

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING: HOW TO APPLY

First, review the steps and guidelines in this form very carefully.

Pre-Completion OPT: May work for up to 20 hours a week. May apply after one year of coursework.

Post-completion OPT: May work full-time for one year after graduation, and may apply as soon as 90 days before graduation. Students may not work until the OPT application is approved and they have received work permission (EAD card).

Steps:

1. Submit an appointment request with a DSO as early as 90 days before graduation to gain DSO approval for OPT and advising. Email iss@stchas.edu to set up an appointment.
2. Once the DSO verifies that you qualify for OPT, your I-20 will be updated to indicate you have been approved.
3. Now you are ready to begin your application with USCIS. First, set up a portal account using the guidelines provided below. *Note: Be sure you are using the most current application, and carefully read the guidelines and recommendations described below.*
4. Send a copy of your application to a DSO before mailing it to USCIS (see the Study in the States description below).

I have read the information in this packet, and followed the directions to meet with a DSO before applying for OPT. I understand that I am responsible for updating the student portal, and that I may not begin working before I receive permission to work (EAD card) from USCIS.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

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I-765 AUTHORIZATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Fill out the 1-765 application form. Be sure to use the most current form.

Enclose appropriate filing fee (currently \$550). *Note: Your check or money order must be from a US Bank in US Dollars.* Make checks payable to: **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

Please included the following documents:

1. I-94 (www.cbp.gov/i94)
2. A copy of the front and back of current EAD card. If no card was issued, enclose a copy of your passport.
3. Photographs
 - A) You must submit two identical color passport-style photographs of yourself taken recently.
 - B) The photos must have a white to off-white background, be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish, and be unmounted and unretouched.
 - C) The two identical passport-style photos must be 2 by 2 inches. The photos must be in color with a full face, frontal view, on a white to off-white background. Head height should measure 1 to 1 and 3/8 inches from the top of your hair to the bottom of your chin, and eye height is between 1 1/8 to 1 and 3/8 inches from the top of your eyes to the bottom of photo. Your head must be bare unless you are wearing headwear as required by a religious denomination of which you are a member. Using a pencil or felt pen, lightly print your name and A-Number (if any) on the back of the photo.

Where to file:

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS
P.O. Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

For FedEx, UPS, and OHL deliveries:

USCIS
Attn: NFB AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

Note: Students should verify the appropriate address on the USCIS site and are responsible for doing so.

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4601 Mid Rivers Mall Dr. • CC Room 102E • Cottleville, MO 63376
(636) 922-8617 • vguneyli@stchas.edu • stchas.edu/international

CREATE A SEVP PORTAL ACCOUNT

The SEVP Portal makes it easier for F-1 students on post-completion optional practical training (OPT) and M-1 students participating in practical training to meet their regulatory reporting requirements.

There are four basic steps for creating an account in the SEVP Portal:

1. SEVIS notifies the SEVP Portal of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) approval of the student's OPT or practical training and the OPT authorization is active; the portal emails the student instructions for creating a portal account.
2. Student receives the email which contains a link they must use to create the account. This link is unique to the student and cannot be shared or reused.
3. Student clicks the link in the email, enters their SEVIS ID and creates a password.
4. The SEVP Portal creates the student's user profile.

Step 1: SEVIS Sends Student Information to the Portal

When the status of an OPT request or practical training request in SEVIS changes to "Approved" and the OPT authorization is active, SEVIS sends relevant data from the student's SEVIS record to the SEVP Portal.

SEVIS shares the following information from the student's SEVIS record with the SEVP Portal:

- SEVIS ID and email address.
- Biographic Information (name and date of birth).
- Contact Information (addresses and telephone numbers).
- Employment Authorization information.
- Employer information.

Step 2: The Portal Sends the Account Creation Email to the Student

The portal will send the account creation email after getting OPT data from SEVIS. SEVIS sends OPT information to the portal if all the following are true:

- OPT is approved.
- The OPT start date is not in the future.
- The student's email address is in SEVIS.

The student will receive an email from **do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov**. The subject line of the email will be: **Optional Practical Training Approval - the next step. Create an SEVP Portal account**. The only way to get to the portal registration page is to use the link in this email.

If a student does not receive a notification email they should:

- Check their spam or junk mail folders.

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- Contact their DSO to:
 - Confirm that the correct email address is in their SEVIS record.
 - Request that the portal resend the account creation email.

Special notes to keep in mind:

- The only emails the government will send to students related to the portal are to create an account, unlock an account or to reset the user's password.
- There is no cost to access the portal.
- The only time SEVP asks for a payment from a student is for the I-901 SEVIS Fee. Any student on OPT has already paid this fee as well as the USCIS application fees for training authorization. In general, if anyone claiming to be from the government asks a student for money, the student should contact their DSO.

Step 3: The Student Follows the Link to Create their Portal Account

Students must click the link in the email to open the registration page. The initial registration page will ask for the student's SEVIS ID number. A student must enter their correct, most recent SEVIS ID on which practical training was approved and then click **Submit**.

A new page will open and welcome the student by their name and display their email address. This page will prompt the student to create a password for their account. Follow the instructions on the screen and refer to the Make and Maintain User Password page to create a password that complies with system requirements. The student will need to type their password in twice and click "Create Account."

Important notes to keep in mind while completing step three:

Students can only use the link once. If a student is unable to start the registration process using the link provided in the email they should ask their DSO to have the email notice sent again.

Students should carefully enter their correct, current SEVIS ID. The system only allows the student three chances to submit their SEVIS ID correctly. After three failed attempts, the portal will lock a student out. If a student gets locked out, they need to contact their DSO. Their DSO can log in to SEVIS to submit a request to unlock the student's SEVP Portal account.

Step 4: The Student Successfully Creates their Portal Account

After the student clicks "Create Account" the portal will open the login page and display a success message. This signifies that the student has successfully created an SEVP Portal account and may now:

- Log in and out of the portal.
- Access portal pages.
- Manage the account.

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Once a student gains access to the SEVP Portal, they can:

- Edit profile.
- Edit employment information.
- View history.
- Manage the account (Change their password).

For more information and to view helpful screenshots and step-by-step instructions, visit [**studyinthestates.dhs.gov**](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov).

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