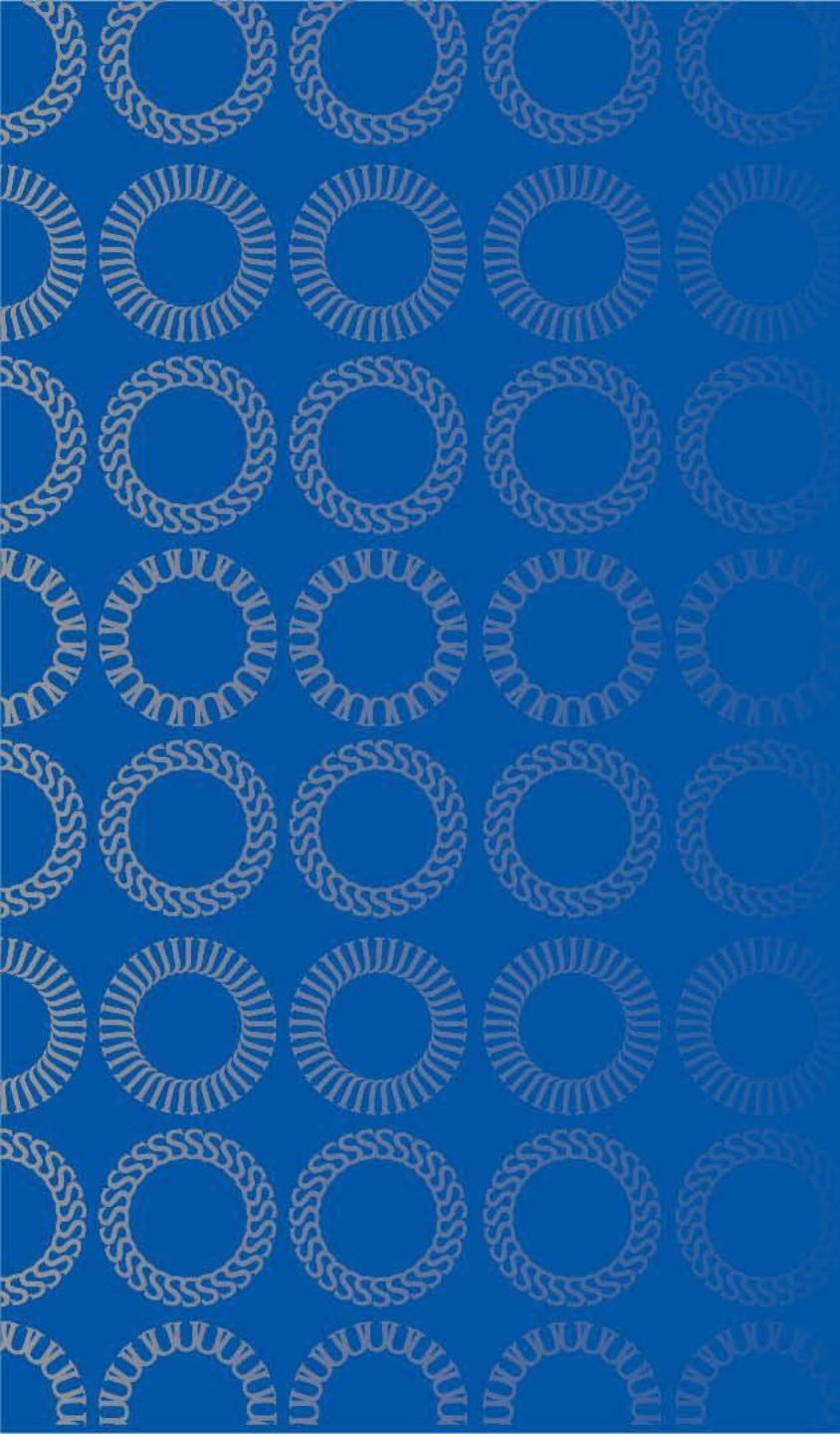


A decorative pattern of white circular motifs, resembling stylized sunbursts or gears, arranged in a grid on the left side of the blue background.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

SJSU | INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
AND SCHOLAR SERVICES

Post-Completion OPT

This tutorial will give important information regarding the process for applying for Post-Completion OPT, as well as student's responsibilities while on Post-Completion OPT.

We recommend that you take the time to review all slides, then [contact](#) International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) Office if you have further questions.

international-office@sjsu.edu

Optional Practical Training

“Temporary employment that is directly related to an F-1 student’s major area of study”

Up to 12 months may be authorized by USCIS

Pre-Completion

Occurs during your studies.

Review [CPT information](#),
[Pre-Completion OPT webpage](#).
Then meet with an ISSS Advisor to
discuss further.

Post-Completion

Occurs after degree completion OR
Grad students only: After completion
of all course requirements and are
only left with a project, thesis or
comprehensive final exam.

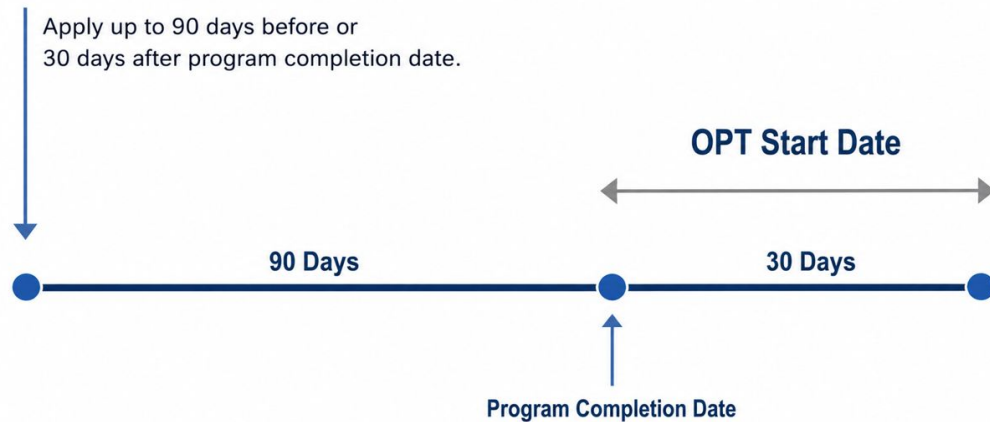
*** This tutorial will focus on Post-Completion OPT.**

Post-Completion OPT

- Post-Completion Optional Practical Training is a type of work authorization that allows international students on the F-1 status to work in the United States for up to 12 months;
 - after the completion of a degree program OR
 - Grad students only: after completion of all course requirements and are only left with a project, thesis or comprehensive final exam.
- Employment on Post-Completion OPT must be directly related to the student's major field of study and at least 20 hours per week to be considered full-time.
 - Post-Completion OPT gives students the opportunity to gain real-world professional experience while applying the knowledge and skills they learned during their degree.
- Students must first receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS before they can begin working.
- Students must report changes to their employment and U.S. address through the SEVP Portal.
- You are still in F-1 status while on Post-Completion OPT and can continue to reach out to ISSS for guidance and advising.

When to Apply

Post-Completion OPT



- You may submit the post-completion OPT I-20 request to ISSS up to **90 days** BEFORE or within **60* days** AFTER the program completion date, as long as you are in the U.S. and have not left.
 - *We recommend that you apply early.*
- OPT applications can take up to 3-5 months (sometimes longer) to get approved by USCIS. Therefore, we recommend that you apply early. You are not required to have a job to apply.
 - **You must get a new I-20 with OPT recommendation BEFORE filing your OPT application with USCIS.**

***Due to the pending litigation with the Duration of Status (D/S) final rule, students can still apply for OPT within 60 days after their program end date. However if D/S goes into effect this can change to 30 days after program completion date.**

Please see the ISSS webpage for Post-Completion OPT to find out the Fall, Spring and Summer Completion Term Dates to determine when you can submit the request to ISSS and eligible start dates for OPT.

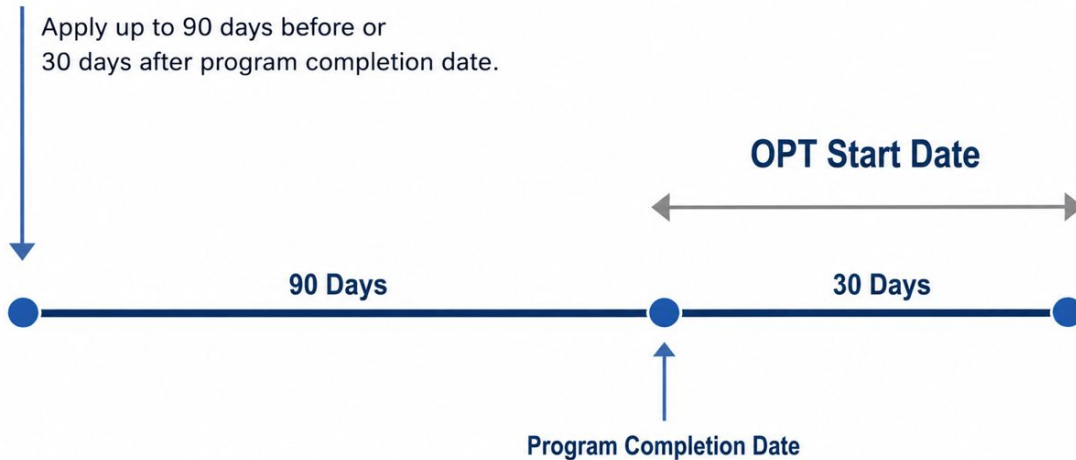
Eligibility Requirements

You must meet **ALL** of the following criteria to be eligible to apply for Post-Completion OPT:

- Enrolled full-time in F-1 status for one academic year.
 - OPT eligibility requirements may reset due to a leave of absence or SEVIS record termination. Please consult with an ISSS Advisor for more information.
- Be in valid F-1 status when requesting OPT I-20 from ISSS and when application is submitted to USCIS.
- Have a valid/unexpired I-94.
- Be in good academic standing (minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 for graduate, 2.0 for undergraduate), and making normal progress toward degree completion.
- Academic Department verification (via the OPT I-20 request e-form) confirming:
 - You will be completing your degree OR
 - Grad students only: that you have completed all courses and are only left with project, thesis or comprehensive final exam.
- Be physically present in the U.S. when requesting the OPT I-20 from ISSS and when submitting your application to USCIS.
- Have not previously been approved for post-completion OPT at the same degree level.

Requested Start Dates

Post-Completion OPT



- **First possible OPT start date:** day after program end date.
- **Last possible OPT start date:** **60* days** after the program end date.
- **Last possible OPT end date:** 12 months (minus a day) after requested start date.
 - If you previously had pre-completion OPT, then this time will be subtracted from the 12 months.
- Enter your requested start/end date on OPT I-20 request e-form.
 - Think about the following when selecting your OPT start date:
 - Do you have a job offer?
 - You cannot exceed 90 days of unemployment during your OPT period.
 - You cannot change your requested OPT dates once you have filed your application to USCIS.

***Due to the pending litigation with the Duration of Status (D/S) final rule, students can select an OPT start date within 60 days after their program end date. However if D/S goes into effect this can change to 30 days after program completion date. ISSS recommends selecting a date within 30 days after your Program End Date.**

***Please see the ISSS webpage for Post-Completion OPT to find out the Fall, Spring and Summer Completion Term Dates to determine when you can submit the request to ISSS and eligible start dates for OPT.**

OPT Process

1. Pay the one time \$150 administrative post-completion OPT fee to ISSS.

- a. A payment link is on the ISSS OPT webpage.

2. Student requests a Post-Completion OPT I-20 from ISSS. *You will need this I-20 with Post-Completion OPT recommendation from ISSS to file your Post-Completion OPT application with USCIS.*

- a. Log into iSpartan - <https://globalspartans.sjsu.edu>, using your SJSU credentials.
- b. Click on the 'F-1 Practical Training' link. Select [Post Completion Optional Practical Training I-20 Request](#).
- c. Complete the e-form.
 - i. Within the request you will need to upload proof of payment of the administrative fee and your most recent I-94 record of arrival.
- d. Select the requested OPT start and end dates. It will be in the form of a year minus a day from the start date.
 - i. Example: Start Date: 06/15/2027. End Date: 06/14/2028.
 - ii. You are not required to have a job to request or apply for post-completion OPT.
- e. Academic Department (Major Advisor or Graduate Program Coordinator) information will need to be added into the e-form. Name, title and email address.
 - i. Request will be routed to ISSS once your Academic Department reviews request.
 1. Please note that it is your responsibility to notify your academic/major advisor of the OPT approval request. It will be sent via email to the indicated advisor.

3. ISSS Receives Post-Completion OPT I-20 Request

- a. Once submitted to ISSS, processing time is 5-7 business days.
- c. DSO will review your eligibility for OPT.
 - ii. May shorten your I-20 end date for the current semester, if this has not already been done.
- d. DSO will recommend post-completion OPT in your SEVIS record and issue you a new I-20 with the OPT recommendation on page 2.
 - ii. DSO will email you the I-20 with OPT recommendation.
 - iii. **You will need this I-20 to file your OPT application with USCIS.**

OPT Process

4. Student files Form I-765 and supporting documents with USCIS.

- a. **Do not file your application with USCIS until you have a new I-20 with Post-Completion OPT recommendation from ISSS.**
- b. USCIS must receive your post-completion OPT application within **30 days** of the date your post-completion OPT was recommended by ISSS, or your post-completion OPT application will be denied.
 - i. DSO (ISSS Advisor) will tell you when your post-completion OPT recommendation was done, when they email you the I-20.
 - ii. If you are unable to file within 30 days, then contact ISSS for an updated I-20.
- c. Review checklist for documents needed to apply.

Online Filing of I-765

You will need to file the I-765 online.

**USCIS is no longer allowing for students to mail in their I-765 application.*

Go to ISSS [Post-Completion OPT webpage](#) for the tutorial, “Online Filing of I-765 for OPT/STEM OPT”.

- Save all required documents for OPT application on your computer.
- Create online account with USCIS. Use your personal/non-SJSU email address to create the online account.
 - *Since your SJSU email will be deactivated one year after you graduate.
- File I-765 for OPT.
- Upload supporting documents in online application.
- Receive same day notification, receipt number, that application has been filed with USCIS.

****Do not file with USCIS until you have the I-20 with OPT recommendation from ISSS.***

Required Documentation for Filing Online

For filing the online I-765 Post-Completion OPT Application to USCIS

- **2 x 2 Photo of You**
 - You will need to get a new passport style color photograph taken.
 - Review the [Department of State photo guidelines](#).
 - Photos need to be current, taken within the last 30 days, and not previously used for a previous application submitted to the U.S. government (such as passport, visa, OPT/STEM).
 - These photos should not be taken by you or your friend. You will need to go to a place that takes passport style color photographs. (CVS, Walgreens, UPS Store).
- **Form I-94**
 - Retrieve I-94 at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>
 - If you have a paper I-94, include a copy both sides of the card
 - If you changed your status to F-1 and have not left the US since getting F-1 status, you will need to submit a copy of your I-797A approval notice.
- **Employment Authorization Document (EAD) or Government ID**
 - Copy of previous EAD card, if you have ever had OPT(pre- or post-completion) or STEM OPT.
 - If you do not have an EAD, then you will need to submit a copy of your passport bio page.
 - *If your passport will be expiring within 6 months, you will need to write a letter acknowledging your passport expiration date and that you plan on renewing your passport before it expires.
 - *If your I-94 has your old passport number on it, then you will need to submit a copy of your current and your previous passport.
- **Previously Authorized CPT or OPT ****
 - Upload all copies of I-20's that have CPT authorization or any previous OPT or STEM OPT authorization.
- **Form I-20 ****
 - I-20 with post-completion OPT recommendation from ISSS.

**For any I-20 that you are uploading, make sure that you have done the following. Please print, (hand) sign and date page 1 of the I-20. Once you have signed and dated page 1 of the I-20, make a copy to submit with your OPT application to USCIS.

*Filing code is (c)(3)(B) for Post-Completion OPT.

Additional Information for Filing Online

For filing the online I-765 Post-Completion OPT Application to USCIS

Additional Information

Complete this section to give additional useful information that you would like USCIS to know.

**You are required to indicate any current or previous employment authorizations that have been authorized in your SEVIS record (CPT, OPT, STEM OPT from SJSU and/or other schools) (See next slide for details).*

Additional information may also include:

*Passport information: Only if your I-94 information or F-1 visa has your old passport number on it, then enter the expired passport information here.

*SEVIS ID number: If you have had a different SEVIS ID number, other than the number listed on your current I-20.

Additional Information for Filing Online

For filing the online I-765 Post-Completion OPT Application to USCIS

Additional Information Continued

Give the details of your currently authorized post-completion OPT

Also, If you had previous CPT authorization:

Section: Select “Evidence”

Question: “Previously authorized CPT or OPT”

Additional Information: Enter the type of employment authorization, indicate if part-time or full-time, degree level, authorization dates, and any receipt numbers (IOE or YSC) associated with the authorization.

Example for CPT: CPT; Full-time; Master’s; Authorized (05/31/2022 - 08/15/2022).

Example for OPT: Post-Completion OPT; Full-time; Master’s; Authorized (01/21/2021 - 01/20/2022); IOE123456789.

Review and Submit Online to USCIS

For filing the online I-765 Post-Completion OPT Application to USCIS

- **Review your application**
 - This is where you can check your application before you submit.
 - Check to make sure that you have spelled things correctly as well as entered any dates in the US format of MM/DD/YYYY.
- **Your application summary**
 - This is a summary of all the information that you have provided in your application.
- **Your statement**
 - You must read and agree to the statements that are listed in this section.
- **Your signature**
 - Type in your full legal name, for the digital signature.
- **Pay and submit**
 - The final step to submit the Form I-765 is to pay the required application fee.
 - The filing fee is non-refundable and subject to change. Please go to <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> for the current filing fee.

OPT Process

5. USCIS processes OPT application.

- a. Within 2-3 weeks of USCIS receiving your OPT application, a paper receipt (Form I-797) will be mailed to the mailing address that you provided as your mailing address in your application (Form I-765).
 - i. You will be able to access your receipt notice in your USCIS online account.
 - 1. Review the receipt for any errors in your name or date of birth. If there are errors, please contact ISSS.
- b. Processing of your OPT application can take 2-3 months, sometimes longer.
 - i. You cannot change your requested OPT dates, once you have filed your OPT application with USCIS.
 - ii. If you receive a RFE 'Request for Evidence' from USCIS, please contact ISSS.

Premium Processing

- If you want an expedited adjudication, USCIS offers **Premium Processing** for an additional fee. If you want to add Premium Processing you will need to file the [Form I-907](#) in your USCIS Online Account.
- You may file the [Form I-907](#) either concurrently with your I-765 OR at a later time as long as your I-765 application is still pending.
- If you add Premium Processing, USCIS will take adjudicative action within **30 business days**.
 - Business days **excludes** weekends and federal holidays;
 - You can use a [Business Day Calculator](#) to understand when you can expect an update from USCIS.
- Adding Premium Processing does NOT guarantee approval within 30 business days. If you receive a Biometrics Appointment, the Premium Processing clock will stop and will only restart again after you have attended your Biometrics Appointment.
- You can learn more about premium processing in our [FAQ](#) section on our [Post-Completion OPT webpage](#).

Biometrics Appointment

- Students may receive a Biometrics Appointment Notice to provide their photograph and/or fingerprints at a USCIS Application Support Center.
- Students should carefully monitor their USCIS Online Account for updates (check both the “Case Status” tab and “Documents” tab for updates). The Appointment Notice will generally be available in the USCIS Online Account first. The physical appointment notice may take 2-3 weeks to be delivered.
- Refer to the Biometrics Appointment Notice for documents to bring with you to the appointment. In general, you will need to take the Biometrics Appointment Notice and your Passport.
- Within 1-2 days after attending the Biometrics Appointment, the USCIS Online Case Status should state that USCIS will continue to process your case as at the date you attended the appointment, and nothing further is pending.
- Appointments may be rescheduled in the USCIS Online Account, however, this must be done at least one day prior to the scheduled date.
- If you miss your scheduled appointment due to unavoidable circumstances, reach out to ISSS immediately.

How to find your Biometrics Appointment Notice in the USCIS Online Account.



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

 **My Account**

My Account ▼

Resources ▼

Sign Out

Your Cases

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Submitted on May 5, 2026 | Receipt #

Download PDF ▼

Case Status

Case History

Documents

USCIS Notices

File	Date Sent	Action
Appointment Scheduled.pdf	May 15, 2026	N/A
Receipt Notice.pdf	May 5, 2026	N/A

Your uploads

While I-765 is Pending

What you can do while your application is pending with USCIS.

1. Do not work.
 - a. You cannot start working until your OPT has been approved, you have your EAD card in hand, then work within the authorized dates (noted on the card) in a job (paid or unpaid) that is related to your major.
2. Monitor your USCIS online account for any time sensitive information and updates.
 - a. Biometrics Appointment
3. Check processing time online.
 - a. Click [here](#) to check I-765 application processing times at Potomac Service Center.
 - i. Under <Forms> select 'I-765', for <Form Category> select 'Based on a request by a qualified F-1 academic student [(c)(3)]', for <Field Office or Service Center> select 'Service Center Operations (SCOPS)>', click the 'Get Processing Time' button.
4. Look for a position directly related to your major field of study.
5. If you receive an RFE 'Request for Evidence' or RFI 'Request for Information', please contact ISSS.
6. Do not travel abroad while your I-765 is pending.

Employment Authorization

EAD work permit

- Report EAD typographic error(s) to ISSS.
- Only work based on given dates printed on card.
- Paid or unpaid employment at least 20 hours per week (full-time), must be directly related to major field of study.

6. Once OPT is approved, student receives approval notice and EAD card.

- a. Once your OPT application has been approved, USCIS will mail you 2 documents, separately:
 - i. Form I-797 approval notice;
 - ii. EAD (Employment Authorization Document).
- b. You cannot start working until:
 - i. Your OPT has been approved;
 - ii. You have the EAD card;
 - iii. Work within the dates authorized on your EAD.



Maintaining Status on Post-Completion OPT

- Report employment and any changes in employment within 10 days of the change directly in your [SEVP Portal Account](#).
- All employment must be directly related to your major field of study.
 - Employment can be paid or unpaid, but needs to be at least 20 hours per week (full-time) to stop the unemployment clock.
- Report living address and any change in living address within 10 days of the change directly in your SEVP Portal Account.
- Do not exceed 90 days of unemployment.
- [Maintain a valid travel signature](#) (endorsement) on your I-20.
 - Validity of 6 months, when on post-completion OPT.

Reporting Responsibilities

During Post-Completion OPT

7. Student uses [SEVP portal](#) for employment reporting. Employment must meet **ALL** of the following requirements.

- I. Employment must be directly related to your major field of study from SJSU. *ISSS is not in a position to determine employment relevance to your major. You are responsible for this.*
- II. Employment may be paid or unpaid;
- III. Employment will need to be at least 20 hours a week in a qualifying position.
 - A. This will prevent unemployment days from accruing.

SEVP Portal

- Closer to your OPT start date, SEVP will send you a link to create a SEVP Portal Account. *
- This email will be sent to your SJSU email address.
- We recommend creating the account even if you do not have a job yet.

SEVP Portal

- Report any employment, change in employment or personal information (living address) within 10 days.
- Visit Study in the States SEVP Portal Help for more information.

*If you do not receive the email from SEVP to create your student portal account within week after your Post-Completion OPT start date, then submit the [SEVP Portal Access Form](#).

SEVP Portal Information

 An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#) ▾

STUDY in the **STATES**

[Translate this page](#)

Search

STUDENTS ▾

SCHOOLS ▾

BLOG ▾

TOOLS ▾

HELP HUBS ▾

SEVP PORTAL HELP

Students on post-completion practical training should use the SEVP Portal Help section to learn how to use the SEVP Portal and comply with reporting requirements. Eligible students can access the SEVP Portal from ICE.gov.



Purpose

Important tool to let F-1 students on Post-Completion OPT to update their physical home address, mailing address, telephone number, employer information and monitor their employment authorization.

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help>

Additional SEVP Portal Resources

- Create SEVP Portal Account
- SEVP Portal User Guide
- SEVP Portal Videos

Unemployment on OPT

Important

If you accrue more than 90 days of unemployment or you forget to report your employment information into the SEVP portal, then you are considered not to be maintaining status. A SEVP official may terminate your SEVIS record.

Post-Completion OPT

- Based on the start date listed on EAD.
- May accrue up to 90 days of unemployment.
- Unemployment is cumulative.
- **It is your responsibility to keep track of number of unemployment days you have accrued, so you do not exceed 90.**

SEVIS employment counter

- Based off employment data submitted by you.
- Report information to SEVP portal within 10 days.
- Report paid or unpaid work, multiple jobs, etc.

Travel While on Approved OPT

You will need the following documents to re-enter the U.S. and should present these to the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer when entering the US. We recommend that you have the following documents in your carry-on, in case you need to access them at the Port of Entry.

1. I-20 with valid travel signature on page 2. Travel signatures are valid for 6 months, when on OPT.
2. Valid passport.
3. Valid F-1 visa.

You should have the following documents also ready to show the CBP Officer in case they ask to see them:

1. EAD card.
2. Employment Letter.

Do NOT travel abroad with a PENDING OPT application!

1. If your OPT is denied after your program end date and you are not in the U.S., then you do not have an option to re-enter the U.S. and reapply for OPT.
2. Renewing your F-1 visa, can be risky during this time.
3. You may miss your Biometrics Appointment if you are abroad.

Inform ISSS if you are leaving the U.S. prior to your OPT end date with no plans to return and resume OPT. Ending My F-1 Status

Requesting an Updated I-20

We recommend that you request an updated I-20, once the following has occurred:

1. OPT has been approved.

[Replacement/Updated I-20](#)

2. Reported employment or changes in employment in SEVP Portal.

[Replacement/Updated I-20](#)

Traveling overseas?

- Request a travel signature I-20.
 - Travel signatures on page 2 of the form I-20 are valid for 6 months when on Post-Completion OPT.

[Travel Signature/I-20 Request](#)

Unable to access iSpartan to submit e-form? Please go [here](#) for further instructions.

End of OPT

At the end of your OPT, you have a 30 day grace period after your OPT ends to do one of the following:

1. Get a new I-20 from SJSU to pursue a new degree program;
2. Transfer I-20 to another U.S. school to pursue a new degree program;
3. Leave the U.S.

***If you are eligible for the 24 month STEM OPT extension, you must get an I-20 with STEM recommendation from ISSS and file your application to USCIS prior to your post-completion OPT end date. Review ISSS webpage on [STEM OPT](#) for more information.**

If you have any questions about these options, please [schedule an appointment](#) with an ISSS Advisor.

iSpartan (ISSS Student Portal)

iSpartan - You will use this portal to submit requests to ISSS. *(Recommend using Google Chrome or Firefox as your web browser).*

E-forms

Post-Completion OPT I-20 Request

- Need this I-20 from SJSU with Post-Completion OPT recommendation, **before** you can file your OPT application with USCIS.

SEVP Portal Access Form

- Submit this form only if you do not receive an email from SEVP to create your SEVP portal account, within a week after your OPT start date.

Replacement/Updated I-20 Request

- To request an updated I-20 after your Post-Completion OPT has been approved.
- To request an updated I-20 after you have reported your employment via your SEVP Portal.

Travel Signature/I-20 Request

- To request an updated travel signature from ISSS.

Unable to access iSpartan to submit e-form? Please go [here](#) for further instructions.

THANK YOU!

Email: international-office@sjsu.edu

[Check ISSS homepage](#) for more information as well as [Workshops webpage](#) for F-1 Employment Workshop, for Post-Completion OPT.