

GUIDELINES WHILE ON POST-COMPLETION OPT IN F-1 STATUS

General Information:

1. If your OPT was based on graduation and you DID NOT graduate, please speak with an international advisor in the International Programs & Initiatives (IPI) as soon as possible.
2. Keep your OPT card with you at ALL times. This card is your authorization to work and, along with your I-20 and I-94, proves your legal status in the U.S. **You are not authorized to work before or after the dates on your OPT card.**
3. Keep for your records the form I-797D (USCIS white mailer) in a safe place, separate from your card. The information on this sheet could be needed if you apply for any other work authorization from the USCIS in the future.
4. When your OPT card expires, DO NOT throw it away. Keep it, along with the form I-797D and all I-20s, for your records. The card will also be needed if applying for any other work authorization from the USCIS in the future.
5. Eligible for 24-month STEM extension? Yes_____ No_____
6. If you wish to transfer to another institution or begin a new academic program at UAF, your OPT authorization is terminated effective the date you choose to have your SEVIS record released to the new institution or your new academic program begins at UAF.
7. If your employer has applied for a change of status to H-1B on your behalf, please remember to email a copy of the "H-1B Approval Notice", as soon as possible, to your international advisor.
8. When traveling outside the U.S. on OPT, you must have the following documents with you to return to the U.S.:
 - OPT card
 - SEVIS I-20 signed for travel within the past 6 months by your advisor. If you do not reside in Fairbanks, send your I-20 to us. We will sign and return it to you.
 - Valid passport
 - Valid F-1 visa
 - Employment letter confirming you are working or will start working upon arrival.

If you have an expired F-1 visa or no employment, please contact an international advisor before leaving the U.S.

Notification Requirements:

1. You must notify IPI of your physical and/or mailing address, email, and phone number change within 10 days throughout the duration of your F-1 OPT status in order to comply with F-1 regulations.
2. You must notify IPI of your employer's name, address, and the start/end date of your employment. We will also need a description of how your position relates to your field of study. Employment information will be reported to SEVIS.

3. You must notify IPI if you change employers. You are required to report the last workday in your previous position and the new employer's name, address, and the start date of your employment. We will also need a description of how your new position relates to your field of study.
4. If you choose to use the SEVP Portal (<https://sevp.ice.gov/opt/#/login>) to update any of your personal or employment information you MUST notify IPI. We will check your SEVIS record, determine if a new I-20 is needed, and collect required documentation from you for our records.

Unemployment days:

Students on OPT can accumulate only 90 days of unemployment. Each day (including Saturday and Sunday, national holidays, days outside the U.S.) during the period when OPT authorization begins and ends that the student does not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment. OPT authorization start date and end date are shown on the student's EAD.

If you accumulate 90 days of unemployment you SHOULD plan on leaving the U.S. on day 91 or before. If you were hired on day 90 you must be working on day 91. It is important that you keep track of your unemployment days since you are considered out-of-status after exceeding 90 days of unemployment, and this could impact future immigration benefits.

Qualifying employment:

OPT employment does not have to be paid employment as long as there is no violation of labor laws (i.e. if the employer would normally pay someone to do the work, it would be against labor laws for them to have you volunteer) but you must work at least 20 hours per week. Other areas of opportunity:

- self-employed
- short-term multiple employers
- interning or volunteering in a position directly related to the academic field of study
- work for hire (contractual relationship)
- employment through an agency

In all circumstances of employment students on OPT must:

- work at least 20 hours per week
- work in a job that is related to their degree program
- inform IPI of employment and any changes to it
- maintain evidence of all employment and be prepared to provide the information to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). If requested by DHS, students must provide evidence showing duration of employment; name and address of employer(s); if self-employed have proof of the proper business licenses.

I have received and read the "Guidelines while on OPT in F-1 status".

SIGNATURE: _____

NAME (printed): _____

DATE: _____