



Applicant Information (OPT)

Information for students who have applied for OPT

INFORMATION FOR OPT APPLICANTS

Now that you have are ready to submit your complete OPT application, here are a few important regulations and reminders.

EVENT	GUIDANCE/NOTES	DATES (Office Use Only)
OPT I-20 Issued	This is the date your new OPT I-20 was issued.	[MM][DD][YYYY]
Application Received Deadline	Once your new OPT I-20 is issued, your application must be received by USCIS by this date.	[MM][DD][YYYY]

NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS ON OPT

- Provide a Photocopy of Your EAD/Report the Application Outcome to Academic Affairs Within 10 days of Notification.**
Regulations require students to notify the Office of Academic Affairs regarding the outcome of their OPT application. If employment is authorized: fax, scan/email, mail or deliver a copy of both sides of the Employment Authorization Document card. If employment is not authorized: fax, scan/email, mail or deliver a copy of the notification letter accordingly.
- Notify Academic Affairs within 10 days of Accepting a Job Offer.**
Federal regulations require the Office of Academic Affairs to enter employer name and address information in SEVIS.
- Notify the Office of Academic Affairs within 10 days of Any Change of Address or Employment.**
While a student is on OPT, they are still considered an F-1 student under St. John Fisher College’s sponsorship. Federal regulations require students to continue reporting changes to Academic Affairs while engaging in OPT. Failure to do so is a violation of F-1 student status. Specifically, students must report any changes to:
 - Employer’s name or address;
 - Any change in address (U.S. or foreign). Academic Affairs also recommends providing updates for change of phone/email information to maintain student contact;
 - OPT termination. If a student chooses to terminate OPT, transfer to another academic program, travel home, etc., they must notify Academic Affairs immediately.

JOB REQUIREMENT & UNEMPLOYMENT

During post-completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon maintaining continuous employment. During any 12-month period of standard post-completion OPT, no student may be unemployed for an aggregate of **90 days** or more. There is no unemployment provision for pre-completion OPT.

- Unpaid or volunteer/intern work is considered valid OPT employment. [SEVP’s OPT Policy Guidance](#) states: "Students may work as volunteers or unpaid interns (in a field directly related to their program of study), where this practice does not violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week for students on post-completion OPT. All students are advised to keep records, acquired from the student’s employer, to verify hours and days worked during the period of employment.
- While it is not currently the school’s responsibility to calculate or report unemployment time in SEVIS, the potential consequence of violating the 90 day unemployment provision may be severe. Students may be denied future immigration benefits if DHS determines they have exceeded these unemployment limitations.

OPT TRAVEL & REENTRY

Students applying, or approved for post-completion OPT are advised to contact Academic Affairs prior to traveling outside of the U.S. to receive an updated travel signature on pg. 3 of their I-20 and to discuss important reentry considerations.

Note: while engaging in OPT, the travel signature is valid for a period of 6 months from the date signed.

1. Travel and Reentry While Post-Completion OPT Request is Still Pending

Travel outside of the U.S. while a post-completion OPT application is pending can be risky and is not recommended if unnecessary. SEVP guidance states “before your EAD is used you can reenter the U.S. to resume looking for a job; after your EAD is issued you can only reenter the U.S. to resume employment.” If a student leaves the U.S. before they are authorized to

OPT

work and the application is approved while they are abroad, they may be denied re-entry to the United States if they do not yet have an offer of employment. If a student must travel while their application is pending, it is recommended they travel with the following:

- A. Current SEVIS Form I-20 properly endorsed for travel by the international advisor within the previous 6 months;
- B. Valid passport and visa;
- C. I-765 receipt notice of application filed, as proof of eligibility for the F-1 visa.

2. Travel and Re-entry During Post-Completion OPT

A student approved for OPT following completion of studies who is traveling outside the United States temporarily (i.e., less than 5 months) can be readmitted to resume employment for the remainder of the period of authorized employment, provided the student can present the following:

- A. Current SEVIS Form I-20 properly endorsed for travel by the international advisor within the previous 6 months;
- B. Valid passport and visa;
- C. Valid, unexpired EAD card;
- D. Proof of continuing employment. Students are advised to carry a letter from their employer verifying proof of employment or a job offer with dates of employment and contact information provided.

3. Travel During Pre-Completion OPT

An F-1 student engaged in pre-completion OPT follows the same procedure for visits abroad and re-entry as all F-1 students.

POST OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING OPTIONS

Students have a 60 day grace period following completion of POST-completion OPT to either:

- A. Prepare for departure;
- B. Transfer to a new school or degree level; or
- C. Apply for a change of status.

NOTE: Students are not permitted to leave the U.S. and reenter during their grace period and should plan accordingly.