Responsibilities while Participating in Post-completion 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 very important that you continue to maintain your F-1 status throughout the period of your OPT authorization. In order to maintain your status, you must do the following:

1. Inform IPO of your current 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 as well as your start and end dates. You must report any changes to IPO within 10 days of the change.

3. Engage in employment that is directly related to your major area of study and commensurate with your degree level.

4. The OPT authorization is approved for specific beginning and end dates. You must not work prior to the OPT Start Date or beyond the end of the authorization period (OPT End Date).

5. You may not engage in employment prior to receiving the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card from USCIS.

6. 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, immigration is not likely to allow you to re-enter the U.S. to seek employment.

7. Students granted post-completion OPT are permitted a maximum of **90 days of unemployment** during the 12 months of OPT work authorization. To maintain status, students with OPT authorizations are required to report any interruptions in employment to the International Programs Office within 10 days. Students approaching 90 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 90 days will be considered out of status.

**Please note:** as of November 2015, SEVP plans to initiate a function in SEVIS that will automatically terminate your SEVIS record if you have no employment record in SEVIS for 90 consecutive days.

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8. 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.

9. 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 return home 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.
   
   • **Option 4**: 17-month Extension OPT- Students who majored in specific Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields may be eligible for a 17-month extension. To be eligible you must be engaged in post-completion OPT, which is directly related to your major and commensurate with your degree level. In addition, you must work for an employer enrolled in the E-verify system. This extension may only be used once in an academic career. If utilized at the undergraduate level, you will be ineligible for future extensions.