Post Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Preparation Checklist

- ❑ Complete the attached form on page 2, including the required signature(s) from your department (engineering majors require an additional signature). You **must** complete this step prior to attending an OPT group appointment.
- ❑ Obtain (1) digital color "passport type" photograph, (2) photos if filing by regular mail (photo dimensions are on page 5).
  - ✓ *The Creation Station in the Student Center Underground is good to use for an on-campus option.*
- ❑ Schedule an OPT appointment through MyUH with an International Student & Scholar Services Office (ISSSO) counselor. OPT appointments are in a group setting and completed virtually (OPT workshop appointments show as a green color on the appointment calendar for each counselor, on the Advising tab through MyUH).

Appointment Checklist

- ❑ Current I-20, passport that is valid for six months into the future, most recent visa page, and current I-94.
- ❑ Have the attached "Academic Verification" form signed by your academic advisor.
- ❑ <mark>Do Not</mark> submit and pay for your OPT application through USCIS at this time.

Processing Checklist

*After completing the OPT workshop, ISSSO counselor will update **TerraDotta** to create an OPT request for you to submit the required documents.*

- ❑ Submit the completed Academic Verification Form (p 2)
- ❑ Copies of passport biographical page, visa page, and I-94. If applicable to you: Previous EAD card and/or F-1 Approval Notice
- ❑ Submit $100 Alumni fee to ISSSO in person or by regular mail. Link to payment coupon:
  https://uh.edu/issso/resources/forms/issso_payment_coupon.pdf

ISSSO counselor will then do the following and upload in TerraDotta:

- ❑ Request a new I-20 from SEVIS with a recommendation for OPT
- ❑ Print out a CPT screenshot (if applicable)

E-Filing Checklist

Note: *You are responsible for submitting your application to USCIS in a timely manner. Your application must be completed and paid* **WITHIN 30 DAYS** *of requesting the OPT recommendation I-20 or before the end of your 60-day grace period, whichever comes first.*

- ❑ Wait to receive your updated I-20 with the OPT recommendation from ISSSO counselor in TerraDotta. Make sure to print and sign the I-20 in ink prior to uploading it to the USCIS application online.
- ❑ Create a USCIS account to prepare for e-filing (https://myaccount.uscis.gov/users/sign_up).
- ❑ Upload the following documents as part of your application online:

  1) Most recent I-94 or change of status approval notice in PDF format
  2) Under EAD: Upload a color scan of your passport biographical page, VISA page, and any prior EAD card you may have/. Make sure the images are clear, in color, and in PDF format.
  3) CPT screenshot from ISSSO counselor (if you did CPT during your degree program)
  4) Your new I-20 with OPT recommendation on p. 2. Make sure to sign prior to uploading in PDF format
  5) Under additional information: Add any prior CPT or OPT you may have had at a prior degree level. Also any prior SEVIS ID's that you had while attending school in the U.S.
  6) One passport photo in JPG, JPEG, or PNG format

- ❑ Once everything is uploaded, then you can electronically sign and submit. It should take you to www.pay.gov where you can make the $470 payment. You will receive an E-notice receipt of your filing showing IOE as the starting letters. This notice should also arrive by regular mail. Following the payment for your OPT application, you are allowed to request for premium processing to receive an adjudication result of your EAD card within 15 days. The cost for this expedited processing is $1,685.

After Filing Checklist

- ❑ You should receive an official USCIS filing receipt (called an I-797 Notice of Action) within 2-3 weeks.
- ❑ Processing times for the EAD card is normally around 60 days but may take up to 120 days or longer. Once received, submit a copy of the front and back of your EAD Card to us through our OPT/-X self-report system.
- ❑ **You are required by law to report any biographical or employment changes within 10 days.**
  - ✓ Continue to update your SEVIS address and employment changes in the SEVP Portal.
- ❑ Once your OPT ends you have a 60-day grace period to file for a change of status, receive a new I-20 for a program that begins at the next available semester that is within 5 months(transfer or change of degree level), or depart the U.S.

Academic Verification Form

Student: Print your name below and take this form to your department for the required signature(s). **Note:** *Engineering majors require the signature of the Dean and <u>additional</u> procedures that you must follow to apply for OPT.*

Student's Name:_____ PS ID:_____ Date:_____

Academic Verification
– College or Departmental Signature Required –

This section needs to be signed by the Dean, Dissertation/Thesis Advisor, or the student's Academic Advisor. The student is applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT), which is available through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It allows an F-1 international student to work for up to one year in their field of study. In order to recommend the student for this post-completion practical training, we need to know the expected completion date. A student is allowed to apply <u>90 days before</u> the completion of studies. It is helpful for the student to apply as early as allowed under law, since it may take up to three months to process the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Card from DHS. If the student does not complete the degree when expected, the EAD card may be cancelled as long as it has not been approved by USCIS. If the card is cancelled the student may reapply for OPT with the cancellation letter from USCIS. If you have any questions, please call 713-743-5065 and ask to speak to an International Student Counselor. **NOTE:** Engineering majors have additional steps to follow. Please check with your department before attending a group OPT appointment.

1. **This student has applied for graduation at the following degree level** (please circle one)**:**

    Bachelor   Masters   Doctorate

2. **This student is expected to complete/has completed all degree requirements on ____/____/____.**
    (This is the official closing of the semester or when the thesis/dissertation is/will be submitted. For Graduates: If enrolled in the 1 credit hour course for administrative purposes with an early submission deadline before the start of the next semester, a student will be in their 60 day grace period following this deadline, even if they do not apply for OPT, see below.)

<u>**Attention Advisors:**</u> A student cannot prolong their stay in the U.S. by taking additional courses they do not need (because they failed to apply for graduation) or they are administratively enrolled. If the student has completed all degree requirements, they are required to take action to maintain status.
<u>The federal regulations in 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(iii)(C) state:</u>
    "If the student is not required to take any additional courses to satisfy the requirements for completion, but continues to be enrolled for administrative purposes, the student is considered to have completed the course of study and must take action to maintain status."

Academic or Thesis/Dissertation Advisor: _____

            Signature: _____ Date: _____

Associate Dean of College_____Signature_____Date_____
(Engineering Majors Only)

Please return the form to the student.