**MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS**

**Update Mailing and Email Addresses**

Remember, while on OPT, you are still an F-1 student at WSU, and you are **required** by USCIS to notify WSU of any change of residential addresses (no P.O. Box) within 10 days. The address you enter in *myWSU* automatically notifies SEVIS. Please keep your current address in *myWSU* updated at all times. *myWSU log-in: Visit the WSU homepage (www.wsu.edu) and click on the myWSU link at the bottom of the page under the heading “Faculty, Staff, & Students”.*

All students will have access to myWSU and the WSU Network Log-in after their last day of attendance at WSU. If you have difficulty logging into the database, please contact the WSU IT Help Desk at (509) 335-4357, or email helpdesk@wsu.edu.

**Update Employer Information**

You are **required** to keep Global Services informed of any changes with your OPT employment during the authorized period. There are two ways to do so: 1) visit https://myPassport.wsu.edu, login, click on F-1 Optional Practical Training, and select “OPT Employment Update Form” to report your OPT employment to our office direclty; or 2) use the SEVIS portal to update the information directly in your SEVIS record. Federal regulations requires you update your SEVIS within ten days of any change.

**Checking OPT application status**

With the OPT receipt number found on your I-797, Notice of Action form, you can check your application status online. USCIS Case Status: www.uscis.gov

**UNEMPLOYMENT WHILE ON OPT**

Students who are authorized for post-completion OPT should not accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment during the 12-month OPT period. Students are advised to retain any documentation of OPT employment. This includes keeping copies of earning statements or any documentation of volunteer activities.

We also recommend documenting your days of unemployment and actions that you are taking to obtain employment, especially if you will be traveling during the time of unemployment.

**Traveling outside the U.S.**

**Essential Documents for Re-entry**

* A valid passport
* A valid\* F-1 visa
* OPT I-20 endorsed by Global Services **within the previous six (6) months**
* OPT receipt (I-797, Notice of Action), when OPT is pending,or EAD card (once OPT is approved)
* A letter from your employer verifying employment (once OPT is approved)

\*For trips shorter than 30-days to Canada, Mexico or Adjacent Islands, you may be able to reenter the U.S. on an expired visa. Some exceptions do apply. For more information, refer to Question 2-E at www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/. For information about visa renewal, visit the Global Services website at ip.wsu.edu.

**While OPT is Still Pending**

*As there is an increased risk with re-entry without an EAD card in hand, our office advices against traveling abroad while your OPT application is still pending*. However, according to the Department of Homeland Security, an F-1 student who has applied for OPT may travel outside the U.S. while the application is pending and receipted. You are required to have a valid U.S. visa to re-enter. If you do not have a valid F-1 visa, you will need to obtain one. If your F-1 visa is expired, an OPT receipt notice as proof of eligibility for a new visa in addition to a properly endorsed OPT I-20 is required.

**Once OPT is Approved**

If you travel outside the U.S., you should carrry a valid Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) and a job offer letter. Failure to do so will increase your risk of being denied re-entry. If you travel without a valid EAD card, you are assuming risk upon re-entry. Additional risk is incurred if you travel without employment.

**F-2 Travel**

When F-2 dependent(s) travel unaccompanied outside the U.S. while the F-1 student is engaged in OPT, they should carry the following items **in addition to their own immigration documents for re-entry.**

* A copy of your OPT I-20
* A copy of your OPT receipt (Form I-797, Notice of Action)
* A copy of your EAD card (once OPT is approved)
* A copy of your letter from OPT employer (once OPT is approved)

**WITHDRAWing OPT application**

If you have decided not to engage in OPT, please notify your Global Services advisor immediately. Your advisor will request a withdrawal of your OPT through USCIS as long as your OPT start date has not been reached. You will receive a letter of acknowledgement from USCIS once your OPT cancellation is processed. There is no refund of the OPT application fee.

**SOCIAL SECURITY CARD**

If you don’t have a social security number (SSN), you will need one to get paid in the U.S. Not all

F-1 students are eligible for a SSN, but if you have been issued an EAD card, you can apply for a SSN card at your nearest Social Security Administration (SSA) office.

**Required ORIGINAL Documents for SSN Application**

* A valid passport
* A F-1 visa stamp or change of status approval
* I-94 card
* OPT I-20
* EAD card

**When starting a job on Opt**

Your EAD card and I-20 with OPT recommendation allow you to engage in employment within your major field of study during the authorized period specified on your EAD card. When you begin your OPT job, you should provide your employer with a copy of immigration documents (valid passport, EAD card, OPT I-20, etc.) to complete the Form I-9 [Employment Eligibility Verification].

**To maintain status after OPT Ends**

**Option** ❶ **Depart the U.S. within the 60-day grace period**

**Option** ❷ **Request a change of program I-20 at WSU**

If you are going to begin a new program at WSU, you must make certain that your F-1 record gets updated with new program within the 60-day grace period. Please contact Global Services at

(509) 335-4508 or ip.globalservices@wsu.edu to inquire about your I-20 once your new program is confirmed.

**Option** ❸ **Request a Transfer-out at Global Services**

If you are going to pursue a new educational program at another U.S. school, you must initiate a SEVIS school transfer within the 60-day grace period in order to maintain your F-1 status. Even if your EAD card is valid, you are no longer eligible to engage in OPT once your SEVIS record is released from WSU to the new School. Contact Global Services to complete a Transfer Out form.

**Option** ❹ **Apply for 24-month OPT STEM Extension (if applicable)**

If your post-completion OPT was based on a STEM-designated degree, and if your OPT employer is an E-Verify participant, you are eligible for a 24-month extension of OPT. Eligible students must contact Global Services and file an extension with USCIS prior to the expiration date of the initial OPT Authorization.

**Additional Options**

**Option** ❶ **Request I-20 for H-1 Cap-Gap Extension**

Please contact Global Services at (509) 335-4508 or ip.globalservices@wsu.edu about the possibility of a H-1 cap-gap extension if your employer in the private sector has filed a H-1 petition on your behalf.

**Option** ❷ **Apply for a change of non-immigrant status with USCIS**

If you intend to remain in the US after your OPT ends, you must apply to USCIS to change your immigration status to one appropriate for the purpose of your stay.



**Check out the Global Services website for important updates!**

**www.ip.wsu.edu**

**Important Things to Remember**

**After Applying for OPT**



Global Services 🞍 Bryan Hall 206 🞍 PO Box 645121 🞍 Pullman, WA 99164-5121

Phone: (509) 335-4508 🞍 Fax: (509) 335-2373

E-mail: ip.globalservices@wsu.edu 🞍 Web: www.ip.wsu.edu

**MAILING YOUR OPT MATERIALS\***

**If using a Pullman address:**

**Standard Mailing via USPS Expedited Delivery (UPS, FedEx)**

**USCIS USCIS**

**PO Box 21281 Attn: AOS**

**Phoenix, AZ 85036 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S**

 **Suite 100**

 **Phoenix, AZ 85034**

**YOUR OPT MATERIALS MUST ARRIVE TO USCIS BY: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\*We recommend you send this via a mail service that can be tracked. That way you can ensure your documents arrive.**

\*\*Do not include this pamphlet with your OPT application

**OPT Receipt & Application status**

Once USCIS receives your OPT application, they will mail you a receipt, called *Notice of Action*. It is very important to keep this receipt in a safe place along with other immigration documents.

If you do not receive an OPT receipt within 2-3 weeks of mailing your application to USCIS, please contact Global Services. We will follow up on your application.

Students who have filed the application in care of “WSU Int’l Programs” will receive the OPT receipt (I-797, Notice of Action) at Global Services in Bryan 206. When your OPT receipt arrives in the mail, Global Services will notify you via e-mail. If you have moved out of Pullman by that time, we will first verify your mailing address and forward the document to you.

If you used your personal address on the Form I-765 [Application for Employment Authorization] and change your mailing address while your OPT is pending, you must call the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1(800)375-5283. The U.S. Postal Service does not forward mail from USCIS even if you have requested mail forwarding at the post office.