Bergen Community College

International Student Center

Mailing Address:
Bergen Community College
400 Paramus Road
Room A-126/International Student Center
Paramus, NJ 07652
Phone: +1 (201) 689-7601
Fax: +1 (201) 251-0353

OPT Information

F-1 regulation definition of Optional Practical Training (OPT):
An F-1 student may apply to the USCIS for authorization for temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study. The student may not begin OPT until the date indicated on his or her employment authorization document. A student may submit an application for OPT up to 90 days prior to being enrolled for one full academic year, provided that the period of employment will not begin until the completion of the full academic year as indicated by the DSO. A student may be granted authorization to engage in temporary employment for OPT." [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(A)]

Eligibility requirements:
Practical Training may be authorized to an F-1 student who has been lawfully enrolled on a full time basis for one full academic year. *Note:* A student who completed 12 months or more of **full time** CPT **is not** eligible for OPT.

OPT opportunities:
A student may be authorized 12 months of practical training, and becomes eligible for another 12 months of practical training when he or she changes to a higher educational level. However, 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 by semester. If you choose to use some of your OPT time while doing your degree, this counts against your overall OPT time. You may request OPT by semester, before the completion of your degree.

Location:
Student may work anywhere in the USA for the duration of OPT.

Duration & hours per week:
1 year as a full-time employee. Full time OPT is considered 21-40 hours per week. *Note:* It is NOT possible to renew or extend the EAD card at the Associate's Degree level.

Termination of OPT:
Authorization to engage in practical training employment is automatically terminated when the student transfers to another school or begins study at another educational level.

Important Reminders:

- Students must apply for OPT within 60 days of the completion of their degree.
- If you receive a blue letter from USCIS, bring it to the ISC immediately
- Do NOT leave the USA while you await your EAD card, and once on OPT, do NOT leave the country unless you have found a job and can travel with a letter from your employer, and a signed I-20!!!
- When your EAD card arrives, bring/mail/fax a copy of it to the ISC
- You are only permitted to work once you have received your OPT card AND it is on your passed the start date on your card
- OPT cannot be extended
- If you do not receive your card AFTER 90 days, come to the ISC for further instructions
- Once you receive your EAD card, you can then go to the Social Security office, with a letter from an International Counselor, to apply for your Social Security Card. Please note that you cannot apply for your Social Security Card until the start date on your card.