Optional Practical Training (OPT)

OIE IS LAUNCHING E-FORMS!

READ THE OPT HANDOUT!

Today we will:

- Outline OPT Basics
- Review Application Process & Timing
- Discuss work options in US after OPT (H-1B, etc.)
- Questions?
Optional Practical Training

OPT = Temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study.

- Types of OPT:
  - Pre-completion
  - Post-completion
  - STEM extension

- Part-time or Full-time
  - Always full-time after completion of requirements for degree
Practical Considerations

During OPT period:

• You remain in F-1 status
  • *OPT is not a status, it is a benefit*
• CMU holds your SEVIS record
• OIE still your advisors/visa sponsor!
• **You still have reporting requirements!!**
What work can you do during Post Completion OPT?

- **Any** – As long as it:
  - Is related to YOUR field and level of study
  - Paid, unpaid, volunteer, contract
  - Job title *doesn’t* matter...
  - **BUT** the nature of the work does

No job offer is needed for you to apply for OPT!
Employment

Types of employment that are acceptable while in the initial period of Post-Completion OPT:

- Multiple employers.
- Short-term multiple employers (performing artists).
- Work for hire.
- Self-employed business owner.
- Employment through an agency or consulting firm.
- Paid employment.
- Unpaid employment.*

* A student may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern, where this practice does not violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week for a student on post-completion OPT. A student must be able to provide evidence acquired from the student's employer to verify that the student worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment.
OPT Usage

• 12 months per *advanced* degree level
  • Can’t have another 12 months of OPT after 2\textsuperscript{nd} Master’s

• *Once USCIS grants OPT, you have used the benefit!!*

\[ \text{Doctoral Degree} \]
\[ \text{Master’s Degree} \]
\[ \text{Bachelor’s Degree} \]

\[ \text{Doctoral Degree} \]
\[ \text{Master’s Degree} \]
\[ \text{Bachelor’s Degree} \]
The Application is a Three Step Process

Step 1. Recommendation
- Signed by your advisor & submitted to OIE through the MyOIE Portal

Step 2. New I-20
- Goal: new I-20 with OPT recommendation
- I-20 TIME: 5 to 10 business days at OIE

Step 3. Application
- Mail to USCIS
- Goal: EAD card
- APPROVAL TIME: 3 to 5 months!!

You can only legally work in the U.S. when:

• Have received the EAD Card
• Within valid dates on EAD

• EAD Card says “Not Valid For Reentry To U.S.” – This means not Valid for Reentry **ALONE** (you need all other valid documents: Passport, Visa, I-20, etc..)
The Application Process has **IMPORTANT Timelines!!**

If OPT is denied *before* end of 60 day grace period, it **MAY** be possible to apply again.

If OPT is denied *after* 60 day grace period, the benefit is **forfeited**.
The Application Process has **IMPORTANT Timelines!!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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OPT I-20: The 30 Day Rule!!

SCHOOL ATTESTATION

I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student’s application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student’s qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.

X

SIGNATURE OF: Carly Devineburgh, Foreign Student & Scholar Advisor

DATE ISSUED
2/15/2019

PLACE ISSUED
Pittsburgh, PA

• OPT application **must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date your OPT I-20 is issued.**

• Be ready to file when you turn in your request!

• I-20 more than 30 days past issuance date = OPT DENIED!
1. Login to your MyOIE Portal Account
2. Check and make sure all biographical data is correct and up-to-date

3. Next click on: “F-1 Practical Training”

4. Then click on: “Post-Completion Optional Practical Training Request Form”
Next complete the Post-OPT e-form as required:

- **REMEMBER – YOU MUST ATTEND AN OPT INFORMATION SESSION BEFORE YOU SUBMIT THIS E-FORM!**

- Is the above information correct?
MyOIE Portal

- Next complete the Post-OPT e-form as required:
  - CURRENT RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
    - Do you live at the current address listed below?
    - If NO... STOP
  - NEW RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
    - STOP: You are legally required to report ALL address changes to the Department of Homeland Security within 10 days of a change. LOC INTO SIO TODAY and update your address and contact information. Once you have made the change in SIO, also enter your current address below before submitting this form.
      - U.S. Address Line 1: *
      - Apartment Number:*
      - City: *
      - State: *
      - Zip Code: *

Failure to update the address in SIO will result in OPT application denial.
Next complete the Post-OPT e-form as required:

- PLEASE CONFIRM
  - Personal Email
  - Requested OPT Start Date
  - Requested OPT End Date
  - Department
  - Passport Expiration
  - Are you graduating with multiple majors/degrees at this time?
  - Have you applied for OPT before?
  - How would you like to receive your new I-20?
**MyOIE Portal**

➢ REMEMBER!!

If You Are Graduating In: | Then Your Program Ends On: | Select Any OPT Start Date Between The Following Dates:
--- | --- | ---
Spring 2019 | May 16, 2019 | May 17, 2019 – July 15, 2019
Summer 2019 | August 13, 2019 | August 14, 2019 – October 12, 2019
Fall 2019 | December 18, 2019 | December 19, 2019 - February, 16, 2020
MyOIE Portal
Upload A Copy Of Your I-94 Record

- Electronic arrival record (called I-94) MOST important immigration document you have
- Make sure all information is correct
- Proof of your F-1 status and D/S (Duration of Status)

Obtain I-94 record: www.cbp.gov/i94
Contact oie@andrew.cmu.edu if there are any mistakes!
MyOIE Portal
Upload A Copy Of OIE Advisor’s Form

Bachelors and Masters Students – Term You Will Graduate

PhD Students – Exact Date You Will Complete Requirements

Your academic advisor completes this section.
OPT CANNOT begin before this date.
MyOIE Portal – FINAL STEP

- STUDENT CERTIFICATION:
  - ONLY **CERTIFY AND SUBMIT** THIS E-FORM IF EVERYTHING IS CORRECT
  - If needed, you can save this e-form as a **DRAFT**
The Application Process: OPT Dates

• Choose dates CAREFULLY!

*CAN’T CHANGE OPT DATES AFTER APPLICATION IS MAILED TO USCIS!

• OPT Pending?

*Fine to stay in the U.S. But NO WORK without EAD Card!
Choosing Your OPT Start Date

**Early Start:**
- Work permission right after completion
- On-campus work continues

**Late Start:**
- Good if no job offer
- Consider travel plans
- Won’t cut into days of unemployment (90 days)
Choosing Your OPT Start Date

ONLY Eligible for 365 days of Post-OPT per degree level!

EXAMPLE:

“Andrew will graduate in Spring 2019. He selected 7/8/2019 as his OPT start date. Andrew’s OPT’s end date would then be 7/7/2020.”

Remember! If you applied for a period of Pre-Completion OPT, you must deduct that time from your 12-months of Post-OPT.

• Part-time pre-OPT deducted at ½ rate.
• Full-time pre-OPT deducted at full rate.

• NOTE: If you choose less than 12 months, only way to “redeem” remainder of 12 months is to go back to school, complete another program (at same level) and reapply for OPT
## Choosing Your OPT Start Date

**REMEMBER!!**

### Please Confirm

- **Personal E-mail Address (non-Andrew):**
- **Requested OPT Start Date:**
- **Requested OPT End Date:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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PhD Students: Potential End Dates

- Date of defense
- Date corrections will be completed
- Date you turn in dissertation and committee signs off
- **OR** Employment start date (if you have passed the qualifiers)

PhD students need to apply for Post-OPT no earlier than 90 days before one of the above examples of end dates, and no later than 60 days after that date.
Program End Date
On OPT I-20

Last Day of Work at CMU!
ARE YOU WORKING ON-CAMPUS!?!?

Then, if your Program End Date has changed, you **MUST** give a copy of your New OPT I-20 to CMUWorks and your CMU Department Payroll Administrator!!

*(ONLY if your Program End Date has changed!!)*

REMEMBER, ALL WORK MUST STOP ON THIS DATE! Unless – you have an approved EAD card and are within the dates listed on the card!
If there is a **GAP** between your Program END DATE and your EAD CARD START DATE...

Program End Date
May 16, 2019

**HOWEVER – NO WORK** can be done during this Gap (for example – in red)

*YOU are still in a Valid STATUS inside the U.S. While OPT Application is **PENDING**

OPT Start Date on your EAD Card is July 8, 2019
YOU CAN NOW ONLY WORK WITHIN THE TIME FRAME ON YOUR EAD (For example - in green)

OPT Start Date on your EAD Card: July 8, 2019

OPT End Date on your EAD Card: July 7, 2020
When Can I Pick-Up My New OPT I-20?

- You will receive an email once your OPT I-20 is ready for pick-up at OIE.
- However, your OPT I-20 will **NEVER** be ready prior to the dates listed below.

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OPT I-20: The 30 Day Rule!!

OPT application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date your OPT I-20 is issued.

Be ready to file when you turn in your request!

I-20 more than 30 days past issuance date = OPT DENIED!
I-20 Page 2

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**OPT Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>FULL/PART-TIME</th>
<th>STATUS REQUESTED</th>
<th>START DATE</th>
<th>END DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POST-COMPLETION OPT</td>
<td>FULL TIME</td>
<td>REQUESTED</td>
<td>17 May 2019</td>
<td>16 May 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change of Status/CAP-GAP Extension**

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Authorized Reduced Course Load**

<p>| | | | | |</p>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Travel Endorsement**

This page should be used for reentry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each certification signature is valid for one year.

Signature: [Signature]

Date Issued: 7-2-2015

Place Issued: Pittsburgh

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Travel Signature should be updated every 6 months *during* OPT.
EAD’s Issued After Start Date Requested

• You requested OPT dates of 5/17/2019 to 5/16/2020

**But**

• **IF** USCIS does not process your application until 7/29/19
  Then your EAD card will have new dates 7/29/19 to 7/14/20

*Your Post-Completion OPT EAD card end date will **NEVER** go beyond 14 months from your program completion end date!*

**NO WORK** until EAD received and you are within start and end dates on EAD!
Timing of Your Application

Be aware of processing times:

• Up to 3 to 5 months to be approved...

  ..or longer if application is returned, something is missing, etc...

• **Cannot Expedite OPT!!** Trying can slow the process!

NOTE: Always check [https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/](https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/) for most up-to-date processing times. Select “I-765...” & “Potomac Service Center” from the drop-down menus.
What do I include with my application?

Include **ALL** Materials on PAGE 1 in **OPT handout**.
What Do I Include?

- **G-1145** form
- Check for $410 (payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security) **OR**,
  - **Form G-1450** – to pay by Credit Card
- **Two U.S. passport-sized photos** *(No Glasses)*
- Completed, signed **I-765** form
- **Copies** of all I-20s issued to you
- Copy of passport
- Copy of F-1 visa stamp
- Copy of I-94 record ([www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94))
- Copy of previous EAD (if you’ve applied for OPT before)

**Items are listed on page 1 of the OPT handout!!**
G-1145 Form

Complete this form and clip it on top of the first page of your immigration form(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant/Petitioner Full Last Name</th>
<th>Applicant/Petitioner Full First Name</th>
<th>Applicant/Petitioner Full Middle Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your LAST NAME</td>
<td>Your First Name</td>
<td>Your Middle Name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E-mail Address</th>
<th>Mobile Phone Number (Text Message)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:xxxxxxx@gmail.com">xxxxxxx@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>412-123-4567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• G-1145 - first page of application

• Free to file

• More like 2-4 weeks...

• Disregard form expiration date – be sure to download from uscis.gov

When Will I Be Notified?

USCIS will notify you within 24 hours of accepting your immigration form(s).

Form G-1145

OMB No. 1615-0109
Expires 09/30/2014
Preparing Your Check

Your Name
123 Street Name
City, State, Zip Code
(123) 456-7890

mm/dd/yyyy

PAY TO THE ORDER OF U.S. Department of Homeland Security $410.00
four hundred and ten dollars only

Sign Your Name Here
Preparing Your Check

Leave the back **BLANK**
G-1450 Form

If you wish to pay by credit card – please fill-out at attached the G-1450 Form to your application.

“Petitioner is person applying for the OPT

Card Holders Information Can be your information or a friends -> enter that information here.

Make sure “Card Holder” SIGNS the form!

Type or Print in Black Ink
Preparing Your Application: Photos

OIE Cannot Check Photos!

• Write your name AND I-94 # on the back of the photos!
  –Write lightly – don’t damage the photo!!
• Make sure they are the correct size!
• Photos taken within past 30 days!!
• NO glasses!
• White or off-white background with no shadows!

Well Composed Photo Composition Examples
Preparing Your Application: Tips

• You can include your check & photos in a white envelope, marked with your name and I-94 number:

• Attach to application – don’t staple photos!
New I-765 FORM!!

**DO NOT** use an old I-765 from a previous OPT application!

https://www.uscis.gov/i-765

- **Complete:**
  - Form fillable pdf
  - Handwrite in black ink
Form I-765

Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):

1.a.  [ ] Initial permission to accept employment.

1.b.  [ ] Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.

NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to Replacement for Card Error in the What is the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.

1.c.  [ ] Renewal of my permission to accept employment.

(Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)

Check the box: “Permission to accept employment...”
Form I-765

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)
1.b. Given Name (First Name)
1.c. Middle Name

Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in Part 6. Additional Information.

2.a. Family Name (Last Name)
2.b. Given Name (First Name)
2.c. Middle Name

3.a. Family Name (Last Name)
3.b. Given Name (First Name)
3.c. Middle Name

4.a. Family Name (Last Name)
4.b. Given Name (First Name)
4.c. Middle Name

Only complete this section if your name has legally changed. i.e. You updated your passport with a new name, etc...
Form I-765

Follow the below instructions **ONLY** if you will use a friend or family member's address on the I-765.

- If you believe you will change addresses within the next three months, you are advised to list the address of a trusted friend or family member.
- If you choose to enter your friend or family member's address, you **MUST** fill in 5.a, 5.b, 5.c, 5.d, 5.e with this person's U.S. address.

- You would then check box “NO”

- You will now enter **YOUR** current U.S. address to where you are living at the time you submit your application to USCIS.

**PLEASE NOTE:** YOU CANNOT USE OIE’S ADDRESS!
Form I-765

If you know that you WILL BE at your current address for 3 to 5 months after submitting your OPT application to USCIS – then follow the directions below.

- Enter a US address (where you will be located in the next 3 to 5 months)

- You would check box “YES” – if this is the same as your current physical address.
  - You would check “NO” if this mailing address is not the same as you listed for questions 5.a to 5.

- Enter your current US address – where you are currently living.

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 6, provide your physical address below.
8. Leave Blank
9. Leave Blank
10. Check Gender Listed On Your Passport
11. Check Marital Status
12. Have You Filed an I-765 Before? Check Appropriate Answer
Form I-765

13.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?

- Yes
- No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 13.a., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 13.a., provide the information requested in Item Number 13.b.

13.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known).

14. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? (You must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15., Consent for Disclosure, to receive a card.)

- Yes
- No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 14., skip to Part 2. Item Number 18.a. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 14., you must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15.

15. Consent for Disclosure: I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.

- Yes
- No

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Numbers 14. - 15., provide the information requested in Item Numbers 16.a. - 17.b.

13.a: Do you have a Social Security Number? Check Appropriate Answer

13.b: Enter SSN Number

**ONLY** if you answered **NO** for 13.a, **and** would like an SSN Number **and** will be at address used on I-765 -> Then complete questions **14, 15, 16.a to 17.b**
18.a: Enter Country of Passport

18.b: Leave Blank – **Unless** – You Hold Two Passports

19.a: to 19.c: Enter Needed Information

20: Enter Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)
Form I-765

21.a: Write in I-94 Number
https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home
21.b: Passport Number
21.c: Leave Blank
21.d: Enter Country on Passport
21.e: Passport Expiration Date
22 and 23: Refer to your latest port of entry stamp in your passport

Please Note:
**ANY** U.S. **Point of Entry** outside the U.S. – Where you enter through immigration

24: “F-1 Student”
25: “F-1 Student”
26: SEVIS Number
27: Write Post Completion OPT code: (c)(3)(B)

SKIP Questions 28 through 31.b

*Check Options 1.a to 2 As They Apply To You

3: Current US Phone Number
4: Current US Mobile Number
5: Current “Personal” Email Address – NOT Your Andrew Email
Form I-765

Please Note: You should **ONLY** complete pages 5, 6 and 7 **IF** they apply to you (See next slide!).

If they **DO NOT** apply, then **Leave Blank.**

However, **INCLUDE ALL 7 PAGES OF THE I-765** in your OPT application to USCIS.

*Sign within lines in dark blue ink*

---

**Applicant’s Signature**

7.a. Applicant’s Signature

7.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

**NOTE TO ALL APPLICANTS:** If you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents listed in the Instructions, USCIS may deny your application.
Form I-765

If you have had:
• Curricular Practical Training (CPT) AND/OR
• Optional Practical Training (OPT) AND (if applicable)
• A Previous SEVIS ID # in the past -> then complete 1.a, 1.b, and 1.c -> Leave #2 Blank and then follow the sample picture
> 3.a. and 4.a write:
  *Page Number – 3
  *Part Number – 2
  *Item Number – 27
>(if applies to you) 5.a write:
  *Page Number – 3
  *Part Number – 2
  *Item Number – 26
If ALL or NONE of the above applies to you,
INCLUDE ALL 7 PAGES OF THE I-765 IN YOUR OPT APPLICATION TO USCIS.
Required **Photocopies** of Documents

- **I-94 printout**
  (https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home)
  - OR White I-94 card (front & back)

- Photo page of passport

- Most recent F-1 visa stamp

- **ALL I-20s ever issued** (including OPT)
  - Sign all I-20s before copying
Optional Cover Letter

Sample OPT Cover Letter

[DATE OF REQUEST]

[STUDENT NAME]:
[SEVIS ID NUMBER]:
[OPT REQUESTED: PRE or POST-COMPLETION or STEM]
[OPT DATES REQUESTED]:

Dear USCIS Officer:
Please accept this cover letter for my F-1 [PRE or POST-COMPLETION or STEM] Practical Training request. I am writing this letter because [REASON FOR LETTER].

Enclosed, please find my [PRE or POST-COMPLETION or STEM] application materials.

Please contact me if you require additional information or documentation to process this request.

Sincerely,

[signature of student]

[name of student]

• Cover letter **not required**, unless something is missing or further explanation is required:
  • Missing I-20
  • Missing EAD
Dependents in F-2 Status

• F-2 dependents **will** receive a new I-20

**F-2 documents NOT submitted in OPT application**

• F-2(s) Must ALWAYS Travel with:
  – New F-2 I-20
  – Copies of F-1’s Documents (OPT I-20, EAD card(s), Job Offer Letter)
Make A Copy of ENTIRE Application!!

You will need this information in the future!
Scan, copy, etc...
But make sure it is a copy of the entire application.
On I-765 (#3), if you use an address in:

Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, DC, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia

USCIS
Attn: NFB AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121
Business, Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067
Mailing your Application: FedEx/UPS

On I-765 (#3), if you use an address in:


USCIS
Attn: NFB AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034
Mailing your Application: FedEx/UPS

If you mail your application with ANY SERVICE other than FedEx or UPS...

Please find that specific lockbox here

DO NOT MAIL Regular Mail!
What Happens After You Send In Your Application to USCIS?

You should receive from USCIS:

• Text message or email with case number
  o (within 2 to 4 weeks)
• Paper Receipt Notice
  o (within 4 weeks)
• Approval Notice
  o (3-5 months)
• EAD card
  o (3-5 months)

Remain Patient!!
If You Make a Mistake on Your Application...

DON’T PANIC!

Contact OIE!
And **NEVER** Send in Duplicate Applications!
Case Status Online: [www.uscis.gov]

Case was received on November 3, 2014. On that date, your Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, Receipt Number EAC: was received. A receipt notice has been sent to you describing how we will process your case. Please follow the instructions in the receipt notice. If you do not receive your receipt notice by December 3, 2014, please call Customer Service at 1-800-375-5283. If you move, go to [www.uscis.gov/addresschange] to give us your new mailing address.

Case will stay in “received” status until approved.
Keeping Records & Maintaining Status

Job **MUST** be related to level & field of study at CMU

Keep documentation of employment for *your* records:

- Employer/company
- Employer address
- # hours per week
- Job description
- Supervisor contact info

- Paid work: Paystubs, W-2 forms, etc.
- Unpaid work: Employer letters

**NOTE:** Employer **MAY NOT** be able to write letter for unpaid work – **check before starting job!**
Is your Post-OPT Approved?

Yes

Do you have your Post-EAD Card?

Yes

Have you registered with immigration using the SEVP Portal?

Yes

- Then you can update any of the below using the SEVP Portal.
  - Add and Edit Employer Information
    - **NOTE:** you should only delete an employer if you have NEVER worked for them.
  - Residential Address
  - Personal Contact Information

You **MUST** report **ANY** changes in employer, address, etc...

within **10 days of ANY Change**: 

Be specific—this information is reported **DIRECTLY** to immigration (SEVIS)
Keeping Records & Maintaining Status

I Reported To Immigration...

Do I Need A New I-20?

- **Updated Residential Address?**
  - No new I-20 is needed

- **Updated Personal Contact Information?**
  - No new I-20 is needed

- **Updated Employer?**
  - At this time, if you update your information through the SEVP Portal and would like an updated I-20, **you must also complete the required sections of the OIE OPT Reporting Form**

Have questions about reporting? Read the SEVP Portal Guide.
90 Day Unemployment Rule

You may not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment during the Post-Completion OPT...if more than 90 days...

Your SEVIS record will be terminated

OPT and F-1 status ends!

The start date listed on your EAD is when either:

- Employment starts
- Unemployment clock starts

*Employment (Full-Time) from an Immigration Stand-Point =

- MUST work 20 hours a week or MORE for a job to count as employment on OPT.
Travel

“I’m traveling before...”

• If you have applied for OPT and travel outside the U.S. before your program end-date:
  • You will travel with the usual:
    ✓ Passport
    ✓ I-20 (New OPT I-20)
    ✓ Unexpired Visa
    ✓ Enrollment Verification Letter from The HUB (Optional)

“But when I travel after I have applied for OPT – my I-94 record will change...”

• This is expected – And does not affect your OPT Application
Travel While on OPT

*After Program End Date Listed on OPT I-20

ALWAYS TRAVEL WITH:

- Passport
- I-20 *(Most Recently Issued I-20!)*
  - Employer information Report to Immigration
  - (Your travel signature should be less than 6 months old at the time of travel)
- F-1 visa sticker
  - Valid AND unexpired for re-entry...except for Canadians
- EAD
- Job Offer Letter
  - Check I.C.E.’s website for updated guidance on travel.
Travel

EAD says not valid for re-entry!
  • Don’t worry!
  • This means not Valid for re-entry alone!

Canada and Mexico + adjacent islands?
  • 30-day exception for expired US visa
    - *unless you apply for and are denied a US visa*
  • Called Automatic Visa Revalidation

➢ DO NOT ENTER THE US AS A TOURIST!
  ➢ This will END your F-1 Status and OPT!
Travel

• H-1B application pending?
  • **CONSULT** your H employer!

• **Travel questions**
  (need a new visa, etc.)?
  • Consult an OIE advisor
My Post-Completion OPT Plan Guide

**OPT Application Period**
- **OIE Preferred Submission Date of OPT e-form** 100 days before program completion date
- Apply to USCIS up to 90 days before program completion date
- **OPT Application** MUST be received by USCIS before the end of the 60 day Grace Period

**OPT Authorization Period**
- **OPT Start Date** can be any day during 60 day grace period
- YOU’RE ON OPT!! (BUT REMAIN IN F-1 STATUS)

**OPT Grace Period**
- After Post-OPT has ended you can transfer, change status, or leave U.S.
- NO WORK unless authorized for STEM extension or change of status (Cap-Gap)

**100 Days**
- **90 Days**
- **60 Days**
- **12 Months**
- **60 Days**
Options After Your Initial Post-OPT Expires

- **H-1B Temporary Work Visa**
- **24-month STEM Extension**
H-1B Temporary Work Visa

Private Sector:
• H-1B effective start date is Oct 1\textsuperscript{st}.
• The H-1B “CAP” or quota
  • 65,000 annually available to employers April 1\textsuperscript{st} (6 months in advance).
  • 20,000 additional H-1B spaces set aside for advanced degree holders.

Universities and Non-Profits:
• Not subject to Cap.
• University/Non-Profits employers can apply at any time for any start date.
Cap-Gap Extension

• If H-1B is *timely* filed:
  • Between April 1 and before the end of your OPT
  • Then your OPT is **AUTOMATICALLY** extended from the end of your OPT to September 30 of the year filed

• **Does your employer want a new I-20?**
  • Directions of how to request a “Cap-Gap I-20” is on our [website](#)
H-1B / OPT Timeline (EXAMPLE)

2020

OPT Start
Date on your EAD Card
May 17, 2019

OPT End
Date on your EAD Card
May 16, 2020

Cap-Gap Highlighted in Yellow

H-1B Filing Year Opens on
April 1, 2020

Start Date of H-1B
October 1, 2020
H-1B vs. OPT

OPT is *based on your degree*

- If you don’t like your job, you can start working somewhere else using your OPT.

H-1B is directly linked to your employer

- If you don’t like your job and decide to quit, you will have no status.
- Once H is approved, OPT is ended and F-1 is complete.
24-Month STEM Extension

Am I eligible?

To be eligible you MUST:

1. Have your most recent degree in a **STEM designated field**
   - CHECK the Major Code(s)/(cip code) on your I-20 NOW!

2. Be in the initial Post-Completion OPT period

3. Have a job or job offer with an **e-verify** employer, that is paid employment
24-Month STEM Extension

How do you apply?
Submit a 24-month STEM I-20 request to OIE
Can be done remotely!
-Directions on our website

Mail STEM application to USCIS
Must reach USCIS:
• Within 90 days of EAD Card end date
• Before end of Post-OPT period
Office of International Education
Posner Hall, 1st Floor
412-268-5231
www.cmu.edu/oie