

What do I need to know about being on OPT?

Employment and Reporting Requirements:

- You cannot start work until the start date on your EAD card.
- You must inform us and get an updated I-20 before you initially start work after receiving your EAD card. You will do this by completing the EIR form and uploading the documents requested.
- If you change employers during your OPT period, you are required to complete the EIR form again, stating the end date of your initial job and the start date for the new job. You will be required to upload all of the documents requested, including the job offer letter for the new job.
- In addition, you may also choose to use the SEVP portal to satisfy your reporting requirements whilst on OPT. You can find further guidance and information about the portal [here](#).
- You can work for more than one employer when on OPT - as long as every job you have is directly applicable to your major and as long as the total hours worked is not more than 40.
- You can start a business and be self-employed on OPT, as long as your business is properly licensed, your work is related to your major, and you are employed full time in this job.
- You can be employed at Oakland University if you obtain a professional level job (not a student worker job) that is related to your major. However, you should be aware that Oakland is not an e-verified employer, so cannot provide a valid job for an OPT STEM application if you wish to do that at a later date.

Unemployment:

- After the start date of your OPT you have 90 days of unemployment time that can be taken during your 12 month OPT period. If you are getting close to the end of your 90 period, remember that part time work or volunteer work can still be a valid option if it is within your major field.
- If you exceed the allowed 90 days you will have to depart the USA immediately, apply to a new program at Oakland, or transfer out to a different school.

Travel:

- You must be in the USA when you apply for OPT, however you can travel when you are on OPT. If you choose to travel, make sure that you take your job offer letter or recent pay stubs to prove that you are employed and your EAD card with you, make sure that your travel signature on your I-20 is valid, and that your passport and visa are in date. If you do not yet have a job offer, take any proof that you will be interviewing for jobs to show that your job search is active.

- OPT and OPT STEM travel signatures are only valid for 6 months, so please plan accordingly when you are wanting to travel.

Health insurance:

- You should ensure that you always have adequate health insurance for yourself and your dependents while you are on OPT. Many OPT participants choose to take their employer's healthcare plan during this time. If you prefer to remain on the United Healthcare student insurance policy during your OPT - either for a short term option before your employer's insurance is available to you, or as a longer term option - you may choose to do that. To get more information about enrolling in Oakland's health insurance policy when on OPT, email Joanne Tarling at tarling@oakland.edu

Changes in name or address when on OPT:

- You are required to report changes to your name or address whilst on OPT to the ISSO within 10 days of the change occurring. You can do this by following the instructions in the change of address section here. <https://oakland.edu/isso/current-students/>

- If you no longer have access to your Oakland email and your MySAIL account, email isso@oakland.edu for assistance in making these changes.

- In addition, you may also choose to use the SEVP portal to report an address change whilst on OPT. You can find further guidance and information about the portal [here](#).

Ending your OPT:

- If you decide to end your OPT early and return home, please let us know by completing our departure/ transfer out form.

- If you decide to transfer out to a program at a new school or start a new program at Oakland, your OPT will end automatically on the day when your level change I-20 is created or your SEVIS record is transferred. Please make sure you communicate your plans to us, so we can find the best date to do this, otherwise you may shorten your OPT period unintentionally.

- If you successfully change your status to a new visa type, your OPT will end on the date your new status becomes effective.

- If your major was in a STEM field, you may be eligible for 2 additional years of OPT STEM extension at the end of your 12 month OPT period. You need to apply for this within the 90 days prior to the end of your OPT period. All information for this process are in the OPT STEM extension section of the ISSO website.