Application for
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING
FOR F-1 STUDENTS

In this packet, you will find:

- An OPT Application Checklist
- Instructions for filling out form I-765
- Frequently Asked Questions about OPT
- OPT Acknowledgement Form
- Photo Instructions Page

To complete electronically: USCIS Form I-765 (see page 2 for details)

Please read the forms and instructions carefully before filling them out and signing them in blue ink.

Applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) will be easier if you have all of your forms prepared before you bring them to the Center for International Students and Scholars (CISS). You must obtain a new signed Form I-20, from a Designated School Official, before mailing your application materials to the Vermont Service Center.

Designated School Officials (DSO’s)

Papa D. Sarr psarr@bentley.edu
Tana Ruegamer truegamer@bentley.edu
Donna DeIulio ddeiulio@bentley.edu

PLEASE NOTE: Applications can take up to 12 weeks to process.
Applying early is encouraged!

Once you have completed all of the forms and made appropriate copies, please submit all required documents at the CISS office. Only complete applications will be accepted.
Student procedures:
Compile packet of documents as listed below;
Drop off completed OPT packet at CISS office in the Student Center, Room 350;
Read, complete and sign OPT Acknowledgement Form – take a copy with you;
Wait for email from CISS advisor to pick up your OPT packet (at least 48 bus. hours);
At CISS: sign I-20, take original, review OPT packet;
Mail OPT application packet by traceable mail to:

ATTN: USCIS
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

Bentley University
Optional Practical Training Application Checklist

☐ Request an enrollment verification letter from the Office of the Registrar.
Normal turn-around time is 3 business days. This letter must be included when you submit your OPT application for processing at CISS.
☐ Check or money order for $380 made payable to Department of Homeland Security
☐ Completed and signed form I-765 (typed in electronic format from www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765.pdf), Print this form. Do not submit electronically!
☐ Completed and signed form G-1145, E-Notification of Application
☐ 2 Passport-sized photos with name and I-94 number penciled on the back
☐ 2 Copies of all previous I-20s that were issued to you (including I-20s from previous schools)
☐ 2 Copies of any previous EAD Cards (if applicable)
☐ 2 Copies of all previous correspondence with USCIS (if applicable)
☐ 2 Copies of your F-1 VISA
☐ 2 Copies of the front and back of the I-94 Card
☐ 2 Copies of the Expiration and Photo page of Passport
☐ Give consideration to your choice of an OPT start date. The date must be within 60 days of the completion of studies date, listed in your letter from the Registrar, and the same end date is in block 5 of your I-20 form. You will be required to record the OPT start date on the CISS OPT Acknowledgement form. OPT is granted for one year. This form also requires your mailing address that will be valid for at least 12 weeks from the date you mail your OPT application request to USCIS.

After you pick-up your completed OPT request packet it is recommended that you send it via certified mail or express mail to be able to track the packet.

After you receive your EAD (employment authorization document/card) in the mail, please submit a copy of the card to the Center for International Students and Scholars for your file.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is Optional Practical Training?
Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a work authorization issued by USCIS to be used by F-1 Students. If you are approved for OPT, USCIS will issue you an EAD (Employment Authorization Document) card that you may present to any employer who wishes to hire you as proof that you are authorized to work. You may apply for OPT while you are in school but you are only allowed to work part-time, therefore most students choose to use OPT full-time, after graduation.

How do I qualify for Optional Practical Training?
In order to apply for OPT, you must have been in F-1 status and in good academic standing at Bentley for 9 consecutive months (2 semesters = 1 academic year).

What kind of jobs can I use Optional Practical Training for?
You can use OPT for any job opportunity, within the field of your major, that is offered to you.

How much can I work using OPT?
Post-completion OPT is full-time (21+ hours per week) for one year (12 months). OPT cannot be stored up or saved. You may use your OPT for a year after graduation and then begin a new academic program. However, you will lose any OPT you have remaining if you begin a new academic program before the year of OPT granted has been completed. However, you may use OPT for your new degree, if you are advancing degrees.

When can I start working if I get OPT? When should I apply?
Most students select post-completion OPT, which means you may start working after you complete all degree requirements. You may begin OPT the day after you complete or up to two months after your graduation but no later. You must apply for OPT before your last final exam of your last semester, or within 60 days of your last exam. You are encouraged to apply three months prior to completion, since it may take USCIS up to 12 weeks to process your application.

If you choose to apply for pre-completion OPT (OPT while you are in school), you may choose the start date any time during the semester, but the work must end when you complete your program. Pre-completion OPT deducts from your post-completion OPT by half the rate.

Is OPT a different kind of visa than my F-1 Visa?
OPT is not a visa, it is simply a work authorization that is a benefit of your F-1 visa. You will still be an F-1 student sponsored by Bentley University, which means, you will still have to have a valid F-1 visa and an up-to-date signature on your Bentley I-20 before you plan to travel outside the U.S. You are encouraged NOT to travel while you are waiting for your EAD card from the USCIS.

When travelling on OPT, what documents are required for reentry into the US?
Since you remain on your F-1 student visa while on OPT you will be required to present a valid F-1 visa in your valid passport, your I-20 form with a current travel signature (within 6 months) and a letter from your employer on company letterhead stating your job location, title, start date and that you are expected to return to that job.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING USCIS FORM I-765*

Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization. This form can be found at www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765.pdf. Please complete electronically, print and use blue ink to sign.

Top of the form—check the box “Permission to accept employment” if this is your first application.

Questions 1-8
Complete your biographical information and local address. REMEMBER: this is the address where the USCIS will mail your employment authorization card. It must be a US address. If you are unsure of where you will be living when the card is issued, you should use c/o (in care of), and indicate an address of a friend who will receive the mail on your behalf. If you choose to have your EAD card mailed to the Center for International Students and Scholars please provide the following address on the Form:

1. Your LAST NAME (in all capital letters), First Name
2. Bentley University (in the block for “other names used”)
3. 175 Forest Street, STU 350
4. Waltham, MA 02452

Question 9
A social security number is not required for Optional Practical Training approval, but if you have one, please enter it here.

Question 10
You do not have an Alien Registration Number. The I-94 number is written on the small white card that was stapled into your passport when you entered the US.

Question 11
If you have been approved for any Optional Practical Training in the past, you must attach a copy of the front and back of your previous employment card(s)

Questions 11-15
This information will be listed on your I-94 card.

Question 16
Your category is (c)(3)(B): “F-1 Student Seeking Optional Practical Training in an Occupation Directly Related to Studies.” This is where you verify that you will ONLY work in your career field. Do not forget to sign and date the form, and include your telephone number!

Review the Application Checklist for a list of additional attachments that must be mailed with this application.

IMPORTANT
Your OPT APPLICATION PACKET MUST be received by USCIS within 30 days of the I-20 issue date. The earliest you may apply for post-completion Optional Practical Training is 90 days before the end date on your I-20 (see FAQs for information and restrictions on selecting a start date). You may download official instructions from the Forms and Fees link at www.uscis.gov.

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