



**International Student Program**

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## POST COMPLETION OPT INFORMATION

The following contains important information for you while you are on Post-Completion OPT:

### **Employment Authorization Card (EAD) Card:**

Once you have received your EAD card, please either send us a copy or stop by our office so that we may make a copy of this important document for your school file. Please be sure to check your EAD card and make sure your name and employment dates are correct. If they are not, please contact us immediately.

### **Employment:**

You are allowed to work **ONLY** after you have received your EAD card and only **ON** or **AFTER** the employment date listed on your EAD card.

As a reminder, you must work in a job that is related to your degree program. You must also work at least 20 hours per week while on post-completion OPT. There is no maximum number of hours that you may be employed.

### **Registration:**

Once you have found employment, please complete our **OPT Registration form** available on our International student website under "Forms". We are required to use this information to update your SEVIS record. Please also include a letter from your employer that states your position, address of the business, your work hours, and dates of employment.

### **Change of Address:**

You are still required to report a change of your address to the International Student Program office within 10 days of your move. Please complete our "Change of Address Form" located on our website under "Forms".

### **Limits on Days of Unemployment:**

In order to keep your legal student status in the United States, you are allowed to accrue up to a **total 90 days of unemployment**. Each day (including week-ends) during the period when OPT authorization begins and ends that you do not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment. The only exception is that periods of up to 10 days between the end of one job and the beginning of the next job are not included in the calculation of time spent unemployed. This 10 day exception also applies to the first 10 days from the start date on the student's EAD.

If you are unable to find employment in a job that is related to your degree program, you may keep your legal status by "working" as a volunteer or unpaid intern in a job that is related to your degree program. This work should be at least 20 hours per week. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires that you be able to provide evidence,

acquired from your employer to verify that you worked at least 20 hours per week during this period of employment.

### **Social Security Number:**

As soon as you receive your OPT, we recommend that you take your EAD card to the Social Security Administration (SSA) office in Hayward and apply for a Social Security Number. Note that it typically takes 2 weeks to obtain your card and you will need to show your number to your employer in order to work in the U.S.

### **Travel:**

If you wish to travel and seek re-entry to the U.S. while on Post-Completion OPT, you will need the following:

- a valid passport (valid for at least 6 months into the future)
- a valid visa (except for Canadian citizens)
- Original I-20 with a travel endorsement signature from Cindy or Sean. Despite what it states on page 3 of your I-20, this signature must be within 6 months (and not 1 year). We always recommend that you obtain this travel endorsement each time you travel.
- EAD card. Your card will state: "NOT VALID FOR REENTRY TO THE US". This means that the EAD card alone will not suffice for reentry to the U.S. If you have applied for Post Completion OPT and have graduated, **do not leave the U.S. until you have received your EAD card.**
- It is strongly recommended that you also take evidence of a job offer in the form of a letter from your employer that states that you are or will be employed by that company. You may also provide proof of volunteering/ internship. Not having this letter may make it difficult for you to return to the U.S.
- Proof of sufficient funds in the form of a bank statement from you or your sponsor if your employment letter does not specify a salary.

Also, keep in mind that time spent outside the U.S. during an approved period of post-completion OPT counts as unemployment against the 90 day limit, unless the leave is authorized by an employer or you are traveling as part of your employment.

### **Health Insurance:**

While it is not required, we **strongly recommend** that you continue to purchase health insurance coverage while you are in the United States to protect you from the high cost of medical care and to ensure that you can receive the care that you need.

### **Student Health Center:**

You are **NOT** allowed to use the Student Health Center while you are on Post Completion OPT since our contract with Valley Care states this service is only available to students currently enrolled in courses. If you wish to continue to have access to our Student Health Center (to obtain care or discounts on your health insurance deductibles) you may consider enrolling in a 0.5 or 1 unit Physical Education class. You would need to pay for this course and the additional health center and other fees of \$23 per semester.