Post Completion OPT application process

What to bring to the ISS Office to file post completion OPT?

1. Complete form I-765. Be sure to include a telephone number where you may be reached for further questions. You may also use our office number, 423-425-2110.
2. Include two photographs that meet the criteria listed on the example photo sheet.
3. Check or money-order for $380.00 written to “Department of Homeland Security.”
4. Passport valid at least 6 months past graduation date, I-94, visa, and current I-20.
6. Students who have approved EAD from previous OPT should bring the original EAD card.
7. Students who have approved EAD through Economic Hardships should bring the original EAD card.
8. Master’s or PhD candidates need to provide a memo from your thesis/dissertation chair stating that you will graduate this semester.

What is the process?

1. After preparing the above documents, email Nancy-Amberson@utc.edu to set an appointment to prepare the OPT I-20 and mailing of all documents. Please understand that arriving at the ISS Office without appointment is not accepted.
2. The above documents will be reviewed for accuracy and a new SEVIS I-20 will be prepared for the international advisor and student to sign.
3. All documents will be copied. One set to remain in the student file and one set for the student to keep. The original set will be mailed from the ISS Office to Service Center. [your original passport/visa/I-94 and I-20 will remain with you]

When will I receive the EAD card and when will I be allowed to work?

The Texas Service Center typically takes up to eight weeks to process an EAD card and request the card manufactured and mailed to UTC. This processing time varies and it is important to remember that we cannot hurry the process. Upon receipt of the EAD card and graduation, you may legally begin working. The dates of authorization is determined by the Service Center and indicated on the card. Work should be sought in your field of study and require your level of education completed at UTChattanooga. The work authorization is not based on a previous degree or level of education.

NOTE: Travel is permitted during the 12 months of OPT but you must be able to provide proof of employment or job offer upon returning to the US. If you have not secured a job and you travel, be prepared to be denied re-entry into the US.

If you decide to pursue further study, at UTC or another institution, upon acceptance into a new program your OPT is cancelled. Upon completion of a next higher degree, you will be eligible for another twelve months of OPT for that next higher degree. PhD candidates are not eligible for further OPT.

ALL STUDENTS APPLYING FOR POST COMPLETION OPT AND WHO REMAIN IN THE US FOR THE TWELVE MONTH OPT PERIOD ARE REQUIRED TO NOTIFY THE UTC ISS OFFICE OF ALL EMPLOYMENT AND ADDRESS CHANGES. USCIS NOW REQUIRES SEVIS APPROVED SCHOOLS TO REPORT ALL EMPLOYMENT AND CURRENT ADDRESS OF ALL STUDENT APPROVED FOR OPT.

USCIS/DHS ALLOWS A TOTAL OF 90 DAYS UNEMPLOYMENT WHILE ON OPT. SEVIS MONITORS THE STUDENT INFORMATION IN SEVIS AND DETERMINES WHEN THE 90 DAYS HAS EXPIRED.