

NAME: _____

Maintaining Visa Status on OPT

To maintain your F-1 visa status while on OPT, you must meet the following requirements:

Work only after the USCIS approves the EAD and during the EAD validity periods.

I understand that I cannot begin OPT employment until the start date indicated on my EAD, and that the start date will be either my requested start date or the date USCIS approves the application for work authorization, whichever occurs later.

I also understand that I may not request a start date that is more than 60 days after my program end date.

Engage only in full-time work directly related to my major course of study.

I understand that I must **ONLY** engage in employment directly related to my major course of study. I should maintain documentation to show that my OPT employment is directly related to my degree. If this connection is not clear from the job description, I should obtain a signed letter from my employer or supervisor stating how my degree is related to the work performed.

I understand that I may work for multiple employers, so long as the work is directly related to my program of study and that I work a minimum of 21 hours per week.

I also understand that “employment” can mean the following:

- Regular paid work of at least 21 hours per week, for one or more employers or for multiple employers in succession.
- Work for hire (where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship).
- Self-employed business owner, with the proper business licenses.
- Employment through an agency of at least 21 hours per week.
- Volunteering or unpaid internship, so long as it does not violate any labor laws and constitutes at least 21 hours per week.

Report changes in my employment to USCIS within 10 business days of any change.

- *You MUST use the OPT portal to do this.*

I understand that I must promptly report the following to USCIS:

- Job offers, including employer information, job title, start date, and period of employment.
- Unemployment start and end dates.

I also understand that I may be requested to provide documentation relating to my employment. As such, I should maintain evidence, for each job, of the position held, proof of the duration of that position, the job title, contact information for employer or supervisor, and a description of the work.

Accrue no more than 90 days of unemployment.

I understand that I may not be unemployed for an aggregate of more than 90 days (counted from the start date on my EAD). If I receive a 17-month STEM OPT extension, I may be unemployed an aggregate of no more than 120 days.

Travel and reentry while on OPT

I understand that while on post-completion OPT, I continue to be in F-1 status. Therefore, if I travel, I must be absent from the US for no more than 5 months, have an I-20 endorsed for travel, a valid F-1 visa to re-enter the United States (unless I am exempt from the visa requirement), and a valid, unexpired EAD. Because OPT authorization is related to employment, I should ideally also have a letter of employment.

I understand that if I travel while my OPT request is pending (i.e., after I have submitted my OPT application to the USCIS but before I have received my EAD), I must have an I-20 endorsed for travel, a valid F-1 visa, and the I-765 receipt notice (Form I-797). However, even with this documentation, I may have difficulty re-entering the US.

Time spent outside the United States during an approved period of post-completion OPT counts as unemployment, unless I am either employed during a period of leave authorized by an employer or traveling as part of my employment.

Study while on OPT

I understand that while engaged in post-completion OPT, I may not attend school full-time. If I request the transfer of my SEVIS record to another school, authorization for OPT will end on the Transfer Release Date.

I may, however, attend school on a part-time basis as a recreational activity while on OPT.

General reporting.

I understand that I must immediately report any changes to my address to the International Office.

I, _____ (name), have read and understood what is required for me to maintain valid F-1 visa status while on post-completion OPT.

signature

date