time employment during your annual vacation if you are enrolled and intend to register for the next session;
  - Part-time employment (20 hours per week or less) while school is in session;
2. Post-Completion OPT
  - Full or part-time employment after you have completed your course requirements but before you have finished your thesis/dissertation; or
  - Full-time employment after you have completed your degree.

## OPT REQUIREMENTS

OPT is authorized by submitting an application to the USCIS with supporting documents. Students who have completed one full academic year may engage in Optional Practical Training. An application for OPT may be submitted as early as 90 days prior to completing one academic year, but authorization will only be granted from the date the student actually completes a full academic year. A student authorized for 12 months of OPT becomes eligible for another 12 months of OPT when he/she changes to a higher educational level (i.e. Masters to PhD).

A student may be granted authorization to engage in temporary employment for OPT:

1. During the student's annual vacation and at other times when school is not in session, if the student is currently enrolled, and is eligible for registration and intends to register for the next term or session;
2. While school is in session, provided that OPT does not exceed 20 hours a week.
3. After completion of the course of study or after completion of all course requirements for the degree, excluding thesis or equivalent.
4. OPT must be requested prior to the completion of all course requirements for the degree or prior to the completion of the course of study. **(It cannot be requested during the 60-day grace period at the completion of the course of study.)**
5. A student must complete OPT within a 14-month period following the completion of study.

## Part-time

Part-time OPT (maximum of 20 hours per week) is permitted while school is in session, but students must be registered for a full course load. For students who apply for part-time OPT, OPT is computed at half the regular full-time period. For example, students who choose to engage in OPT while school is in session during the fall semester (4-1/2 months) would have two months and one week deducted from the total of one year.

## Full-time

Full-time OPT is permitted during the school recess, after completion of all course work, or after the completion of all requirements for the degree.

## Application and Authorization Procedures

Your permission to begin optional practical training is not official until you have received an "Employment Authorization Document" (EAD) from the USCIS and the starting date on the EAD is reached.

## Authorization May Not Be Rescinded or Deferred

Once authorization to engage in optional practical training is granted and the EAD is issued, it may not be canceled or deferred. This means that, after optional practical training is authorized by the USCIS, unexpected delays in completing degree requirements, inability to find an appropriate job, or loss of a job may reduce the time you have available for work.

## Change of Employer After Post-Completion Practical Training Has Been Authorized

You may change employers after you have begun authorized employment provided the new job is:

1. Directly related to your major field of study and
2. Appropriate for someone having your level of education.

## Travel Outside the United States

To re-enter the U.S., you should present to the INS Officer at the Port of Entry the following documents:

1. I-20 that has been endorsed within the last six months.
2. A valid American visa stamped in your passport.
3. A letter from your employer (if you are working) indicating that you are expected to resume your duties after a brief absence.
4. Your EAD (Employment Authorization) card.

## Ph.D. Students in Dissertation/Continuation

If you choose to pursue post-completion (full-time) OPT while completing your dissertation, your program will be shortened to allow for OPT application. We are not able to extend your Asbury I-20 after the completion of your OPT. If you choose to pursue OPT while your dissertation is in progress, please be aware that you will not be eligible for any further extensions of your I-20 to allow you to return to Wilmore and continue work on your dissertation after your OPT is completed. Therefore, you should plan to either seek a change of status with another organization, transfer your I-20 to another institution, or depart the US within 60 days of your OPT end date to complete your dissertation from outside the United States.

## APPLICATION DEADLINES

### Pre-completion OPT

Students who have not yet met the one full academic year requirement can file for pre-completion OPT no sooner than 90 days before meeting that requirement, provided the employment start date requested is on or after the date they meet the one full academic year requirement. Students who have already met the one academic year requirement may apply for pre-completion OPT up to 90 days in advance of the requested employment start date.

### Post-completion OPT

For standard post-completion OPT, the I-765 must be received by the Service Center no sooner than 90 days before the program end date, and no later than 60 days after the program end date. In addition, the Form I-765 in support of post-completion OPT must be received by the USCIS Service Center no later than 30 days after the DSO submits the OPT recommendation to SEVIS.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

### Step 1: Prepare your Application Materials

Asbury Theological Seminary Optional Practical Training Request Form

Asbury Theological Seminary Registrar's OPT Recommendation – Complete the top portion of the form and leave with the registrar to complete

Complete Form I-765

- Download Form I-765: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf>
- Instructions for Form I-765: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765instr.pdf>

Check or money order in the amount of \$380 made payable to: "US Department of Homeland Security"

Copy of your current I-20, as well as copies of any previous I-20s issued to you

Copy of your I-94 (if paper I-94, front and back on the same sheet of paper; electronic I-94 can be found online: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html> )

Copy of your most recent F-1 visa

Copy of your passport's bio page

Two passport style (2 in X 2 in) photographs of yourself - Lightly print in pencil your name and your I-94 Admission Number

Copy of any previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD), if applicable

**Step 2:** Schedule an appointment with the Manager of International Services to review your OPT materials and create your new OPT authorization I-20

**Step 3:** Mail your OPT documents within 30 days of the creation of your new I-20. Send your documents by USPS to the following address:

USCIS  
P.O. Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

## **AFTER APPLYING FOR OPT**

Once your application has been submitted to USCIS, you can expect to wait around 3 months for processing. A current estimate of the timeline for OPT approval at the Texas Service Center can be found here: <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>. You should not leave the United States while your OPT application is processing.

If your address changes after you submit your application, please submit your change of address directly to USCIS at this website: <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>. USCIS will be mailing your EAD card to you, and it is very important that they have the correct address information. You are not legally allowed to work until your EAD card arrives; your OPT start date will be confirmed on your EAD card.

During your OPT, you must keep Asbury informed of both your current address and phone number AND the details of your employment. If your address or employment changes, please submit the OPT Change of Information Form to the Manager of International Services.

## **Limit on Unemployment During OPT**

You may accumulate up to 90 days of unemployment during your approved OPT year. If you exceed 90 days of unemployment, your status will be terminated. Days of unemployment are automatically tracked by the government through the SEVIS system. When you obtain or change your employment, you must notify International Services in writing (email) within 10 days so that your record can be updated. The attached OPT Change of Information Form can be used for this purpose.

# Registrar's OPT Recommendation



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### Student Information - To be completed by the Student

LAST OR FAMILY NAME

FIRST NAME

ID #

EMAIL

PHONE

### OPT Information

OPT REQUESTED TO LAST FROM BEGIN (MM/DD/YYYY)

TO END (MM/DD/YYYY)

### Academic Information - To be completed by the Registrar

The student listed above is requesting the Manager of International Services' recommendation for employment authorization in his/her field of study. Please complete and sign the section below. If further information is advisable or necessary, describe in an accompanying letter.

**OPT must be in the student's major field of study and commensurate with the student's educational level. Please confirm the following:**

STUDENT'S MAJOR

STUDENT'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

NUMBER OF CREDITS REMAINING TO COMPLETE THE CURRENT DEGREE

Is the student in good academic standing and making normal progress toward the completion of his/her degree?    Yes    No

The student is expected to complete the degree requirements by: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the one statement that will be true during the student's requested period of OPT from the "OPT Information" section:

The student has (or will have) completed all **course** requirements **excluding** thesis, comprehensive exams, or other non-course degree requirement.

The student has (or will have) completed all **degree** requirements

Student will be on OPT while completing course work (employment cannot exceed 20 hrs. per week).

**I recommend Optional Practical Training in the field of the student's study.**

REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE

DATE

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

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### Student Information

LAST OR FAMILY NAME FIRST NAME ID #

EMAIL PHONE

### Academic Information

Primary Academic Program: Master's Doctorate Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### OPT Information

I am applying for: Post Completion OPT Pre-Completion OPT

Have you previously been authorized for OPT or CPT? Yes No

### Employment Information

EMPLOYER NAME

EMPLOYER ADDRESS

REQUESTED START DATE ANTICIPATED START DATE ANTICIPATED HOURS PER WEEK

How is this employment related to your field of study?

### Student Signature

- I have maintained valid F-1 status since I began my studies at Asbury Theological Seminary.
- I understand that I must report any change to my name or address, or any interruption or change of OPT employment within 10 days to the Manager of International Services.
- I understand that being unemployed for more than 90 days during my post-completion OPT will result in a violation of the requirements for remaining in valid F-1 status.
- I will provide Asbury Theological Seminary with a copy of my Employment Authorization Document (EAD) upon receipt.
- I understand that I cannot begin working until I have my EAD card in-hand.
- I will report the name & address of my employer to the Manager of International Services within 10 days of starting work.
- I will pursue employment in a job directly related to my field of study.
- I understand my responsibilities to maintain F-1 status while engaging in OPT.
- I will contact the Manager of International Services if I need to transfer to another institution, change my visa status, or complete my stay as an F-1 student in the United States.
- I understand that I must keep my passport valid for six (6) months at all times.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

# OPT Change of Information Form



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### Student Information

LAST OR FAMILY NAME FIRST NAME ID #

EMAIL PHONE

ADDRESS

START DATE ON EAD CARD END DATE ON EAD CARD

A copy of my EAD card is attached.

I have already submitted a copy of my EAD card to the International Services office

### Employment Information

This is my initial OPT employment.

This is a change in my OPT employment. My previous employment ended on \_\_\_\_\_

There is no change in my OPT employment. Only my address has changed.

EMPLOYER NAME

EMPLOYER ADDRESS

START DATE ANTICIPATED END DATE HOURS PER WEEK

### How is this employment related to your field of study?

### Student Signature

- I understand that I must report any change to my name or address, or any interruption or change of OPT employment within 10 days to the Manager of International Services.
- I understand that being unemployed for more than 90 days during my post-completion OPT will result in a violation of the requirements for remaining in valid F-1 status.
- I will provide Asbury Theological Seminary with a copy of my Employment Authorization Document (EAD) upon receipt.
- I understand that I cannot begin working until I have my EAD card in-hand.
- I will report the name & address of my employer to the Manager of International Services within 10 days of starting work.
- I will pursue employment in a job directly related to my field of study.
- I will contact the Manager of International Services if I need to transfer to another institution, change my visa status, or complete my stay as an F-1 student in the United States.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

DATE