Responsibilities while Participating in 17-month Extension OPT

While on OPT you are still considered to be in F-1 student status, therefore Earlham College remains responsible for your SEVIS record. It is important that you continue to uphold the requirements of your F-1 status throughout the period of your OPT. In order to maintain your status, you must remember to do the following:

1. Inform IPO of any changes in your name, address, and contact information. The law requires you to report a change of address within 10 days of moving. IPO will update this information in the SEVIS database.

2. Inform IPO of your current employment information. This includes employer’s name and address, your start and end dates, and any interruptions in or loss of employment. Please inform IPO of updates within 10 days.

3. Engage in at least 20 hours/week of paid employment that is directly related to your major area of study and commensurate with your degree level. Employment must be with a company or organization that participates in E-Verify.

4. The OPT authorization is approved for specific beginning and end dates. You must not work beyond the authorization period (end date).

5. If leaving the country, an international student adviser must endorse your SEVIS I-20 for travel. Please note:
   a) While on OPT, travel signatures are required every 6 months, rather than every 12 months.
   b) You should plan to leave the country while participating in OPT only if you have secured a job and will be re-entering to resume employment. You will need to be able to demonstrate proof of employment and show your EAD at the port of entry. After you are granted OPT, you will not be allowed to re-enter the U.S. to seek employment.

6. Students granted 17-month Extension OPT are permitted a maximum of 120 days of unemployment during the 29 total months of OPT work authorization, including the 12 months of post-completion OPT. To maintain status, students with OPT authorization are required to report any interruptions in employment to the International Programs Office within 10 days. Students approaching 120 days of unemployment should prepare to depart the country, apply for a change of status, or prepare to begin a new degree program. Students unemployed for more than 120 days will be considered out of status.

7. If you decide to discontinue your OPT and leave the U.S. before the End Date on your OPT card, inform IPO of your decision and with the date that you will leave the U.S. IPO will “complete” your SEVIS record so that you do not continue to accrue days of unemployment.
Upon completion of OPT you should follow guidelines for the option below that best suits you, being sure to consult IPO as necessary.

- **Option 1** - Complete training and leave the U.S. within the 60-day grace period. This option requires you to inform IPO of your intended departure.
- **Option 2** - Complete practical training and begin another degree program. If you intend to enroll directly into another degree program (within 5 months of your OPT completion date) you will need to work with IPO and your new school to coordinate the transfer process in SEVIS. **Please note:** Enrolling in a new academic program while on OPT automatically terminates your work authorization.
- **Option 3** - Continue working in a new visa status. If you have found an employer willing to sponsor you for the appropriate visa, you will need to take the steps to change your status prior to the expiration of your OPT.

**Alternative Types of Employment Allowed on 17-month Extension OPT**

- Multiple employers. A student may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to his or her degree program and all employers must be enrolled in E-Verify.
- Work for hire. This is also commonly referred to as 1099 employment where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. The company for whom the student is providing services must be registered with E-Verify. If requested by DHS, the student must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract period and the name and address of the contracting company.
- Self-employed business owner. A student on a 17-month extension can start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, the student must register his or her business with E-Verify and work full time. The student must be able to prove that he or she has the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to his or her degree program.
- Employment through an agency or consulting firm. Students on a STEM extension may be employed by an employment agency or consulting firm. The employment agency or consulting firm must be registered with E-Verify, but the third parties contracting with the agency or firm (for which the student is providing services) need not be.

**Automatic OPT Extension during Application Procedure**

If your regular post-completion OPT expires after your 17-month Extension OPT I-765 is *filed properly and in a timely manner*, your employment authorization is considered automatically extended for up to 180 days while the EAD application is pending. However, you **should not travel outside of the U.S.** until you receive your new EAD card. Leaving the U.S. while your 17-month Extension OPT application is pending is considered abandoning your application and will result in immediate and irreversible cancelation of your application.
**Employer’s Responsibility**

Your employer must agree to report to IPO at Earlham within 48 hours if you leave your position. He/she should provide your name, SEVIS ID number (if available), and the date that your employment ended. This information may be submitted by email to lawsoke@earlham.edu or fanjoal@earlham.edu.

**6-month Validation Reports**

You must also make a "validation report" to IPO every six months starting from the date your 17-month extension begins and ending when: A) your F-1 status ends, B) you change educational levels at Earlham, C) you transfer to another school, or D) your 17-month OPT extension ends, whichever is first.

The validation report must include your:

- Full legal name
- Current mailing and residential (physical) address
- Name and address of your current employer
- Date you began working for your current employer

If you do not submit a validation report, your SEVIS record will automatically be terminated with the reason of "Failure to Report while on OPT" 32 days after the reporting due date.

You may use this link to inform IPO of any updates in your personal or employment information and to report in for each of your 6-month validation reports: [http://www.earlham.edu/student-life/global-community/international-students/employment-regulations/optional-practical-training/student-opt-update/](http://www.earlham.edu/student-life/global-community/international-students/employment-regulations/optional-practical-training/student-opt-update/)