

While on the Initial 12-month OPT period ...

... you are still considered an EMU F1 student!!!

- * You must submit a **copy of your EAD** card to OIS upon its receipt.
- * You **cannot begin work** until you have your EAD card in-hand and the start date is valid.
- * During your **job search** you need to keep an accurate record of your efforts to find employment (company contacted, date, phone number, name of contact person etc.)
- * **Name or Address Changes** - You must **report all name, US, and home country address changes** to OIS within 10 days of moving to your new residence. Your address must describe where you live; it cannot be a PO Box or an office address. Failure to keep your US address current can jeopardize your immigration status!
- * **Employer Name & Address** - You must **report to OIS** the name, address and telephone number of your employer within 10 days of finding employment. Failure to report can jeopardize your immigration status.
- * **Periods of Unemployment** - You must **report to OIS** all periods of unemployment. Failure to report can jeopardize your immigration status.
- * **Taxes** - Generally, if you've been in the United States less than 5 years, while on OPT you should be exempt from Social Security Tax & Medicare Tax (FICA) (See Internal Revenue Service Publication 519, "US Tax Guide for Aliens"). However, your earnings are subject to applicable federal, state & local taxes unless your country has a tax treaty with the USA exempting you from payment. Tax returns must be filed on or before April 15th each year, for the previous calendar year.
- * **Health Insurance** - It is very important that you have health insurance while in the USA. If it is not provided by your employer, you may be eligible to continue your student policy; contact the Snow Health Center for more information. For your own financial wellbeing - BE INSURED at all times!!!
- * **Travel while on OPT** - Before you travel, remember to:
 - Make sure your **passport** is valid at least 6 months into the future
 - Make sure your **I-20** has been signed for travel within the past 6 months. If you need a new travel signature, bring or send your I-20 to OIS with a copy of your EAD card
 - Make sure your **visa stamp** is valid. If your visa is expired, you may need to renew it while overseas. If this is the case, please speak to an OIS advisor **before** traveling.
 - If you have an expired visa stamp & plan a short trip to Canada, Mexico, or adjacent islands, you may be qualified for Automatic Revalidation. Please contact an OIS advisor before traveling!
 - **Carry your EAD card and proof of employment** for the EAD time period with you. Proof of employment can include a letter from your employer and recent pay stubs.
 - **Dependent Travel** - Since OPT is not noted on dependent I-20's, an F2 dependent must carry copies of the F1 student's I-20 with OPT recommendation, EAD card & job offer letter in addition to their own I-20 when traveling.
- * **Change of Status** - If you change your immigration status during OPT, you are required to send us a copy of the approval document (ie. H-1B). We recommend you begin this process before your OPT is expired.
- * Your **OPT will automatically terminate** if you transfer to another school or begin to study at another educational level. Please **contact OIS** if you plan to apply for another degree program or transfer to another school.
- * Remember to **apply for the 17 month STEM extension** (if you qualify) or **depart the USA** within the 60 day grace period that follows your last day of OPT. If you are subject to **NSEERS special registration**, please make sure to use official ports of departure and to complete the exit interview.