



## FAQ about post-completion OPT

- **What is post-completion OPT (Optional Practical Training)?**
  - OPT is a full time work authorization for 12 months after program completion.
- **What is the difference between OPT and CPT?**
  - CPT is a work authorization approved and issued by the International Office at AAU. While OPT is a work authorization approved and issued by USCIS.
  - CPT can only be approved while enrolled in school, while OPT can be approved either as pre- or post-completion OPT.
  - Students usually use CPT during their studies and OPT after program completion.
- **When can I start working?**
  - You must obtain a valid work authorization BEFORE you are allowed to begin working.
  - If you engage in employment without the appropriate work authorization, it will be considered a violation of your F1 status and may serious consequences.
- **Where can I find detailed information about CPT and OPT?**
  - All information is available on our website: <https://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/student-resources/international-student-resources#emp-auth>
  - You will be able to access tutorials, information sheets and forms on our website.
- **When should I start to apply for OPT?**
  - The earliest you can apply for your OPT is 90 days before program end date.
  - See slides 9-11 of the OPT Online Tutorial for more detailed information.
- **What documents shall I prepare for the OPT application?**
  - Review chapter 2 of the OPT Online Tutorial for a complete list of all documents needed to file for OPT, slides 21-30
- **How do I select my OPT start date?**
  - See slide 25 of the OPT Online Tutorial
- **When can I pick up my OPT I-20?**
  - The average processing time is 3 business days. You will receive a notification email from our office when the OPT I-20 is ready for pick up.
- **How do I complete Form I765?**
  - Review chapter 3 of the OPT Online Tutorial, in particular slides 32-37
- **Where can I find the mailing address?**
  - Review chapter 4 of the OPT Online Tutorial, in particular slide 44



- **When must I mail out my OPT application?**
  - As soon as possible after picking up your OPT I-20. USCIS must receive your application packet and accept it for processing within 30 days of the OPT I20 issuance day.
- **How long does it take to get my OPT approved?**
  - It takes USCIS an average of 3 months to process your application.
  - You will not be able to begin working until you received your Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
- **What should I pay attention to while waiting for my OPT Approval?**
  - Review chapter 5 of the OPT Online Tutorial, slides 47-54
- **Can I travel outside the U.S. on OPT?**
  - The answer to this question will depend on your personal situation.
  - Review slides 57-58 for detailed information.
- **How do I apply for my Social Security Number?**
  - See slide 60 of the OPT Online Tutorial
- **Do I need to file taxes?**
  - AAU does not advise on filing taxes, however, you will find resources in the OPT Online Tutorial, slide 61
- **What happens when I have work gaps during my OPT?**
  - USCIS allows a total of 90 days of unemployment during 12 months of OPT.
  - You are responsible to keep track of your unemployment time and report any changes in your employment to the International Office. You can do that online at:  
<https://www.academyart.edu/aau-forms/international-admissions/opt-reporting-form>
- **What should I do, if I accumulate more than the allowed unemployment time?**
  - Your options will depend on your situation. For more detailed information about your options, review slide 63-65. Keep in mind that action must be taken before 90 days passed.
  - SEVP will automatically terminate your SEVIS record, if you accumulated 90 days of unemployment time.
- **Can I qualify for OPT more than one time?**
  - Everyone is eligible for 12 months of OPT per higher degree level. Examples can be found on slide 7 of the OPT Online Tutorial
- **What are my options after OPT?**
  - Review slide 63-65 of the OPT Online Tutorial
- **Who should I contact for questions or concerns?**
  - International Student Services: [intlservices@academyart.edu](mailto:intlservices@academyart.edu) || 415-274-2208 || Drop In Hours