



**Student Reporting Responsibilities & Travel Resources for
Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

EAD Card

You may begin working once:

- (A) you have obtained the EAD card (you may not begin employment if your OPT has been approved but you have not yet received the EAD in the mail)
- (B) **and** the begin date on the card has been reached.

The EAD is not employer specific, so you may change or add employers, however, all employment must be directly related to the field of studies. Any employment outside your field of study is considered unauthorized employment and is a violation of your F-1 status. You must submit a copy of your EAD card to the Office of International Affairs, via email: international@northpark.edu. If there is a mistake on your EAD card, please contact the Office of International Affairs for further guidance.

Types of Employment

Post-completion OPT employment can be:

- Paid employment or unpaid employment, at least 20 hours/week
- Multiple employers: Students may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to the student's degree program.
- Short-term multiple employers (performing artists): The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration.
- Work for hire/contract work/1099 employment
- Self-employed business owner (must have proper business licenses)
- Employment through an agency
- Unpaid internship/volunteer **not recommended, but acceptable in the case paid employment cannot be obtained.*

Unemployment

Students on post-completion OPT are only allowed a total of 90 days of unemployment. Unemployment time is counted each day during the OPT dates indicated on the EAD when you have not reported an employer through the SEVP Portal or OIA. The SEVP Portal should display your total number of accrued unemployment days. If you exceed 90 days of unemployment while on post-completion OPT, you have violated your status. If you cannot find employment, you may have the following options: (1) continue your education by a change of level or transferring to another institution or (2) depart the U.S. Please contact OIA for advice.

SEVP Portal

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) Portal is an online tool that F-1 students on OPT can use to comply with reporting requirements. Students will receive an email around their approved start date, with instructions to create an account. Please refer to the [Study in the States: Create an SEVP Portal Account](#) page on how to do this. You will be required to log into the SEVP portal to enter your employer information and update your contact information. If you fail to enter employer information, you will accrue unemployment days. Please review the [SEVP Portal Introduction](#) to learn more.

OPT Reporting Responsibilities

Students on OPT must report the following within 10 days of the change via the SEVP Portal:

- Your physical address
- Your mailing address (if different from your physical address)
- Your phone number
- Your employment information (e.g. employer name/location/contact information, job title)

If you have questions about making updates or need to update your name and email address, please reach out to the Office of International Affairs.

Documenting OPT Employment

It is recommended that you keep documentation of all your employment. In the future, you may be asked to provide proof of your detailed employment history during OPT. Your documentation should ideally include an offer letter from your employer HR or manager containing the following information: position held, proof of the duration of that position, the job title, the hours worked per week, contact information for your supervisor or manager, and description of the work. Keep this in your personal records, along with copies of your OPT application materials, receipts, I-20, and EAD card.

Travel

While your OPT application is processing: If you are still waiting for your OPT approval and EAD card, we do not recommend travel outside of the U.S. It is possible, but generally not recommend. If you need to travel outside of the U.S., please set up an appointment with the Office of International Affairs to discuss the risk and the necessary documentation you must bring.

If you are on OPT AND have your EAD card, you can travel outside of the U.S. Please make sure to bring the following documentation with you in your carry-on bag:

- (1) Form I-20 with a valid travel signature from within the past **6 months**
- (2) Unexpired EAD card
- (3) Valid passport
- (4) Valid F-1 visa*
- (5) OPT employment evidence (job offer or evidence of your current job)
- (6) Office of International Affairs contact information

***Note:** If your visa is expired, please consult OIA for more information and instructions on process for visa renewal on OPT. Even with the above listed documents, reentry to the U.S. is never guaranteed.

After OPT

You must stop your employment when the end date on the EAD card is reached, but may remain in the U.S. for the 60-day grace period. You have the following options after OPT:

1. If you are a STEM-designated major, you can apply for an OPT extension which grants you 24 additional months of practical training. This application must be completed within the 90 days before your OPT end date. You cannot apply after your post-completion OPT expires. Please review information on our [website](#) and the [STEM OPT Hub](#) to learn more.
2. Apply for another degree program. You will need to receive a new I-20 from your school before the 60-day grace period ends and begin the program within 5 months of your OPT End Date. Please provide OIA with a copy of your acceptance letter during the 60-day grace period and before your departure from the U.S. If you depart the U.S. before your transfer is complete, you will have to re-enter on a new SEVIS record and pay a new I-901 fee.

3. You can depart the U.S. within 60 days of the OPT end date. During your 60-day grace period, you may not study or work.