Responsibilities while Participating in Post-completion Optional Practical Training (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. Report any changes in address, phone number, email address, name or employment (including employer name, employer contact information, and employment start/end dates) within 10 days of changes. You may report this information to the Center for Global Education (CGE) through the OPT Update form on the CGE website or through the SEVP Portal. (Please see SEVP Portal information re: exceptions.)

2. Engage only in employment that is directly related to your major area of study.

3. OPT authorization is approved for specific beginning and end dates. You must not work prior to the OPT Start Date nor beyond the end of the authorization period (OPT End Date).

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

5. If leaving the U.S. after applying for OPT, please note:
   a) While on OPT, travel signatures are required every 6 months (rather than every 12 months).
   b) The regulations state that you may re-enter the U.S. to resume employment. Therefore, be aware that once your OPT has been approved, there is a risk of being denied entry if you do not have a job or job offer.
   c) In addition to showing your valid passport, visa and I-20 at the port of entry, you will also need to show your I-797C receipt if your OPT application is pending, or your Employment Authorization Document (EAD/OPT card) if your application has been approved.

6. Students granted post-completion OPT are permitted a maximum of 90 days (aggregate) of unemployment during the 12 months of OPT work authorization. Please note: SEVP plans to initiate a function in SEVIS that will automatically terminate your SEVIS record if you exceed 90 days with no employment record in SEVIS.
   a) To maintain status, students with OPT authorizations are required to report any interruptions in employment to an International Student Adviser within 10 days.
   b) While on Post-completion OPT, volunteering for at least 20 hours in your field of study while supervised can count as ‘employment’ and can stop the 90-day unemployment ‘clock’.
   c) Students approaching 90 days of unemployment should prepare to depart the country, apply for a Change of Status (COS), or transfer to a new degree program. Post-completion OPT participants unemployed for 90 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 CGE of your decision and the date that you will leave the U.S. CGE will “complete” your SEVIS record so that you do not continue to accrue days of unemployment.

8. Upon completion of OPT you should follow guidelines for the option below that best suits you, being sure to consult an International Student Adviser as necessary.

- **Option 1**: Complete training and leave the U.S. within the 60-day grace period. This option requires you to inform CGE of your intended departure.

- **Option 2**: Complete practical training and begin another degree program in the U.S. If you intend to enroll directly into another degree program within 5 months of your OPT completion date, you may work with CGE and your new school to coordinate the transfer process in SEVIS. *Please note: Starting a new academic program while on OPT automatically terminates your work authorization.*

- **Option 3**: Apply for a Change of Status (e.g. B-2 or H-1B). However, if you have an employer who is willing to sponsor you for the appropriate visa and you want to continue working while your Change of Status application is pending, you will need to take the steps to change your status *prior to the expiration of your OPT.*

- **Option 4**: A 24-month Extension OPT may be an option for students who majored in specific *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)* fields. To be eligible you must have a job or job offer that is directly related to your major, supervised, and at least 20 hours per week. In addition, you must work for an employer enrolled in the E-Verify system. Your complete OPT 24-month extension application must be submitted to USCIS (via CGE) *prior to the expiration of your EAD.*

More information on OPT and the OPT Update Form can be found here: [https://earlham.edu/global-community/international-students/optional-practical-training/](https://earlham.edu/global-community/international-students/optional-practical-training/)

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**SEVP Portal**

After your OPT application is approved, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will send you an invitation to the “SEVP Portal”, that will allow you to edit or add your phone number, mailing address, physical address, and employer information.

However, the Portal does not enable you to make all updates - **you must contact someone in CGE to make the following updates:**

- Email address
- Name changes/updates
- STEM Extension employment information and program validations

If you use the Portal to update employment information, you must still contact someone in CGE to request an updated I-20.

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Updated October 2019