

Important OPT Information

While on the Initial OPT period, you are still considered an EMU F-1 student, you are required to READ and FOLLOW these instructions. Please keep this information and visit www.emich.edu/ois for the latest information.

During OPT, You MUST keep the OIS informed:

- Submit a copy of your **EAD card** to the OIS upon receipt
- Report all **address changes, employment information, and unemployment periods** to the OIS within **10 days of any change**. Submit all changes to the OIS via the **Information Reporting Form (OPT- IR12)** at <http://www.emich.edu/ois/forms.html> under "OPT 12"
- Submit a copy of all **Change of Status** application receipt and approval notices, upon receipt

Don't forget:

- **You can't work** until you have your EAD card **in-hand** and the start **date** is valid
- Your **OPT will automatically terminate** if you transfer to another school or begin to study at another educational level
- You **may not accrue** more than **90 days of unemployment** during the initial 12-month OPT period
- If eligible for the **17-month STEM OPT extension**, your application **must be received before** the end date of your initial OPT (see OIS website for more information on the STEM extension)
- You have another **60-day grace period** after your OPT ends

Travel during OPT:

Traveling during OPT can be risky; we suggest you email an OIS advisor prior to purchasing an airline ticket. If you travel, you will definitely need:

- **I-20** which includes **current employment information** and an OIS **travel signature** dated within the past 6 months
- **Passport**, valid at least 6 months into the future
- **Visa stamp** that **will be valid upon re-entering** the U.S.; If your visa is expired please speak to an OIS advisor
- Valid **EAD card**
- **Proof of employment**. Carry copies of recent pay checks **AND** a letter from your employer indicating you will have a job upon your return.

Dependent Travel – Since OPT is not noted on dependent I-20s, an F2 dependent must carry copies of the F1 student's I-20 with OPT recommendation, EAD card, and proof of employment, in addition to their own F-2 I-20 when traveling.

If you are **unemployed** or your **OPT application is pending**, talk to an OIS advisor before buying an airline ticket.

Other information you may need to know:

- **Taxes** – Generally, if you've been in the United States less than 5 years, you should be exempt from Social Security Tax & Medicare Tax (FICA) (See Internal Revenue Service Publication 519, "US Tax Guide for Aliens"). However, 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 extremely important that you have health insurance while living in the U.S. If your employer doesn't provide health insurance, you may be eligible to continue your student policy, provided you inform the Snow Health Center within 30 days of your last term of class registration; contact the Snow Health Center for more information.