

OPT – My Responsibilities

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International Student Admissions and Programs
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Congratulations on receiving your EAD (Employment Authorization Document) also known as “OPT Card”. ISAP is excited that you have this opportunity to work in the U.S. **PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM WITHIN 10 DAYS WITH YOUR NAME & UWG ID TO: global@westga.edu**

11 Important Reminders About YOUR OPT RESPONSIBILITIES:

After reading and acknowledging this information, you will receive your EAD card.

1. **Q:** Is OPT a work visa?
A: No, OPT is an optional benefit of F1 student status. On OPT you are still in international student status, and you have temporary employment authorization, not a work visa.
2. **Q:** When and how do I report my jobs during OPT?
A: You must inform the US Government within 10 days of starting each new job. Submit the “Update Your OPT Employer” directly to SEVIS on our website at [Forms & Links](#), then Employment tab at the bottom.
3. **Q:** What if I move while in the U.S. during OPT?
A: SEVIS requires you to update your local US address within 10 days of each move. Continue to update your address in MyUWG !
4. **Q:** What if I travel outside of the U.S. and want to re-enter during OPT?
A: You will need the following each time you wish to re-enter the United States during OPT:
 - a. valid travel signature by a DSO on your I-20
 - b. valid passport and F1 visa
 - c. your original EAD/OPT card from USCIS
 - d. a support letter from your employer briefly explaining the job offer or job continuation
 - e. Note that OPT does not grant unlimited re-entry. Travel outside the US during OPT is at your own risk and should be done carefully after consulting with ISAP.
5. **Q:** What if my immigration status changes? (Ex. F1 to H1-B)
A: You must update ISAP with appropriate documentation immediately.
6. **Q:** What if I want to attend school again at UWG or at another university?
A: Contact ISAP first! Beginning a new degree program automatically cancels current OPT.

7. **Q:** Can I repeat OPT?

A: OPT can be approved once per degree level. If you choose a lower degree program, such as a Master's after being in a PhD program, you cannot request OPT for the lower level. OPT is only available at the primary (highest of the two) degree levels.

8. **Q:** What if I am unemployed during OPT?

A: 12- month OPT entitles you to 90 days of unemployment. 24 month STEM extensions receive additional 60 days of unemployment for an aggregate total of 150 days of unemployment. After these limits, you are considered in violation of OPT status, which could put your F1 or future immigration status at risk. *Source: CRF 214.2(f)(10(ii)(E))*

9. **Q:** What forms of OPT employment or practical training are acceptable?

A: You must be engaged in OPT at least 20 hours per week. There is no maximum limit, and you can work anywhere in the US in activity related to your field of study. OPT can include: regular, full-time, payroll employment, a paid or unpaid internship, volunteer work, or free-lance work.

10. **Q:** Is there a limit on my work time or earnings? What about US taxes?

A: You can work and earn as much as you want anywhere in the US if the work is related to your degree. All income earned in the U.S. is subject to U.S. income taxes, for which you must file a U.S. income tax return each Spring. Failure to file an income tax return on U.S. earned income will negatively affect future immigration status.

11. **Q:** What if I don't maintain the responsibilities summarized above?

A: Students may be denied future immigration benefits if DHS (Dept. of Homeland Security) determines that the student exceeded the limitations on unemployment. Additionally, ICE/SEVP may examine SEVIS data for an individual on post-completion OPT and terminate a student's record if it fails to show continuous employment within the limits of unemployment. In all cases, it is the student's responsibility, not ISAP's, to maintain proper status during OPT.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the above information, had an opportunity to ask questions about it, and I understand my reporting duties while on OPT.

Print: First Name and Family Name

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Signature of student receiving EAD card