

# OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

## WHAT IS OPT?

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a temporary practical training authorization that is directly related to the F-1 student's major of study as listed on the student's I-20. OPT employment authorization is granted for 12 months typically after completion of degree requirements.

## ELIGIBILITY

### WHO CAN APPLY?

The student must meet all the below criteria to be eligible for OPT:

- Maintain current F-1 visa status and continue maintaining F-1 visa status;
- Be enrolled on a full-time basis for one academic year before OPT application;
- Did not accrue more than 12-months of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT);
- If during final semester, student need less than full-time course load to complete studies, the student must apply and be approved for a Reduced Course Load for Final Semester by OISS prior to start of semester. This includes summer semester.
- Be physically present in the US at time of filing

If you plan to spend one or more semesters outside the U.S. before applying for OPT, then you may not be eligible for OPT. Consult with an OISS advisor for OPT eligibility.

### WHEN TO APPLY?

Students can apply for OPT up to 90 days before the program completion date and up to 60 days after the program end date. Though it is possible to apply for OPT after completion of studies, OISS does not recommend doing so as the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) processing times vary and you may lose some of your 12-month employment authorization. USCIS may take more than four months to adjudicate OPT application and issue the Employment Authorization Document (EAD). OISS encourages all students to apply as soon as they are able to apply. Even if you do not have a job offer, **it is imperative that USCIS receives your application as early as possible.**

**NOTE:** Students cannot apply for OPT on their own. OISS must recommend students for OPT in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Students will receive an updated I-20 with OPT recommendation listed on page 2 of the I-20. Mailing your OPT packet without recommendation from OISS is an automatic denial of your OPT application.

### WHAT IF I AM COMPLETING MY STUDIES DURING SUMMER?

To be eligible for OPT, students who are completing their studies during summer are required to maintain full-time enrollment AND maintain only one online course towards full-time studies. Students who have only one course remaining to complete their studies, must enroll in an in-person course to maintain their F-1 visa status. Students who need less than full-time requirements to complete their studies, must apply for Final Semester Reduced Course Load.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

### WHAT IS MY COMPLETION DATE?

The completion date for students depends on the level and their program plan. Students are required to consult with their academic or graduate advisor to identify their completion date.

The completion date for undergraduate students is usually:

- The last day of final exams week during final semester of study as listed on the [MSU Academic Calendar](#)

The completion date for Master students depend on their program. The following are all possibilities:

- The last day of final exams week during final semester of study as listed on the [MSU Academic Calendar](#),
- Comprehensive exam Date, or
- The last day of [Graduate Assistantships appointment](#) (if student has an assistantship)
- Defense Date

The completion date for Ph.D. students could be:

- Dissertation Defense Date, or
- Dissertation submission date, or
- The last day of [Graduate Assistantships appointment](#) (if student has an assistantship)
- The last day of final exams week during final semester of study as listed on the [MSU Academic Calendar](#)

**NOTE:** Students with of [Graduate Assistantships appointment](#) AND students who work on campus are ineligible for employment after the new end date (completion date) as listed on page 1 of the OPT I-20 without a valid EAD

### WHAT START/END DATE SHOULD I USE?

Students have a choice of when they want the OPT to start. The earliest a student can start employment is the day after the completion date. The latest start date you can choose is 60 days after the completion date. Utilize the [Date Calculator](#) to get accurate start/end dates.

If you are unsure about what start date to choose, consider the following:

- If you have a job offer with a specific start date, then it is recommended to choose that start date.
- If you have no job offer, but you'd like to be eligible for employment right after your completion date, then you should choose a start date that is after but close to your completion date.
- If you have no job offer and you would like more time to search for jobs, then you should consider choosing a start date that is 40-55 days after your completion date.
- If you wish to allow USCIS as much time as possible to decide on your application, then you should apply as early as possible AND choose and a start date that is 55-60 days after your completion date.
- The end date to put on your application is 12-months after your start date. Example: 06/02/2020 – 06/01/2021
- For a link to a date calculator, visit the [Date Calculator](#)

**NOTE:** Whether you have a job or not, apply for OPT as early as possible – USCIS is experiencing delays in processing

### WHAT HAPPENS WITH MY I-20 WHEN I APPLY FOR OPT?

The first step for recommending a student for OPT is to shorten the program end date as listed on page 1 of the student's I-20. A Designated School Official (DSO) accesses the SEVIS system and confirms that the student will complete within 90 days and list the completion date on the I-20.

The second step is to recommend the student for OPT. The DSO confirms that the student has maintained F-1 visa status and that the student is eligible for OPT. The DSO will then print the updated I-20 that has been shortened and the OPT has been annotated in page 2 of the I-20.

## HOW TO APPLY

### STEP 1: REVIEW PACKET AND COMPLETE D2L COURSE

All F-1 students applying for OPT must complete the D2L online course "OISS - Optional Practical Training (OPT)" during the final semester. To register for the OISS - Optional Practical Training Course:

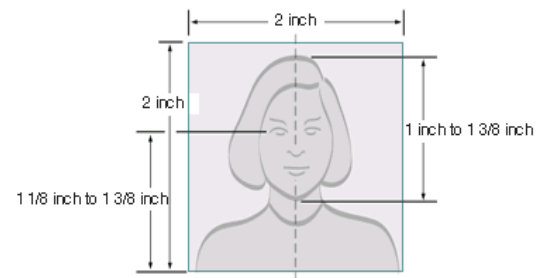
- Log into D2L (<https://d2l.msu.edu/>)
- Click on "Select Self Registration"
- Click on the course named "OISS - Optional Practical Training (OPT)"
- Register for the course
- Save the required "OPT Certificate of Completion" after successfully completing the course

Due to recent USCIS changes, we are currently in the process of updating the D2L Course. The content is still useful and students are required to complete the whole course. **Student who do not complete all modules accordingly may be told to re-do the course. It is vital that you take the appropriate time to complete the OPT course.**

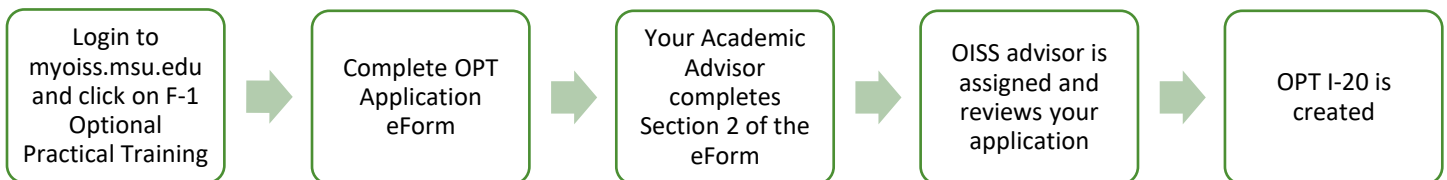
**NOTE:** At this time you should also meet with your academic advisor to discuss your program completion date

### STEP 2: PREPARE THE APPLICATION MATERIALS (Prepare all materials as PDFs to upload)

- G-1145 form**
- I-765 form** (This form must be typed) ([Sample I-765 for initial OPT](#))
- I-94:** Obtain your **most recent I-94** or photocopy of both sides of your I-94 card.
- Passport:** Photocopy of the picture page of your passport.
- Two Passport Photos** (see example): Gently print your full name and SEVIS ID on the back of each photo.
  - o Photos must be less than 30 days old from OPT processing date listed on I-20.
  - o [Passport photo requirements](#)
- U.S. bank issued check or Money Order for \$410.00** made payable to: **US Department of Homeland Security**. If the address on your check is not current, cross out the old address and write your present address. **The check must have your name preprinted.**
- If applicable:** Photocopies of previous EAD (front and back).
- If applicable:** Photocopies of all I-20s showing previous Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorizations



### STEP 3: SUBMIT YOUR OPT PACKET TO OISS FOR OPT RECOMMENDATION



- If you have questions about your application, make an [appointment with an OISS Advisor](#)
- If your OPT packet is complete and free of mistakes, an OISS advisor will recommend you for OPT.
- You will receive an I-20 with OPT recommendation on page 2 of your I-20.
- Your OISS advisor will give you mailing information to mail your packet to USCIS.

**NOTE:** You must make sure your packet is complete and free of mistakes. Incomplete applications may be rejected by OISS. It is vital that you review this packet, complete the D2L OPT course and completely follow the instructions.

#### STEP 4: RECEIVE YOUR NEW I-20

To receive your OPT I-20:

1. Request to have your I-20 shipped to you at your expense via EShipGlobal ([instructions](#))

**NOTE:** Once you receive your new I-20, make sure you review it carefully and confirm the OPT recommendation is listed on page 2. **Once you confirm, SIGN IT and date it.** Make a copy of the signed OPT I-20. You must keep the original and include the copied version in your packet. You must mail your OPT packet to USCIS immediately after receiving your OPT I-20.

#### STEP 5: ASSEMBLE YOUR APPLICATION PACKET FOR MAILING TO USCIS

The documents listed below must all be included in your application. Documents should be printed single-sided page format. Only include the following documents and do not include other documents without consulting with OISS.

- Photocopy** of all the pages of your OPT I-20 (make sure it is signed & do not send the original)
- G-1145 form**
- I-765 form** (make sure this form is typed, printed then signed by hand)
- I-94:** ([www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94)) or photocopy of both sides of your I-94 card.
- Passport:** Photocopy of the picture page/expiration date of your passport.
- Two Passport Photos**
- U.S. bank issued check or Money Order for \$410.00** made payable to: **US Department of Homeland Security.** If the address on your check is not current, cross out the old address and write your present address. **The check must have your name preprinted.**
- If applicable:** Photocopies of previous EAD (front and back).
- If applicable:** Photocopies of all I-20s showing previous Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorizations

#### STEP 8: MAIL YOUR OPT APPLICATION

Use the address given to you by the OISS advisor who recommended you for OPT. If you did not receive an address from the OISS advisor who recommended your OPT, please follow up with that specific advisor for information on mailing your OPT packet.

**USCIS must receive the OPT application within 30 days of your visit to OISS for OPT recommendation.** OISS encourages students to make sure they receive their OPT I-20 and mail their OPT applications within 3 business days after being recommended for OPT.

## PENDING OPT INFORMATION

#### RECEIPT NOTICE AND TRACKING YOUR CASE STATUS

USCIS will send you an I-797, Notice of Action within 6-12 weeks after mailing the OPT application to USCIS. USCIS has recently reported that they "have received a significant increase in filings in recent weeks. This increase, along with facility capacity restrictions necessary to protect the health and safety of the lockbox workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic, is causing significant delays for processing receipt notices." Prior to the Notice of Action, you will receive:

1. A text message that includes your receipt number for your OPT application.
2. An email with a brief statement on how to get additional information about the status of your case.
3. An I-797C Receipt Notice. This is your official proof of application.

You can use the Receipt Number listed on your I-797C, form to track your application at [USCIS online Case Status](#).

## OPT PROCESSING TIMES

Processing time of OPT may take 4 months or more after USCIS receives your application. If approved, you EAD will be mailed to the address you detailed on your I-765. Visit [USCIS Case Processing Times](#) for information on processing times.

## WHILE OPT APPLICATION IS PENDING

You are eligible to remain in the United States while your OPT application is pending. You are NOT eligible to conduct any practical training or employment while your OPT is pending. Attending work related orientation is considered a violation of your status. Volunteering for your employer or professor while your OPT is pending is also not allowed.

# TRAVEL INFORMATION

REENTERING THE US WHILE OPT IS PENDING	REENTERING THE U.S. AFTER OPT APPROVAL
<p>Traveling while OPT is pending should be undertaken with caution. You may experience delays and/or difficulties when renewing your F-1 visa, while OPT is pending. USCIS may send you a Request for Evidence (RFE) while you are away. You must respond to the RFE in a timely manner to avoid denial of your OPT application. If USCIS approves your OPT application, you will be expected to have your EAD in-hand to re-enter the United States.</p> <p>You will need the following original documents to reenter the U.S. while your OPT is pending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valid passport (make sure it is valid at least 6 months into the future at time of re-entry)</li> <li>• Valid F-1 visa stamp (You cannot renew your F-1 visa, unless you have a valid EAD)</li> <li>• I-20 endorsed for OPT with a travel signature less than 6-months old at the time of re-entry</li> <li>• Original I-797 Receipt Notice</li> </ul>	<p>You will need the following original documents to reenter the U.S. while on OPT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valid passport (make sure it is valid at least 6 months into the future at time of re-entry)</li> <li>• Valid F-1 visa stamp</li> <li>• I-20 endorsed for OPT with a travel signature less than 6-months old</li> <li>• Unexpired EAD</li> <li>• Confirmation of employment letter from your employer</li> </ul>

# ONCE OPT IS APPROVED

## MAINTAIN YOUR F-1 VISA STATUS WHILE ON OPT

During post-completion OPT; maintaining F-1 visa status is dependent upon employment. Students must not exceed a total of 90 days of unemployment during post-completion OPT. The 90 days of unemployment begins accruing on the start date listed on the EAD. Other requirements to maintain your F-1 visa status while on OPT:

- Upload a copy of your receipt, Notice of Action and EAD to MyOISS ([myoiss.msu.edu](http://myoiss.msu.edu)) when received
- Employment can be paid or unpaid
- Be employed for a minimum of 20 hours per week in your field of study
- You are eligible to work more than one job as long as all employments are directly related to your field of study
- Employment(s) must be directly related to your field of study
- Receive a job offer letter from your employer(s) detailing your start date and description of your duties
- You must report your employment in the SEVP Portal
- Employment authorization will begin on the date listed on the EAD
- You must not exceed a total of 90 days of unemployment time for the entire OPT period

# REPORTING REQUIREMENTS WHILE ON OPT

## EMPLOYMENT REPORTING

F-1 students who are approved for OPT must register for the SEVP portal and report their employment and address information through the SEVP Portal.

It is MANDATORY for all students on OPT to report their employment and address updates to the SEVP Student Portal. Students who fail to report their employment and address updates in a timely fashion may risk violation of their F-1 visa status and have their immigration record be auto-terminated by SEVIS.

While on OPT, you are required to do the following:

1. Register for the SEVP Portal (read below for information regarding the portal)
  - a. Update your U.S. Address through the SEVP Portal and through the registrar website at [reg.msu.edu](http://reg.msu.edu)
  - b. Update your employment information through the SEVP Portal
  - c. If your EAD is mailed directly to you, upload a copy of your EAD at [myoiss.msu.edu](http://myoiss.msu.edu)
  - d. In the Employment Remarks section in the SEVP Portal, you must detail the following:
    - i. Your degree and level (Example: Bachelor's degree in Economics)
    - ii. Employer Name (name of company – not your supervisor or owner) and Job title
    - iii. Major area of study
    - iv. Number of hours per week
    - v. List of job duties
    - vi. Brief explanation of how the job is directly related to the student's studies

Below are examples of how to report your employment in the SEVP Portal under the employment remarks section.

### Example # 1

Bachelor's degree in Business: I work full time (25 hours minimum a week) as a Loan Officer at a mortgage company, called Happy Homes. In Happy Homes, I meet with clients and evaluate, authorize and recommend approval of loan applications. On a daily basis, I use the knowledge I gained in my credit analysis, sales and marketing classes that I took as part of my major program of study.

### Example # 2

PhD in Electrical Engineering: I work full time as an Electrical Engineer at ABC Corp. I work a minimum of 30 hours a week at ABC Corp. In my job, I analyze client requirements for electrical systems and provide them with cost estimates of such systems. My work requires understanding of electrical circuit theory, which I studied in-depth at the University of ABC.

## THE SEVP PORTAL

The SEVP portal allows F-1 students the ability to report address, telephone and employer information to SEVP without relying upon their immigration advisor or designated school official (DSO) to update their information. To use the SEVP Portal, students must confirm with their DSO that their email address is accurately saved in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

The portal shares information with SEVIS but does not give students direct access to SEVIS. The SEVP Portal does not eliminate the need for a student to communicate with their DSO.

The SEVP Portal will allow students on OPT:

- View details about their post-completion OPT
- Report changes to their address, telephone and employer information

- View and update data on all their employers in one place

## THE SEVP PORTAL ACCOUNT CREATION EMAIL

SEVP will email prospective SEVP Portal users important account creation information. However, the only emails the government will send students related to the portal are to create their SEVP Portal account or to reset their password. The sender of the email will be [do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov). There is no cost associated with creating an account or accessing the portal.

The SEVP Portal will send the Portal Account Creation Email when the following criteria is met:

- The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) shows that the OPT is approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) **AND**
- The OPT is for post-completion **AND**
- The email is sent on or after the OPT start date as listed on your EAD otherwise known as OPT card. Please allow up to 7 days after the start date listed on your EAD to receive the email.

**NOTE:** If you meet all the above requirements and you do not find the portal account creation email, check your spam/junk email folders of your MSU and personal email accounts. If you still cannot find the email, search this email address ([do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov)) in your email accounts. If you still cannot find the email, login to MyOISS ([myoiss.msu.edu](http://myoiss.msu.edu)), select F-1 Optional Practical Training and submit the SEVP Portal Reset eForm.

## FAILURE TO REPORT YOUR EMPLOYMENT DURING OPT

F-1 students participating in OPT are allotted 90 days of unemployment, before they are considered to have violated the terms of their F-1 status. **If they exceed that period, they can be terminated from SEVIS and are subject to removal proceedings.**

## ADDRESS REPORTING

You must report address changes of your local residence through the SEVP Portal within 10 days of moving to a new address. The address cannot be a P.O. Box or an office address. Report any address changes to SEVP Student Portal. Students are also required to update their U.S. address through MSU registrar office within 10 days of any changes.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

OPT students may be able to get health insurance:

- Through an employer:** If you will be working at a job that offers health insurance coverage, you'll simply transition to your employer's health plan.

**NOTE:** US-based plans usually don't offer medical evacuation and repatriation (MER) coverage. An inexpensive policy for MER can be purchased at <http://www.medexassist.com/Individuals/Products/MEDEXSafeTrip.aspx>

- Through MSU Benefits Office:** Student who are approved for either OPT or Academic Training (AT) after graduation, their dependent family members are eligible to purchase health insurance. Please contact OISS for the enrollment form and a letter to prove your OPT status, then bring both documents to the MSU Benefits Office at 1407 S. Harrison Ste.140 for special enrollment.
- Buy a policy from private insurance company:** Learn more at <http://oiiss.isp.msu.edu/health-wellness-and-safety/us-health-care-insurance/>

**NOTE:**

1. Make sure you know when your current health insurance ends! If you are currently enrolled as a student through the Blue Care Network plan, contact the MSU Benefits Office or Blue Care Network to clarify the end date of your coverage.



- OPT students can still be seen at the Olin Health Center, but will be asked to pay co-pay and deductible

## GRACE PERIOD FOLLOWING OPT

Students who maintain their visa status while on OPT will receive a 60-day grace period starting the day after OPT expires. Only students who complete OPT AND do not exceed the 90-day unemployment limit receive the 60-day grace period. Before the 60-day grace period is over, students must:

- Depart the U.S.,
- Be approved for a change of your visa status from F-1 to another visa status,
- Receive a new I-20 to pursue a new academic program at MSU, or
- Transfer your SEVIS record (I-20) from MSU to another SEVP-certified institution.

Students who do not maintain their OPT status, must do one of the following before the 90-day unemployment limit expires:

- Depart the U.S.,
- Be approved for a change of your visa status from F-1 to another visa status,
- Receive a new I-20 to pursue a new academic program at MSU, or
- Transfer your SEVIS record (I-20) from MSU to another SEVP-certified institution.

## STEM OPT

STEM OPT is a Practical work experience authorization that extends OPT for an additional 24 months for those who have earned a degree in a field included on the [Department of Homeland Security's \(DHS\) list of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics \(STEM\) fields](#). DHS grants STEM OPT extensions to eligible F-1 students once per degree level (i.e., bachelor's, master's or doctorate). A student may participate twice in the OPT extension over the course of their academic career.

Students must be employed by an employer that is enrolled in the U.S. Government's E-Verify program and the work is directly related to the field of study. For more information visit the [STEM OPT Guide](#).

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHAT ARE MY FIRST STEPS WHEN I WANT TO BEGIN MY OPT APPLICATION?

You must start by registering for OPT D2L Course that is listed on this packet. Additionally, you must review this packet carefully and completely.

## DO I NEED A JOB TO APPLY FOR OPT?

NO. You do not need a job to apply for OPT. Students are encouraged to NOT wait until they find a job to apply for OPT. This may cause you to delay the start of your employment. Students are encouraged to apply 90 days prior to completion of study. Student will need to secure a job within 90 days of the start date listed on EAD.

## DO I NEED TO HAVE A JOB DURING OPT?

Yes. Students are limited to a maximum of 90 days of unemployment during OPT Period. During the OPT period, students must maintain more than 20 hours of employment weekly in their field of study. Students must report their employment information to the SEVP Portal.

## WHAT VISA STATUS IS OPT?



OPT is an employment benefit under the F-1 visa status. While on OPT or while your OPT application is pending, you are still considered an F-1 visa status. As long as you maintain your OPT requirements, you will be considered an F-1 status holder.

#### CAN I BEGIN WORKING BEFORE I RECEIVE MY EAD?

No. Working before receiving the EAD or before the authorized start date listed on your EAD has been reached is considered illegal employment and a violation of your F-1 visa status.

#### CAN I CONTINUE WORKING ON CAMPUS BEFORE THE START DATE LISTED ON THE EAD?

NO. You are not eligible to work on-campus or off-campus after the completion date listed on your OPT I-20. Once you receive your EAD and the authorized start date listed on your EAD has been reached, you are eligible to begin employment. Students with assistantship need to consider the completion date carefully.

#### WHAT SHOULD I DO ONCE I RECEIVE MY EAD?

Once you receive the EAD, upload a scanned copy of your EAD to MyOISS at [myoiss.msu.edu](http://myoiss.msu.edu). Wait for the SEVP Portal email that will be emailed to you by the government within 15 days of receiving your EAD. You must keep your EAD in a safe place. Losing your EAD may cause serious problems for you and your ability to maintain your OPT.

#### WHAT IF I FAIL A COURSE OR IF I HAVE TO DELAY MY COMPLETION DATE AFTER I APPLY FOR OPT?

If you did not mail your OPT application and you fail a course or must delay your defense date, visit OISS immediately to discuss options. If you already mailed your application, you will be required to maintain your OPT while at the same time making progress towards completion of your studies. While you are taking the remaining coursework, you will be allowed to work part-time (no more than 20 hours a week). At the same time, you must work (at least 20 hours a week) so that you are not considered unemployed. To maintain your OPT status, you must not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment time.

#### HOW LONG CAN I STAY IN THE U.S. AFTER MY OPT END DATE?

There is a 60-day grace period following the end of the OPT period. This grace period is only available to students who maintained their OPT status and did not exceed the 90 days of unemployment.

#### CAN I BE SELF EMPLOYED OR UNPAID DURING OPT?

Yes. You are eligible to be self-employed and/or unpaid during OPT.

#### WHAT IF I AM TERMINATED/FIRED FROM BY MY EMPLOYER?

You must immediately report changes to the OPT Portal. You must update the end date of your employment. When you get a new employer, you must update the SEVP Portal with your new employer.

#### WHAT IF I CAN'T FIND A JOB?

Once the start listed on your EAD is reached, you have a total of 90 days of unemployment during your OPT. If you cannot find a job within 90 days of the start date listed on your EAD, you must depart the U.S. immediately or change to some other status prior to the end of the 90 days of unemployment.

#### WHAT KIND OF JOB CAN I ACCEPT WHILE ON OPT?

You may only work or intern in a position that is directly related to the major listed on your I-20. You and your employment must make strong connection between your job and the major listed on your I-20.

#### CAN I HAVE MORE THAN ONE EMPLOYER WHILE ON OPT?

Your OPT is not limited to only one employer. You are eligible to work for more than one employer while on OPT. The main requirement is that all employments must be directly related to the major listed on your I-20.

### ARE HOLIDAYS AND WEEKENDS COUNTED AS UNEMPLOYMENT DAYS?

Yes. Students who are unemployed must count all calendar days as unemployment days. If a student is not employed or does not work a minimum of 20 hours a week, then that student would count 7 days of unemployment.

### AM I REQUIRED TO HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE WHILE ON OPT?

OISS encourages all students on OPT to have health insurance. Please email [ihealth@msu.edu](mailto:ihealth@msu.edu) for insurance related questions.

### SHOULD I DEPART THE US IF MY OPT IS DELAYED?

F-1 students who applied for OPT and received Form I-797 Receipt Notice, are eligible to remain in the U.S. until their OPT application is adjudicated.

### CAN I WORK FOR THE SAME EMPLOYER DURING OPT AND STEM OPT?

Students who earned a Degree in a field included on the [Department of Homeland Security's \(DHS\) list of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics \(STEM\) fields](#) are eligible for 24-months of additional OPT period. It is possible that you can continue working with the same employer if they are e-verified and they are considered bona fide employer. Visit the STEM OPT packet to learn about STEM OPT requirements.

### CAN I MAKE AN EXPEDITE REQUEST TO MY OPT APPLICATION?

It will be very difficult to request an expedite to your OPT application. There are limited reasons for students to expedite their OPT. The only reason available for most F-1 students is "Severe financial loss to company or individual". However, [USCIS](#) has provided this guidance: "F-1 students are required to establish that they have the financial ability to pay for their course of study and living expenses for the entire period of study as indicated on their I-20, thus they cannot claim financial hardship due to the very nature of their nonimmigrant status and maintenance thereof. Also, an employment offer or start date does not qualify under [USCIS's severe financial loss expedite criteria](#)."

You may contact the USCIS National Customer Service number 1-800-375-5283 (Monday to Friday 8am-6pm) to request an expedite of your pending OPT if you have a valid expedite reason.

### CAN OISS HELP ME GET INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF MY OPT APPLICATION?

Unfortunately, no. USCIS will only give information about OPT application directly to the student or their designated attorney.