



ACADEMY *of* ART  
UNIVERSITY

FOUNDED IN SAN FRANCISCO 1929  
BY ARTISTS FOR ARTISTS



# AAU Post-Completion OPT Guide



We strongly encourage you  
to read the OPT Tutorial  
**from START to FINISH**  
as you are responsible to follow  
policies and procedures related to  
OPT, employment and your F1  
status!



# Overview

1) Understanding PC-OPT

2) Collecting your Documents

3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

4) Mailing & Deadlines for PC-OPT Packet

5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

6) Frequently Asked Questions



## **1) Understanding PC-OPT**

2) Collecting your Documents

3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

4) Mailing & Deadlines for PC-OPT Packet

5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

6) Frequently Asked Questions



## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### What is PC-OPT?

- Stands for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training
- Short-term work authorization for 12 months after program completion
- Purpose is to gain job experience in your major field of study
- Employment may occur anywhere in the US
- It is a benefit of the F1 status, it is not a separate visa type



## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### When is PC-OPT Available?

- PC-OPT is available once per higher degree level
  - Example 1: student completes coursework for B.F.A., is eligible
  - Example 2: student had PC-OPT following B.F.A. degree, has completed coursework for M.F.A. degree, is eligible for a second time
  - Example 3: student completed B.F.A. degree and used PC-OPT, then completed coursework for A.A. degree after B.F.A. degree, student is not eligible because the second degree is lower than the first degree



## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### What is the Eligibility for PC-OPT?

- You must complete your academic program
- You must maintain F1 status for at least one academic year
- M.F.A. students must complete all required degree units but are not required to have completed their thesis
- A job offer is not required to apply for PC-OPT
- Students in the personal enrichment program (PEUG) do not qualify for PC-OPT

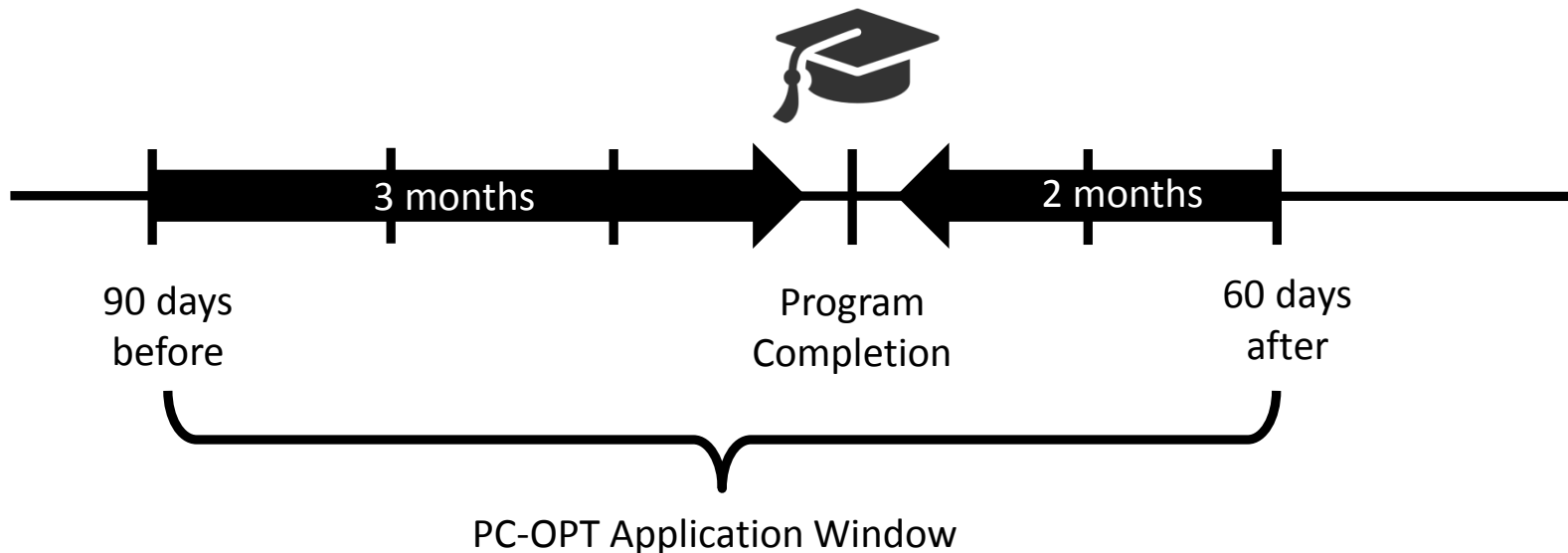




## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### When should I apply for PC-OPT?

- Your window of time to apply is 90 days before to 60 days after the program completion date
- The program completion date is the last day of class in your final semester

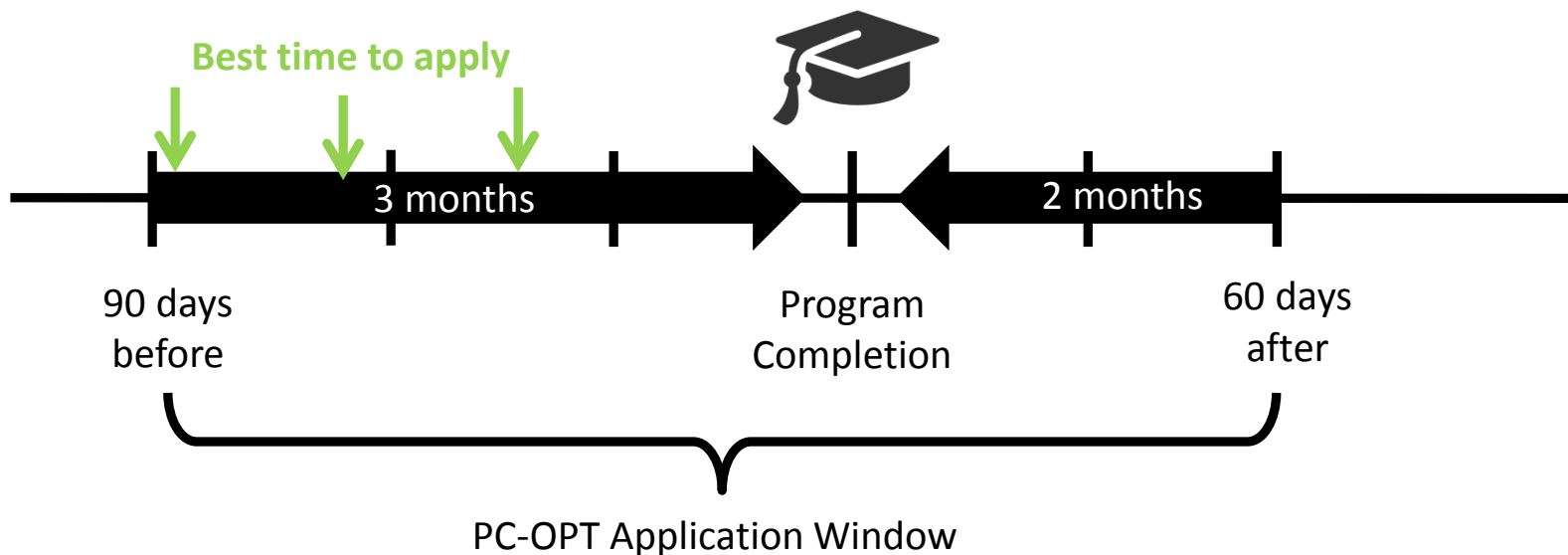




# 1) Understanding PC-OPT

## When should I apply for PC-OPT?

- USCIS averages 90 days to process your PC-OPT Application Packet so it is best to apply as early as possible within your Application Window to avoid employment delays

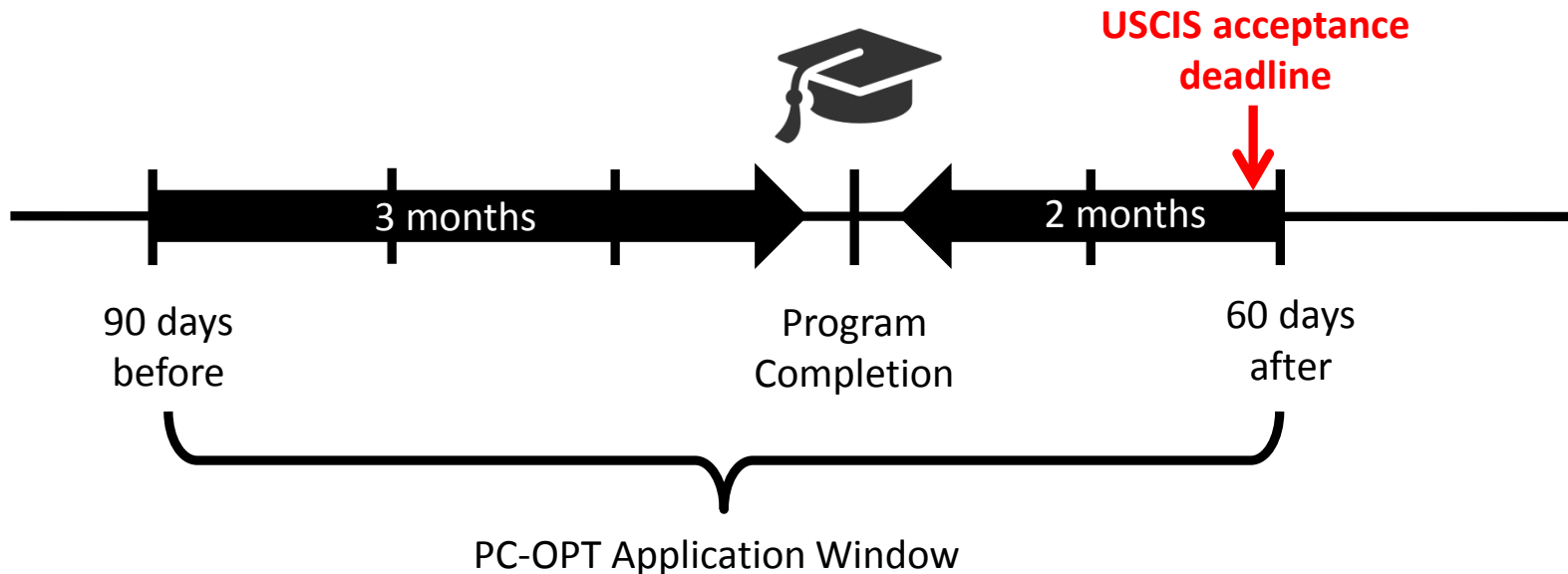




# 1) Understanding PC-OPT

## When should I apply for PC-OPT?

- Important: USCIS must receive your PC-OPT Application Packet and accept it for processing before the end of the PC-OPT Application window or you will be denied

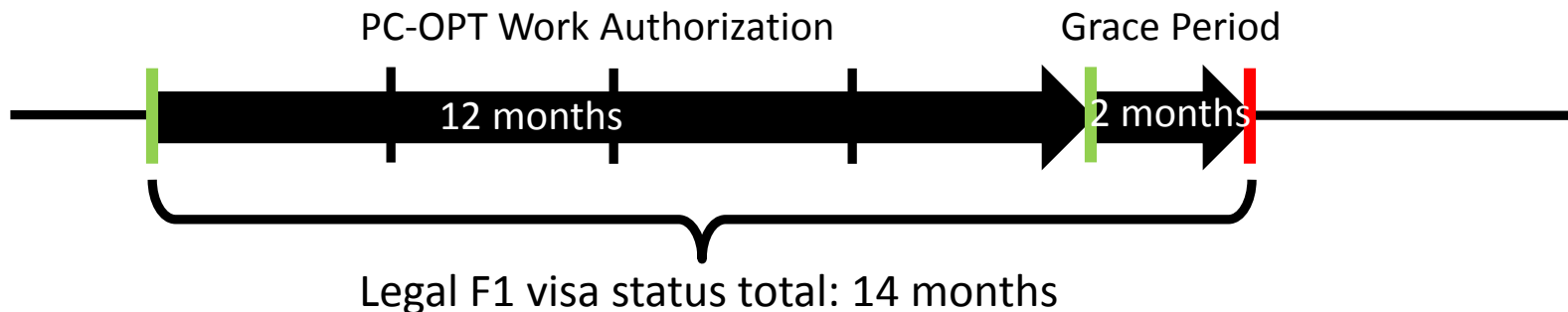




## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### How long is my PC-OPT?

- PC-OPT is for 12 months of work authorization
- However, your PC-OPT grants you 14 months of legal F1 visa status
  - 12 months work authorization
  - 2 months grace period after last day of PC-OPT





## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### How do I maintain my PC-OPT?

- Secure employment directly related to your major
- Work a minimum of 20 hours per week
- Immediately report all employment and personal changes and updates to AAU
- Keep total unemployment time under 90 calendar days



## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### How do I know what jobs I'm eligible for?

- Employment must be directly related to your degree program
- If you are able to clearly explain how your major is related to your job responsibilities, you can accept the job. If you cannot, then chances are the position does not fit your major.
- Examples:
  - Degree in Interior Architecture & Design: Cannot work at Starbucks as a Barista, but can work at Starbucks designing the interior of stores
  - Degree in Animation with focus in 3D Modeling: Can accept any form of employment directly related to Animation and Visual Effects, such as compositing, texturing, etc.



## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### What kind of jobs can I accept?

- USCIS is not concerned with your salary, so your job can be paid or unpaid
- All the following types of employment are valid:
  - Regular full-time/part-time positions
  - Internship
  - Freelance/Independent contracting
  - Project work (doesn't include school projects or assisting a friend with a thesis project)
  - Volunteering with non-profit, church or charity organization
  - Self-employment with a valid business license
  - Employment through agency or consulting firm



## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### What are the hours per week requirements?

- You must work at least 20 hours per week
- If you have a variable work schedule, you should average to 20 hours per week each month
- This requirement includes freelance/independent contracting and project work
- Examples:
  - 1 part time job of 20 hours per week
  - 2 part time jobs averaging 20 hours per week, both jobs must be related to your major





## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### Unemployment during PC-OPT?

- Yes, USCIS allows you to be unemployed for up to 90 cumulative calendar days (that includes weekends) anytime throughout the 12 months of your PC-OPT
- It is your responsibility to track your unemployment time and you should use any form of tracking system you are comfortable with.



## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

What if I exceed 90 days unemployment during PC-OPT?

- You will be considered out of status. Therefore, you must do either of the following before the end of the 90 days :
  - Depart the US and inform the International Office
  - Apply for a change of status with USCIS
  - Maintain your F1 status by continuing your education in the US
    - At AAU and obtain a change of level I-20
    - At another school and obtain a transfer I-20



## 1) Understanding PC-OPT

### How do I report employment during PC-OPT?

- You are required to report all changes in employment within 10 days of their occurrence to the International Office.
- You can update any changes in employment online by completing the OPT Reporting Form:  
<http://www.academyart.edu/aau-forms/international-admissions/opt-reporting-form>
- The International Office will receive an email with your new employer information and report any updates to SEVIS.



1) Understanding PC-OPT

**2) Collecting your Documents**

3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

4) Mailing & Deadlines for PC-OPT Packet

5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

6) Frequently Asked Questions



## 2) Collecting your Documents

### What documents will I need?

1. OPT I-20 (from AAU, mail photocopy only)
2. I-765 (from USCIS, mail original)
3. G-1145 (from USCIS, mail original)
4. 2 Passport Photos
5. Photocopy of 1-94
6. Photocopy of visa page
7. Photocopy of passport page
8. Photocopy of all previous I-20's
9. Photocopy of any previous EADs
10. Personal Check, Cashiers Check or Money Order



## 2) Collecting your Documents

### Where do I get my PC-OPT I-20?

- Fill out the Online OPT I-20 Request Form at:  
<http://www.academyart.edu/aau-forms/international-admissions/opt-i-20-request-form>
- The AAU International Office will then generate and issue your official I-20 within three (3) business days
- You will need to visit the International Office in person to pick up your OPT I-20



## 2) Collecting your Documents

### **ATTENTION**

Pick up your PC OPT I-20

AFTER receiving an email from the International Office confirming that your PC OPT I-20 was issued!



## 2) Collecting your Documents

How do I do I fill out the online OPT I-20 Request Form?

- Enter expected completion date, which is the last day from the semester you complete all your course requirements.
- The requested OPT start date must be within 60 days of your expected program completion date at AAU.

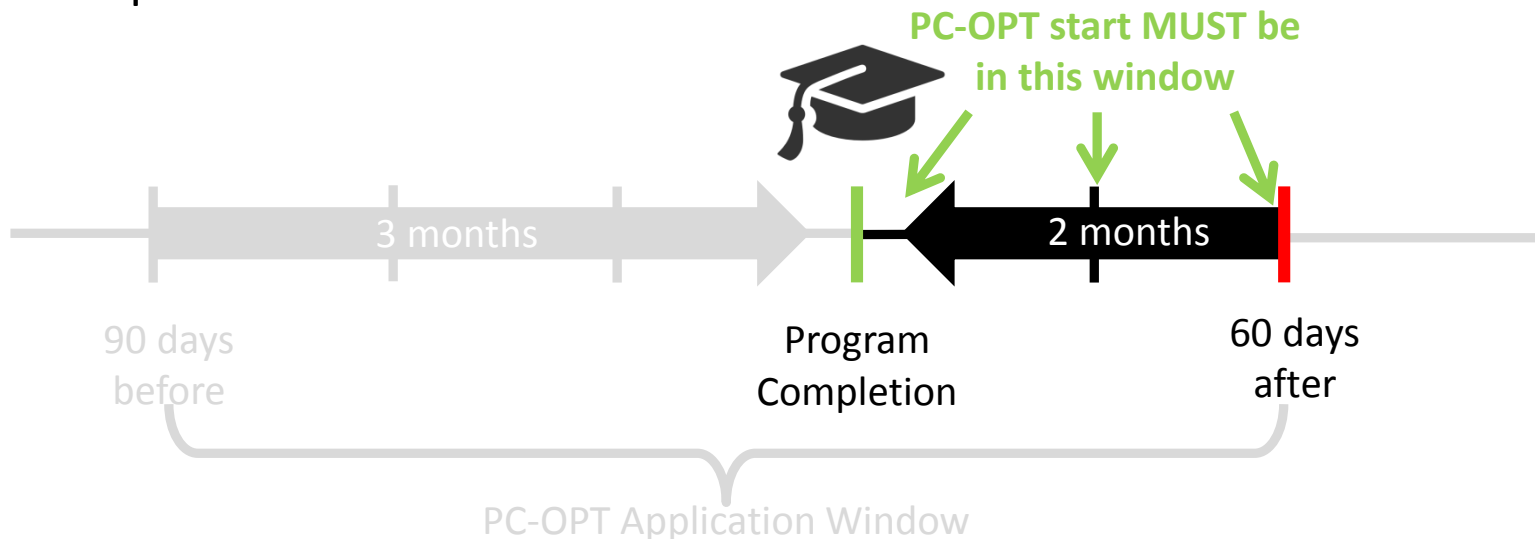




## 2) Collecting your Documents

### How do I pick my Start Date for the OPT I-20?

- The earliest you can start your PC-OPT is one day after your program completion (one day after the last day of the semester).
- The latest you can start your PC-OPT is 60 days after your program completion.





## 2) Collecting your Documents

What do I look for when I pick up my OPT I-20?

- Your requested employment start and end date must be indicated on the second page of your I-20. Make sure the OPT start date on your I-20 is correct.
- You must sign the first page of your OPT I-20.
- USCIS must receive your application within 30 days of the day your I-20 was issued.
- After you mailed your application and submitted it to USCIS for processing, it is not possible to change your OPT start date.



## 2) Collecting your Documents

### **ATTENTION**

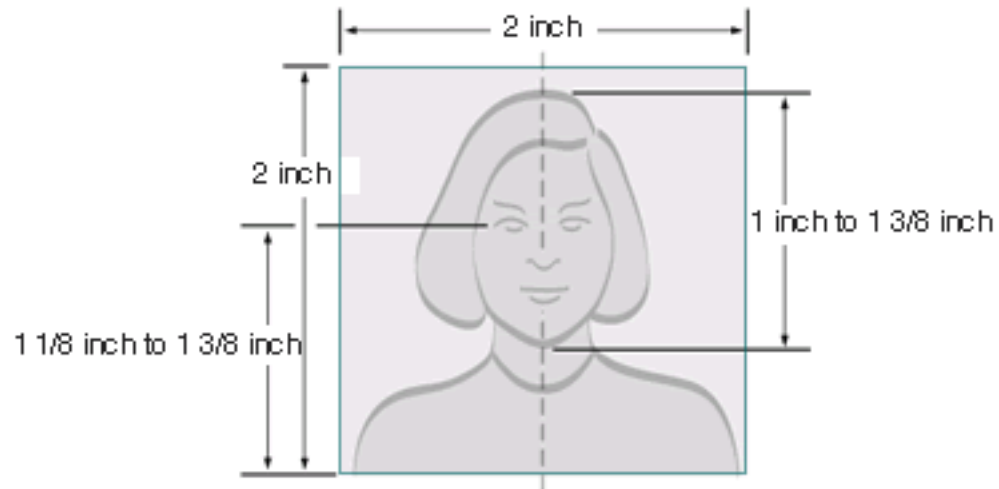
Be sure to sign your I-20 on the first page!



## 2) Collecting your Documents

What are the passport photo requirements?

- For more detailed information go to:  
<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/photos/photo-composition-template.html>
- Take your picture in front of a white background.
- Do NOT wear a white shirt.
- Your shirt must be in color.
- Take picture at Walgreens or Kinkos.





## 2) Collecting your Documents

What about the check/money order?

- Use a money order or cashier's check (can be purchased at banks, post offices and some grocery stores)
- Use a personal check
- Fill it out like this →
- USCIS application fee is \$410

YOUR NAME  
123 YOUR STREET  
YOUR CITY, STATE, ZIP  
(123)456-7890

9-5678/1234 0301  
Date **Date here**

Pay to the order of **U.S. Department of Homeland Security** \$ **410.00**  
**Four hundred ten dollars and <sup>no</sup>/100** Dollars

YOUR FINANCIAL INSTITUTION  
ANYTOWN, USA

For \_\_\_\_\_ **Your signature here**

⑆ 123456780⑆ 0301 12345678⑆



## 2) Collecting your Documents

### **ATTENTION**

When using a personal check, make sure your bank account is still open and \$410 are in the account!



1) Understanding PC-OPT

2) Collecting your Documents

**3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet**

4) Mailing & Deadlines for PC-OPT Packet

5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

6) Frequently Asked Questions



### 3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

Where do I get my Form I-765 and G-1145?

- You can download both forms on the USCIS website:

<http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

- You can either complete both forms online and print them out or you can print them out and write in them.
- Please sure to use the most current USCIS version of the I-765.





## 3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

### How do I complete Form I-765?

- Complete this Form either with black or blue pen and write clearly.
- If this is your first time to apply for work authorization with USCIS, check here
- Your last name and first name must match your passport information.
- Put the address your EAD card should be mailed to once it has been issued. The address must be valid for 3 months. If you plan to move, use a friends or relatives address instead (c/o: John Smith)

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Fee Stamp		
For USCIS Use Only	<input type="checkbox"/> Application Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Application
	<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid From _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility 8 CFR 27 (a) or (c)
<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid To _____		
Subject to the following conditions: _____		
I am applying for <input type="checkbox"/> Permission to accept employment. <input type="checkbox"/> Replac		
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal of my permission to accept employment		
1. Full Name (Family Name) (First Name) (Middle Name) <b>YOUR LAST NAME, Your first name</b>		
2. Other Names Used (include Maiden Name) <b>Do not enter your nick name</b>		
3. U.S. Mailing Address (Street Number and Name) (Apt. Number) <b>Your mailing address</b> (Town or City) (State) (ZIP Code)		
4. Country of Citizenship or Nationality		
5. Place of Birth (Town or City) (State/Province) (Country)		
6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)		
7. Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		



## 3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

### How do I complete Form I-765?

- Leave blank if you do not have a SSN
- This is your 11-digit I-94 admission number
- Check “no”, if you have never applied for a work authorization with USCIS before
- This is the date you arrived in the US, not left your country
- Usually the first airport you arrived in in the US
- Usually F1 (sometimes H4, B2 or other, if you did a change of status in the US)

8. Marital Status  
 Married  Single  Divorced  Widowed

9. Social Security Number (Include all numbers you have ever used, if any)

10. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or Form I-94 Number (if any)

11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?  
 Yes (Complete the following questions.)  
Which USCIS Office? \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation) \_\_\_\_\_  
 No (Proceed to Question 12.)

12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S., on or about (mm/dd/yyyy)

13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S.  
**Example: San Francisco**

14. Status at Last Entry (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)  
**F1 Student**



## 3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

### How do I complete Form I-765?

- Write “F1 Student” here
- This is the code for the PC-OPT
- Do not enter anything in number #17, it only applies to STEM applicants
- Do not enter anything in number #18, it only applies to H4 visa status

OMB No. 1615-0040; Expires 02/28/2018

#### I-765, Application For Employment Authorization

Action Block	Initial Receipt	Resubmitted
	Relocated	
	Received	Sent
Condition Denied - Failed to establish: Eligibility under <input type="checkbox"/> Economic necessity under 8 CFR 274a.12 (c) and 8 CFR 214.2(f)	Approved	Denied
	A#	
<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant is filing under section 274a.12 _____		

placement (of lost employment authorization document).  
Document (attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document).

15. **Current Immigration Status** (Visitor, Student, etc.)  
**F1 Student**

16. **Eligibility Category.** Go to the “Who May File Form I-765?” section of the Instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.  
**( C ) ( 3 ) ( B )**

17. **(c)(3)(C) Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(3)(C) in **Question 16** above, list your degree, your employer's name as listed in E-Verify, and your employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in the space below.  
Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Employer's Name as listed in E-Verify \_\_\_\_\_  
Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_

18. **(c)(26) Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(26) in **Question 16** above, please provide the receipt number of your H-1B principal spouse's most recent Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-129.



## 3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

### How do I complete Form I-765?

- Sign here (between red lines only)



- Don't sign here!



#### Certification

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the “**Who May File Form I-765?**” section of the instructions and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in **Question 16**.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

#### Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Applicant

I declare that this document was prepared by me at the request of the applicant and is based on all information of which I have any knowledge.

Preparer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



## 3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

### How do I complete Form G-1145?

- Your name on the form must match the name in the passport

#### Paperwork Reduction Act

An agency may not conduct or sponsor an information collection and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at 3 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions and completing and submitting the form. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Regulatory Coordination Division, Office of Policy and Strategy, 20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529-2140. OMB No. 1615-0109. **Do not mail your completed Form G-1145 to this address.**

Complete this form and clip it on top of the first page of your immigration form(s).

Applicant/Petitioner Full Last Name <b>Your Family (Sur) Name</b>	Applicant/Petitioner Full First Name <b>Your First Name</b>	Applicant/Petitioner Full Middle Name
E-mail Address <b>Your email address</b>		Mobile Phone Number (Text Message) <b>Your phone number</b>



# 3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

## What about the OPT I-20?

- Make sure your OPT I-20 is signed by AAU and you.
- Make sure you mail your I-20 within 30 days of the Date I-20 was issued.
- Make sure the OPT Start Date on the second (2) page is correct.
- Make a photocopy of your OPT I-20 and all previous I-20's

Attachment A Page 1

U.S. Department of Justice  
Immigration and Naturalization Service

Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student  
Status – For Academic and Language Students (OMB NO. 1115-0051)

Please read Instructions on Page 2  
This page must be completed and signed in the U.S. by a designated school official.

1. Family Name (surname):		<b>SEVIS</b> For Immigration Official Use 
First (given) Name:	Middle Name:	
Country of birth:	Date of birth (mo/day/year):	
Country of citizenship:	Admission number:	
2. School (school district) name:		<b>SEVIS</b> Student's Copy 
School Official to be notified of student's arrival in U.S. (Name and Title):		
School address (include zip code):		
School code (including 3-digit suffix, if any) and approval date: approved on _____		
3. This certificate is issued to the student named above for:		
4. Level of education the student is pursuing or will pursue in the United States:		
5. The student named above has been accepted for a full course of study at this school, majoring in _____ The student is expected to report to the school on _____ and complete studies not later than _____ The normal length of study is _____ months.		
6. English proficiency:		
7. This school estimates the student's average costs for an academic term of _____ (up to 12) months to be:		
a. Tuition and fees	\$ _____	8. The school has information showing the following as the student's support, estimated for an academic term of _____ months (Use the same number of months given in item 7).
b. Living expenses	\$ _____	
c. Expenses of dependents	\$ _____	
d. Other (specify):	\$ _____	
Total		Total
9. Remarks:		
10. School Certification: I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above in items 1 through 9 was completed before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form; the school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school; the student will be required to pursue a full course of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(D)(6); I am a designated official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.		
Name of School Official	Signature of Designated School Official	Title
		Date Issued
		Place Issued (city and state)
11. Student Certification: I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay as specified on page 2. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full course of study at the school named on page 1 of this form. I also authorize the named school official to use my name and photograph in any form which is needed by the INS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status.		
Name of Student	Signature of Student	Date
Name of parent or guardian if student under 18	Signature of parent or guardian	Address (city) (State or Province) (Country) (Date)

Form I-20 A-B (Rev. 04-27-88N)

For Official Use Only  
Microfilm Index Number

New program end date

AAU Signature

Date I-20 was issued

Your Signature



## 2) Collecting your Documents

### **ATTENTION**

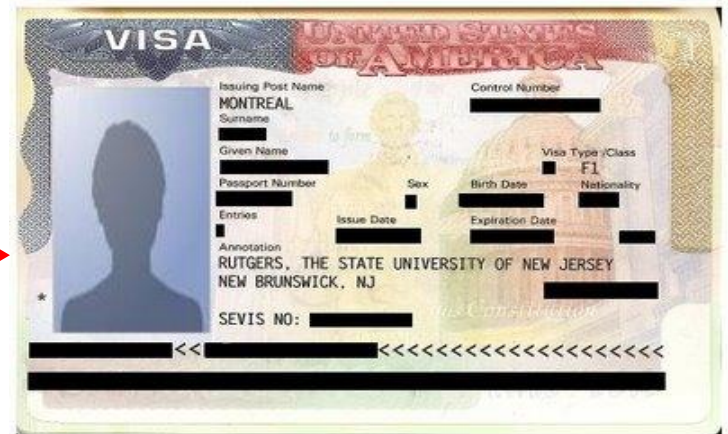
USCIS must receive your OPT application within 30 days of I-20 issuance, otherwise your application will be denied!



# 3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

## What about my F1 visa and passport?

- Make a photocopy of your F1 visa, if applicable. →



- Make a photocopy of your passport biographic page with photo. →
- Your passport must be valid.







## 3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

### What about my I-94?

- Your I-94 will be either:
  - 1) a white card stapled in your passport like this

- or -

- 2) a digital form that you can download online from the following link:

<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>

Departure Number: 000000000 00

OMB No. 1651-0111

Departure Record

DATE OF ADMISSION: Day you entered the U.S. (APR 20 2011)

CLASS OF ADMISSION: Your visa status (F-1)

ADMITTED UNTIL: The last day you can in the U.S. (D/S)

14. Family Name: S | T | U | D | E | N | T

15. First (Given) Name: I | M | A

16. Birth Date (Day/Mo/Yr): 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 0

17. Country of Citizenship: A | N | Y | C | O | U | N | T | R | Y

CBP Form I-94 (10/04)

See Other Side

STAPLE HERE

After **May 7, 2013**, you will no longer get a paper I-94 like this one at the airport. This information will now be in your passport.

Note: If you have the I-94 stapled in your passport, you must include a copy of the back and front of your I-94.



## 3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

### What about previous I-20's and EAD's?

- You must include a photocopy of all your previous I-20's. If you no longer have all your previous I-20's then only include the most recent ones.
- The photocopy of your PC OPT I-20.
- If you previously received CPT, you must include a photocopy of all your I-20's with the CPT authorization.
- If you were issued an EAD before, because of previous OPT or Economic Hardship work authorization, you must include a photocopy of the back and front of your previous EAD.



1) Understanding PC-OPT

2) Collecting your Documents

3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

**4) Mailing & Deadlines for PC-OPT Packet**

5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

6) Frequently Asked Questions



## 4) Mailing & Deadlines for PC-OPT Packet

### Where do I mail my documents?

- If the address on your Form I-765 is in California, mail your application to the USCIS Phoenix Lockbox:
  - For Regular mail (USPS):
    - USCIS, PO Box 21281, Phoenix, AZ 85036
  - For Express mail (FedEx or UPS):
    - USCIS, Attn: AOS, 1820 E Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100, Phoenix, AZ 85034
- If the address on your Form I-765 is outside California, look at this website to confirm which mailing address you should use:
  - <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses>
  - You will either mail your application to the Dallas or Phoenix Lockbox. The Lockbox addresses are noted on the bottom of the website.



## 4) Mailing & Deadlines for PC-OPT Packet

### When do I mail my documents?

- USCIS must receive and accept your application for processing within 30 days of the issuance of your OPT I-20.
- It is highly recommended to mail your application packet as soon as possible to avoid a denial of your application.



1) Understanding PC-OPT

2) Collecting your Documents

3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

4) Mailing & Deadlines for PC-OPT Packet

**5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD**

6) Frequently Asked Questions



## 5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

### How long does it take to get my EAD?

- USCIS will process your application within approximately three (3) months.
- If you receive a Request for Evidence (RFE), USCIS will stop processing your application until you submitted the requested documents. Receiving an RFE will delay your application and it may take a total of four (4) months to receive your EAD. Please come to the International Office when you receive an RFE.



## 5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

### What is the authorization process?

- 2 weeks
  - Within two weeks of submitting your application to USCIS, you will receive a text message and/or email with your receipt number. Receiving a receipt number confirms USCIS accepted your application for processing.
- 6 weeks
  - Within six weeks of submitting your application to USCIS, you will receive a letter, named Notice of Action. This confirms that USCIS has the correct mailing address on file for you. Check if your name and date of birth is correct.
- 12 weeks
  - Within 12 weeks of submitting your application to USCIS, you will receive an Approval Notice and within a few days afterwards you will receive your EAD.





## 5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

### What happens after I received my EAD?

- After you received your EAD, make sure your name is spelled correctly, your Date of Birth and OPT start/end date is correct.
- If something is incorrect, contact the International Office for next step.
- If your EAD is correct, you can apply for your Social Security Number and report your employment.





## 5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

What if I do not get an email/ text message with a receipt number?

- If this is the case, you either forgot to mail Form G-1145 or your application was rejected and mailed back to the address on your Form I-765.
- If your application packet is returned back to you, please contact the International Office to request a new Form I-20 with a new OPT recommendation. (Remember USCIS must receive your application and accept it for processing within 30 days of issuing your OPT I-20)



## 5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

### What if I do not receive a Notice of Action?

- If you do not receive a Notice of Action within 6 weeks of submitting your application, but you received an email/text message with your receipt number, chances are that USCIS has the incorrect mailing address on file for you.
- If this is the case, you must call the USCIS Customer Service Hotline and confirm your mailing address.
- You can call USCIS at: 1-800-375-5283
- When calling USCIS you must have your receipt number on hand.



## 5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

### What if I do not receive my EAD?

- If you do not receive your EAD within 12 weeks of submitting your application, but you received an email/text message and approval notice, you should contact the International Office.
- It may be that there is a processing delay or your EAD was processed and mailed out, but for some reason you did not receive it.
- The International Office will then contact our USCIS Liaison Officer to inquire about the status of your application and work with you on the next steps.



## 5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

### What if I get a Request for Evidence (RFE)?

- Sometimes students will receive a blue letter, named Request for Evidence. This means that USCIS is asking for more documents. For example:
  - Updated passport pictures
  - Your signature on the I-765
  - You forgot to sign your I-20 or forgot to submit documents
  - You were previously authorized for CPT or OPT and did not submit a copy of your I-20 with the CPT or OPT authorization
- If you receive an RFE, please contact the International Office at AAU.



## 5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

What if I move and need to change my address while my application is still pending?

- USCIS does not forward any mail.
- Before moving to your new address, you must contact USCIS and update your old address to the new one.
- You can update your address in two ways:
  - Call the Customer Service Hotline: 1-800-375-5283
  - Update your mailing address online:  
<http://www.uscis.gov/addresschange>



1) Understanding PC-OPT

2) Collecting your Documents

3) Preparing your PC-OPT Packet

4) Mailing & Deadlines for PC-OPT Packet

5) Waiting for your Approval & EAD

**6) Frequently Asked Questions**



## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I check the status of my application?

- You can check your application status online at:  
<https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard/CaseStatus.do>
- You will need your receipt number to check the status.
- Your application will remain in “initial” status for a while. Remember the authorization process and that the average processing time is 90 days. If you have approached the 90 days and your status is still “initial”, contact the International Office.





## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

### Can I travel outside the US on PC-OPT?

- Make sure to have all the necessary re-entry travel documents before your departure.
- Do not enter the US in a status other than F1, unless you are willing to give up your OPT.
- Time spent outside the US while on OPT will count towards your 90 days of unemployment, unless you are on a paid vacation, company approved leave or business trip as part of your employment.
- While OPT is a legitimate benefit of your F1 status, students who have to apply for a new F1 visa, must consider the risk of being denied and not being able to re-enter the US to continue their OPT.



## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

### Can I travel outside the US on PC-OPT?

Before Program Completion & Before Getting EAD	After Program Completion & Before Getting EAD	After Program Completion & After Getting EAD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OPT I-20 with a valid travel signature on the third page.</li><li>• Valid passport – must be valid for at least 6 months into the future</li><li>• Valid F1 visa</li><li>• Print out of Semester Registration from your Student Self Service Account to confirm enrollment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OPT I-20 with a valid travel signature on the third page.</li><li>• Valid passport – must be valid for at least 6 months into the future</li><li>• Valid F1 visa</li><li>• USCIS Notice of Action to confirm pending OPT application</li><li>• Letter from Employer is strongly recommended</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OPT I-20 with a valid travel signature on the third page.</li><li>• Valid passport – must be valid for at least 6 months into the future</li><li>• Valid F1 visa</li><li>• Valid EAD</li><li>• Letter from Employer or contract confirming employment</li></ul>



## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

### Do I have to apply for a new F1 visa when on PC-OPT?

- If you are traveling outside the US and your F1 visa is expired, you must obtain a new F1 visa before your return.
- To apply for a new F1 visa, you must have the following documents:
  - Valid OPT I-20 with a travel signature that is not older than 6 months
  - Valid passport – must be valid for at least 6 months into the future
  - Valid EAD
  - Valid Letter of Employment
  - Current Financial Support Documents
  - Visa Renewal Letter from the International Office at AAU
  - Official Transcript from AAU
  - Any other documents required by the US consulate/embassy



## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I apply for the Social Security Number?

- Upon receipt of your EAD you will be eligible to apply for your Social Security Number (SSN) at the Social Security Administration Office.
- To apply for the SSN you must have:
  - Valid OPT I-20
  - Valid passport
  - Valid EAD
  - F1 visa (can be expired)
  - I-94
  - For more information about the SSN: <http://www.ssa.gov/>



## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

### Do I need to pay US taxes?

- You are required to file a tax return although you are not a US citizen.
- When employed, taxes are usually automatically taken out of your paycheck unless you are a doing contract or freelance work or you are a self-employed business owner. In this case, no taxes will be taken out of your paycheck and you must pay taxes when filing your tax return.
- AAU does not advise on taxes, but for more detailed information, please visit:
  - <http://www.irs.gov/>
  - <http://www.academyart.edu/students/my-academy/student-resources/international-student-resources>
  - <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Find-a-Location-for-Free-Tax-Prep>



## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do, if I did not receive an email/text message with my receipt number, but my check was cashed?

- If your check was cashed, but you did not receive a receipt number, you should contact the International Office immediately and provide a copy of your bank account confirming that the money was taken out of your account. The International Office will then contact our USCIS Liaison Officer.



## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

### What are my options after PC-OPT?

#### Depart the US and Return Home

The day after your last day of OPT, your 60 day grace period will begin. During the grace period you will not be allowed to work, however, you may travel throughout the US and prepare your departure before your return home.

#### Apply for a Change of Status with USCIS

You may decide to apply for a change of status from F1 to another status with USCIS. You may do so while on OPT or during your 60 day grace period. When applying for a different status, you must ensure to be in valid F1 status.

#### Apply for 24 Months STEM Extension

If you completed your degree STEM qualifying major, you will be eligible for the 24 Months STEM Extension. For more qualification details, review the Info Sheet and STEM tutorial on the Int'l Student Website.

#### Continue your Education

If you want to continue your studies in the US, you can do so by:

- Obtaining a Change of Level I-20 from AAU
- Transferring out to another school and obtaining a transfer I-20.



## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

### What do I do to apply for a Change of Status while or after PC-OPT?

- Start by taking a look at the USCIS website: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
- Consult with an immigration attorney. For referrals, contact the International Office or look at AILA:  
<http://www.ailalawyer.com/>
- Visa types most commonly used by AAU students after OPT:
  - H1B (Specialty Occupation, Employer Specific)
    - <http://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations-and-fashion-models/h-1b-specialty-occupations-dod-cooperative-research-and-development-project-workers-and-fashion-models>
  - O1 (Individuals with Extraordinary Ability or Achievement, Employer Specific):
    - <http://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/o-1-individuals-extraordinary-ability-or-achievement/o-1-visa-individuals-extraordinary-ability-or-achievement>
  - TN (NAFTA Professionals from Canada or Mexico)
    - <http://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/tn-nafta-professionals>
  - Permanent Residency through family or employment
    - <http://www.uscis.gov/greencard>





## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

How can I request a transfer to another school during or after PC-OPT?

- Contact the International Office and submit the following documents:
  - Copy of your Acceptance Letter to your new school
  - Transfer Release Form from your new school
- The International Office will process your request within 3 business days.
- Note: The moment your SEVIS record is release to another school, your OPT will end. If you have already completed your OPT, your SEVIS record must be released before the end of the 60 day grace period.



## 6) Frequently Asked Questions

### Can I take classes while on PC-OPT?

- You can take personal enrichment classes at AAU while on PC-OPT, but you cannot take degree seeking classes.
- If you plan to pursue another degree and take degree seeking classes, you have two options:
  - Wait until the end of your OPT and receive a new I-20 to continue your studies during the 60 day grace period.
  - Discontinue your OPT and receive a new I-20 to continue your studies.