

# Creating the Quick and Dirty SOP or *What you want? How I'm gonna do that?*

Amy Connolly, Texas A&M University  
NAFSA REGION III  
CONFERENCE 2010

## Standard Operating Procedure

**International Student Services  
Post Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) Processing**

**Standard Operating Procedure**

This SOP is intended to describe the process for processing Post Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) work authorization for students:

- In legal F-1 immigration status
- Item here for one full academic year (fall and spring semester)

**Review documents to make sure all documents were submitted**

- Copies of immigration documents**
  - Most recently issued I-20 for student and their dependents
  - Passport
  - Visa
  - I-94 card
- F-1 Authorization for Optional Practical Training Student Form**
- F-1 Authorization for Optional Practical Training Department Form**
  - Note: Only needed for Master Thesis and PhD students.
- Copy of Email for the Online Workshop or Note in FSA attended OPT workshop in Person**
- Letter from Sponsored Student programs if the student is sponsored.**

**Complete checks of student's record**

- COMPASS/Howdy Portal check**
  - Key screens to check
    - SHAGAPP - has the student applied for graduation - if student is applying based on graduation
      - If checking in Howdy it will be the link for Graduation Status Check for Advisors

... document to date of our date is within 180 days.

... work. Current process need start date.

... application - make sure to print original.

... Student Form

... Example: If OPT starts on March 1<sup>st</sup>, then on how employment should end March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

... Example: If student is graduating on May 16<sup>th</sup> OPT does not expire until July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Day the on how employment should end May 16<sup>th</sup>.

... not in engaging in Optional Practical Training

... for

... for information.

... situation date

... sponsor requirements?

... their qualifications... and on graduation.

... sent Head or Department

... signed signatures.

... for

... information from

... to send what additional

... if the information that is

... Student Eligibility Center (SEC)

... to please continue to next section.

... should be the day before OPT starts or the day of

... to register

... to register

... to Upload

... of events

... to - continue

... to - contact your supervisor regarding the

... next

... by using the Authorization form and

... Should be Post Completion.

... - Check the box

... has

... g or online.

... their insurance coverage has

... current semester, do not

... if it is not designated

... This staff member will give

... advice.

... or information from

... coming and what additional

... to

... in some date that you

... starts on March 1<sup>st</sup>, then I-

... on is graduating on May 16<sup>th</sup>

... until July 2<sup>nd</sup>, then the SOP

## **Kaleidoscope of information- for the International Student Advisor**

- **Definitions**
- **Academic Calendar and catalog**
- **Campus and NAFSA Contact list**
- **Processing – Flip Chart**
- **Advising – Handouts**

## **Library of Information for Students**

- Definition, Acronym, Citation
- Calendar-Timeline – days needed for processing and application deadlines (both in house and at USCIS)



# Definitions and Acronyms

- EMPLOYMENT:
  - OPT
  - Cap gap- auto extension of Post Completion OPT when H1 has been applied.
  - EAD
  - 17 month extension or STEM
  - CPT
- ACADEMIC
  - RCL
  - DLC
  - EOS
  - Academic Registration
  - Graduation
  - Academic major codes, CIP codes, STEM CIP codes
- SEVIS
  - Shorten program, complete program, terminate record
  - BS or A/C,
    - Institutional: (TAMU: IIQ, CEC, ISS, OAR)
  - Immigration Information
  - SEVIS Registration
  - F-1, F-2, J-1, J-2: student vs. spouse or child
  - Reporting Requirements

# ISS Calendar

## International Student Services – Continuing Student Calendar\* SUMMER SEMESTER 2010

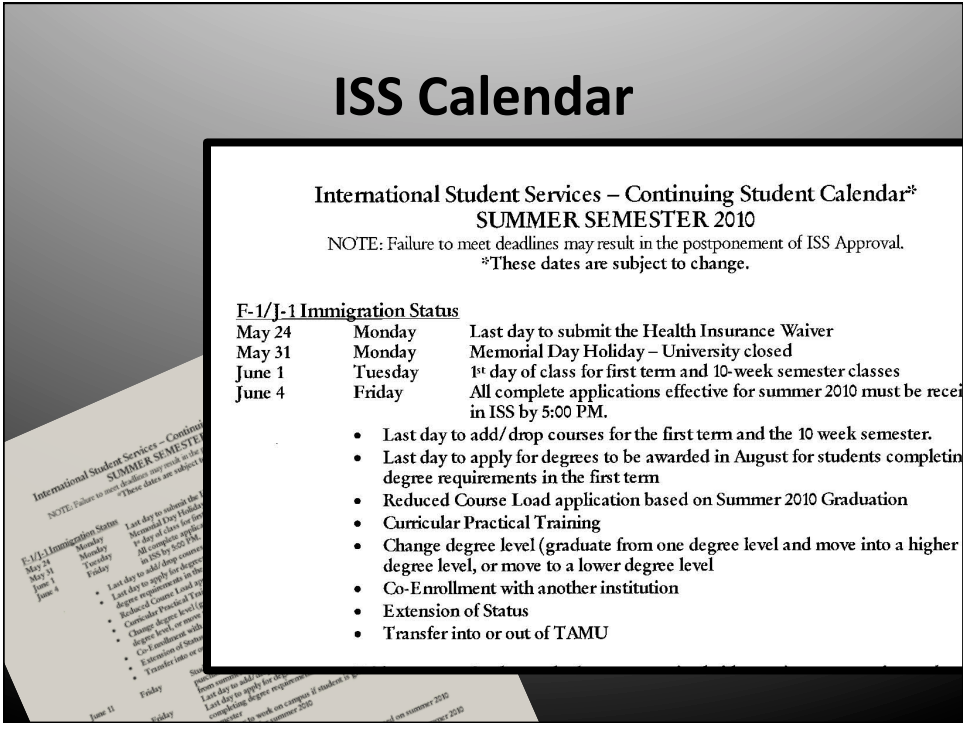
NOTE: Failure to meet deadlines may result in the postponement of ISS Approval.

\*These dates are subject to change.

### F-1/J-1 Immigration Status

May 24	Monday	Last day to submit the Health Insurance Waiver
May 31	Monday	Memorial Day Holiday – University closed
June 1	Tuesday	1 <sup>st</sup> day of class for first term and 10-week semester classes
June 4	Friday	All complete applications effective for summer 2010 must be received in ISS by 5:00 PM.

- Last day to add/ drop courses for the first term and the 10 week semester.
- Last day to apply for degrees to be awarded in August for students completing degree requirements in the first term
- Reduced Course Load application based on Summer 2010 Graduation
- Curricular Practical Training
- Change degree level (graduate from one degree level and move into a higher degree level, or move to a lower degree level)
- Co-Enrollment with another institution
- Extension of Status
- Transfer into or out of TAMU



# Office of Graduate Studies Calendar

Revised 2/1/10

Office of Graduate Studies Calendar\*  
**FALL SEMESTER 2010**

*NOTE: Failure to meet deadlines may result in the postponement of receipt of the degree.  
 \*These dates are subject to change.*

**REGISTRATION AND DROP/ADD**

August 13	Friday	Last day to submit approval form and PDF of thesis in final form by 5:00 pm to avoid registration in Fall semester.
August 27	Friday	Last day to register for fall semester classes and pay fees by 5:00 pm.
August 30	Monday	First day of fall semester classes.
September 3	Friday	Last day to clear Thesis Office by 5:00 p.m. to avoid registration in Fall Semester, and last day to add/drop courses for the fall semester by 5:00 pm.
September 10	Friday	<b>LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR ALL DEGREES TO BE AWARDED IN DECEMBER BY 5:00 PM.</b>
November 5	Friday	Last day for all students to drop courses with no penalty (Q-drop), and last day to officially withdraw from the University
November 18	Wednesday	Bonfire 1999 Remembrance Day.

**APPLICATIONS FOR DEGREE (DIPLOMA ORDER)**

August 18	Wednesday	First day to apply for degrees to be awarded in December.
September 10	Friday	<b>LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR DEGREES TO BE AWARDED IN DECEMBER.</b> A diploma fee of \$40.00 will be added to your student bill. <b>A LATE CHARGE OF \$50.00 WILL BE ASSESSED TO STUDENTS WHO APPLY FOR GRADUATION AFTER 9-10-10.</b>

**CLEARANCE**

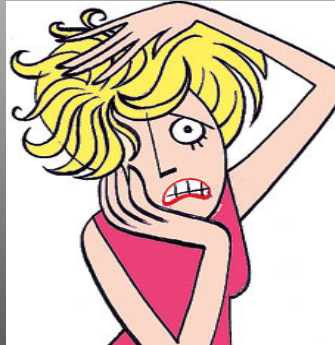
December 16	Thursday	Academic Degree Audits conducted after 5:00 p.m.
-------------	----------	--

**COMMENCEMENT**

December 17	Friday	Commencement
December 18	Saturday	Commencement

Degree plans must be received by our office at least 90 working days prior to submission of the Request and Announcement of the Final Examination.

# Processing Reminders for Advisor



- Which documents are needed?
- How to complete process?

# Flip Chart

## FLIP CHART FOR DOCUMENT SUBMITS

For the Advisor to use.

### TRANSFER OUT:

- ISS form – must have release date and name of other school
- Acceptance from other university, not department
- Offer university transfer form (optional)
- SEVIS Transfer Out

### DEGREE LEVEL CHANGE:

- ISS form
- OGS approval form – signed by OGS, not just department
- Passport/201-94/visa
- Financial support information
- Update Financial Information
- Change of Education Level
- Print/Sign I-20s for travel
- Make copy of original with student signature

### EXTENSION OF STATUS

- ISS form-Academic justification, new end date of expected program
- Passport/201-94/visa
- Financial support information
- Update finances
- Extend program
- Print/Sign I-20s for travel
- Make copy of original with student signature

### INVITE DEPENDENT

- Financial support information
- A page with the following dependent information: first name, last name, city of birth, country of birth, country of citizenship, country of residence, relationship to primary, gender
- Primary's passport/201-94/visa
- Completed "Letter of Invitation" request (student should apply through online letter system)
- Department letter – for all students who have completed one academic year (9 months) or more

1. ABC, P\edit suggestions\Region 3 presentation fall 2010

## INVITE DEPENDENT CONT.

- Update finances to show dependent financing
- Invite Dependent
- Print/Sign I-20s for travel
- Make copy of original with student signature

### OPT

- ISS form - student
- Passport/201-94/visa
- Photocopy of OPT workshop completion email (if done online)
- ISS Department form – if student is MS thesis or PhD
- Student must have
  - applied for graduation or letter of completion or completed coursework and set a date for defense (if thesis or PhD only)
- shorten program (if necessary)
- add new OPT request
- Print/Sign I-20s for travel
- Make copy of original with student signature
- Give student instructions on how to file with USCIS

### STEM OPT

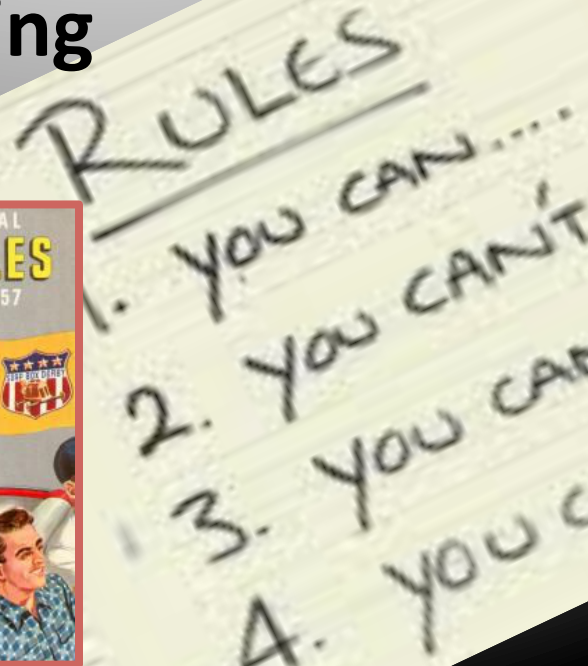
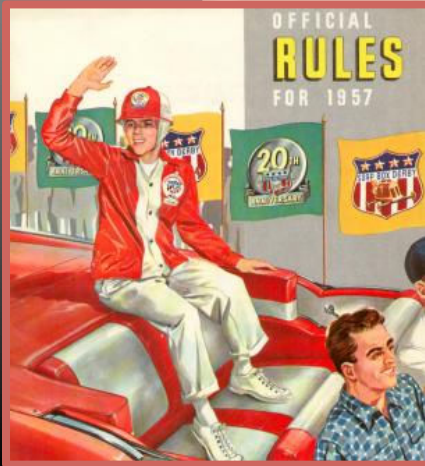
- ISS student form
- Passport/201-94/visa – if student has travelled while on OPT
- EAD card – first and back, if it has not been submitted previously
- Job offer letter – must have current (less than 1 month old) issuance date and list start and end dates of employment, address of company
- add new OPT request
- Print/Sign I-20s for travel
- Make copy of original with student signature
- Give student instructions on how to file with USCIS

### CPT

- ISS form – student/academic
- ISS form – employer
- Job offer letter
- Alternative insurance coverage (optional)
- Passport/201-94/visa

2. ABC, P\edit suggestions\Region 3 presentation fall 2010

# Advising



### TOP 5 QUESTIONS FOR OPT

- 1. CAN I TURN THIS IN?**
  - Graduation or Letter of completion: Student should submit ISS application 90 days before graduation or 60 days after graduation/issuance date on letter of completion.
  - Completion of Coursework: Student must have defense date set and be able to graduate within approved OPT timeframe.
- 2. WHERE CAN I WORK?**
  - All positions must be in field of study, require current degree level.
  - The minimum hours per week a student may work is 20.
  - Students may work at more than one position.
- 3. DO I HAVE TO TELL ISS ANYTHING (AFTER I GET EAD)?**
  - Send a copy of the front and back of EAD card
  - US address should be updated in the HOWDY portal, under the student local/mailling section.
  - Students should make an entry in the OPT data system to update ALL periods of employment and unemployment.

If student changes visa status, a copy of the Notice of Approval (I-797) should be sent to ISS and to the Registrar's office with student's name, UIN and request to update student record.
- 4. CAN I LEAVE THE U.S.?**
  - A student may leave the U.S. while their OPT application is pending at USCIS; however, they should have their EAD when they return to the U.S.
  - After application is approved and student has EAD, student should have job offer with immigration documents (passport, I-94, I-20, EAD) at Port of Entry.
  - Student should not leave the U.S. after graduation but before applying for OPT.
- 5. STUDENT RESOURCES:**

ISS website: <https://international.tamu.edu/iss/employment/optinfo.asp>

ISS Online Workshop: <https://international.tamu.edu/iss/employment/optinfo.asp#onlineOPT>

In-person Workshop: dates of workshop are updated each semester.  
<https://international.tamu.edu/iss/employment/optworkshop.asp>

Advisor Appointment: call ISS (979) 845-1824 or email: [iss@tamu.edu](mailto:iss@tamu.edu)

Policy Guidance: [http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt\\_policy\\_guidance\\_04062009.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt_policy_guidance_04062009.pdf)

# Top 5

### The Ways of OPT

**Pre-Completion OPT**

**Who Can Apply for Pre-Completion OPT?**

- Any Student may be eligible to apply for Pre-Completion OPT if they have completed one academic year of study.
- The student may choose to do Pre-Completion if the internship is an degree plan is not on their degree plan. The student should do OPT if the internship is an degree plan at a time; however, each application will follow the same procedure as the first application. In other words, the student will have to apply for the OPT endorsement from ISS, submit the I-785 application (with payment) to USCIS, and wait for approval.
- If a student does not complete 12 months of full time Pre-Completion OPT, they may apply for Post-Completion OPT for the remaining amount of time. Then, if applicable, a student may apply for a 17 month extension.
- Part time OPT = 1/3 of full time OPT. For example, 3 months of part time OPT = 1.5 months of full time OPT.
- Students may not work full time while on Pre-Completion OPT except during vacation periods.
- Students may not apply for 17 month extension or I-785 application if there is an unemployment accrual for Pre-Completion OPT.
- Students may only have a total of 12 months of full time Pre-Completion OPT.
- Students may not apply for any type of OPT if they have already used their 12 months of full time OPT at that degree level.
- Students may not apply for any type of OPT if they have already used their 12 months of full time OPT at that degree level.

For answers to other questions, please refer to the [ISS Standard Operating Procedures \(Advising Students\)](#) website.

# The Ways of OPT

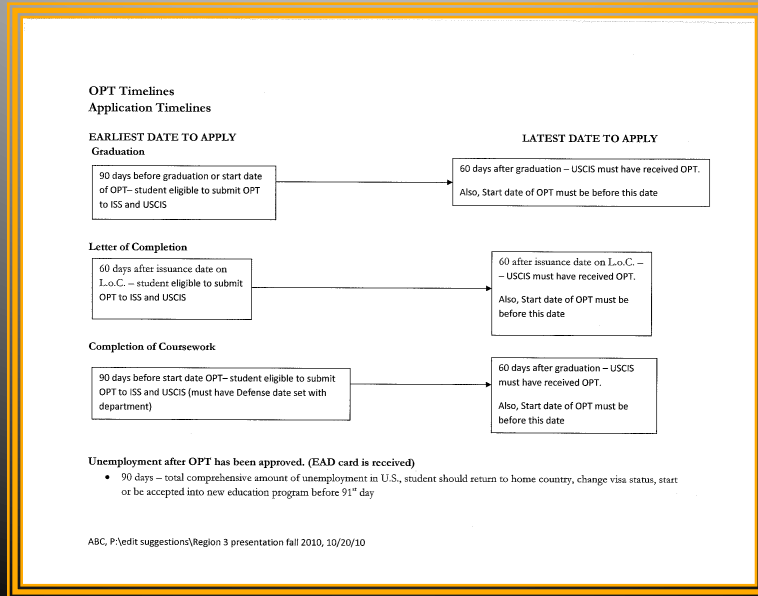
### The Ways of OPT

Post-Completion OPT			
Type of Post-Completion:	#1 Graduation	#2 Letter of Completion	#3 Completion of Coursework
<b>Who can apply?</b>	Undergrad Masters PhD	Undergrad Masters students PhD students	Thesis Option Masters and PhD students
<b>Necessary Forms?</b>	Post-Completion OPT Student Form Photocopies Online workshop certificate	Post-Completion OPT Student Form Photocopies Online workshop certificate Letter of Completion from OGS	Post-Completion OPT Student Form Photocopies Online workshop certificate Department Form
<b>Consequences to on-campus employment</b>	Student must stop working on campus effective the date of graduation.	Student must stop working on campus effective the date on the letter of completion.	Student must stop working on campus effective the I-20 expiration date.

For answers to other questions, please refer to the [ice.gov OPT FAQ website](#).

S/T - ISS Standard Operating Procedures (Advising Students) OPT The Ways of OPT quick chart - abc 10/20/2010

# OPT Timelines



# Front Counter Flip CHART for CPT

**Front Counter Flip CHART for: CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING**

**Questions to ask student:**

- Are you a sponsored student? If yes, Do you have permission from SSP?
- Have you registered for the CPT course credits/hours?
- What insurance will you have – Student insurance or employer provided?
- Is this your 1<sup>st</sup> CPT? If so, no degree plan is necessary at this time.

**Look for this info on the forms:**

- Signatures and current dates
- Answers to questions
- Employer offer letter
- Start and End dates are the same on the student form, employer form, offer letter

**Required Forms and Documents:**

- Authorization Form
- Employer Form
- Job offer letter
- Alternative insurance coverage (optional)
- Passport/I-20/I-94/visa

**Optional Forms – Front counter can accept, but not required:**

- Degree plan
- Full time status while part time enrolled letter from Registrar's office (for Fall and Spring only)
- Permission from Career Center for Co-op program
- SSP approval letter

Amy Connolly  
International Student Advisor II  
Texas A&M University  
[aconnolly@ipomail.tamu.edu](mailto:aconnolly@ipomail.tamu.edu)  
Phone: 979-845-1824  
Fax: 979-862-4633  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Bizzell Hall East, MS 1226  
College Station, TX 77843