



# NORTHWESTERN STATE

*International Student Resource Center and Study Abroad*

## After Post-Completion OPT is Approved

Overview - Once USCIS approves the OPT:

- ✓ You will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card.
- ✓ You cannot begin work until you have received the EAD.
- ✓ The EAD will explicitly state the beginning and end dates you are authorized to work.
- ✓ All OPT employment must be directly related to your major field of study and occur within the periods of authorized employment as shown on the EAD.

Reporting Requirements

**Step 1: Make a copy/scan of your EAD for your records.**

**Step 2: Report Employment and Unemployment.**

- ✓ The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will send a unique-to-you link to your personal email.
- ✓ You will have to create an SEVP Portal Account. The email will be sent from [do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov). Please always check your Spam, Junk, or Trash folders to see if this email gets redirected.
- ✓ This email is sent sometime between the time your OPT is approved and your EAD start date.
- ✓ Follow the instructions in that email immediately upon receipt and create your SEVP Portal Account. This link expires in 14 days. If the link expires, contact our office to reset it.
- ✓ When you start your job or if you change employer, you must update your profile within 10 days of your start day at the job, failure to do so can result in the termination of your OPT work authorization.
- ✓ When updating your profile, do not delete previous Post-Completion OPT employer information already in the portal.

**Step 3: Report All U.S. Address and Telephone Number Changes**

- ✓ Throughout the OPT period, you are required by law to use the SEVP Portal to update any changes in US address or phone number within 10 days of the change.

Keep in mind:

- ✓ Once your start date has begun, you must begin reporting information on all your job positions (start and end dates, paid or unpaid positions, name and addresses of employers, unemployment, etc.)
- ✓ Be sure to maintain copies of all OPT materials, including job descriptions, for your personal records.
- ✓ **Failure to comply with your responsibilities while on OPT may result in the loss of your immigration status. To the U.S. Government, you are solely responsible for maintaining your legal status in the U.S.**

**Unemployment days:** while on OPT, **you are permitted a maximum of 90 unemployment days between the start and end date on their EAD card.** The SEVIS system automatically calculates unemployment days, **this is why you need to update your portal as soon as you begin to work.** If you exceed the 90-day unemployment limit begin to accrue unlawful presence, which may risk the access to future immigration benefits.

**Grace period:** when your OPT permit ends, you have a 60-day grace period in which you prepare to leave the U.S., apply for a change of immigration status, or transfer your F-1 status to begin a new academic program.

**STEM OPT:** If you graduated from a specialized degree in qualifying STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields and have a job offer from an E-Verify employer, you are eligible for an additional, 24-month extension of your OPT work authorization.

**REQUIRED UPDATES.** The following information **must** be reported on your SEVIS Portal during the post-completion OPT period within 10 days of any changes:

- Your residential address
- Your phone and e-mail address
- Employer(s) name
- Employer(s) address
- Job Title(s)
- Explanation of how your job(s) relates to your field of study at NSU
- Start and/or end dates of employment
- Any periods of unemployment
- Date of exiting the U.S. (You must provide date of exit if you decide to exit the U.S and complete your OPT status prior to the end date of your OPT)
- If your visa status changes while on OPT

**TRAVELING ABROAD WHILE ON PRACTICAL TRAINING.** The EAD says “Not valid for Travel” of the face of the EAD, which means it cannot be used alone to re-enter the US. In order to re-enter the US while on OPT, you must have:

1. **Valid passport**
  2. **Valid F-1 visa in your passport.**
  3. **OPT I-20 signed within the last six months.**
  4. **EAD (OPT work card)**
  5. **Offer letter of employment from your employer.** While a job offer letter is not required to obtain OPT, it is highly recommended that students who travel have a job offer letter with them when re-entering the US.
  6. **Dependent Travel:** An F-2 dependent must carry copies of the F-1 student’s I-20 with the OPT recommendation, EAD and job offer letter, in addition to the F-2 I-20 (endorsed within 6 months of re-entry to the US on page 2).
  7. **NEVER ENTER the US in any VISA STATUS OTHER THAN F-1** while on OPT (it will invalidate OPT)
- **90 DAYS OF UNEMPLOYMENT RULE.** You may not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment during the 12 months of OPT. If you are unemployed for more than 90 days, OPT and F status ends. **IMPORTANT: Unpaid** work is acceptable by USCIS but unless it’s truly VOLUNTEER work, there could be problems with US labor law.

If you need assistance with this process, please visit the SEVP Portal Help Website, email [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov), or call the SEVP Response Center at (703) 603-3400 or 1-800-892-4829 between the hours of 8am-6pm ET Monday through Friday, except U.S. holidays.