

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### For students recommended for Optional Practical Training

Congratulations! You have been recommended for optional practical training (OPT). You've earned the opportunity to have this experience by working so hard on your degree at PSU. We hope that it's a good experience for you! To insure the best possible experience for you, there are a few important details you must understand.

Although you have been recommended for OPT, you are not authorized to begin working until you have received your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the USCIS. The Nebraska Service Center, which currently processes OPT applications for schools in our region, generally takes 90 days to process these applications.

OPT work authorization is designed to give you work experience in your field of study. While there are no guidelines suggesting how to decide what job is within your field of study, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are doing so. Failure to do so will place you in violation of your immigration status.

You may work for more than one employer while on OPT, provided that all of your work is within your field of study. You may also work for multiple employers simultaneously.

As soon as you find work, you are required to report your employer's name and the address where you are working for them to the Office of Int'l Student and Scholar Services. You are also required to report any changes in your name and/or home address. Finally, you must report to us if you STOP working for a particular employer. Each of these reports must be made to OISSS w/in 10 days of the change occurring. Please use the designated e-mail address, [psuopt@pdx.edu](mailto:psuopt@pdx.edu), for any OPT-related updates. Your employer may use this address too if reporting any change in your employment status.

As of April 8, 2008, new federal regulations place a limit on the amount of time you may be UNEMPLOYED during your OPT period. You may have up to 90 days of unemployment while you are within your authorized period of OPT. If you are granted a 17-month extension of your OPT (see below for more information), this aggregate (total) period of unemployed time is extended to 120 days.

### H1B cap gap elimination

The April 2008 regulations effectively eliminate the cap-gap experienced by students approved for OPT whose employers had filed H1b for them but whose OPT period ended before the H1b became effective. Now, if your employer decided to sponsor you for H1b, your OPT period is AUTOMATICALLY extended until the H1b period becomes effective or is denied. In the latter case, if your EAD has expired, then a 60-day grace period begins from the date of your H1b denial notice. During this 60 day grace period, you may begin a program of study or leave the United States. No new EAD will be issued to cover the gap period.

## 17-month extension of OPT period

The April 2008 federal regulations allow some students to apply for a 17-month extension of their initial 12-month period of OPT. Students for whom NO H1b application has been filed, who have received a Bachelor, Masters or Doctoral degree in a Science, Engineering, Technology or Mathematics field may apply for an extension of their OPT period. If your degree is not in an eligible field, then you may **not** apply for an extension.

According to our records, you've been authorized for OPT in the following field:

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According to the federal regulations, you are / are NOT eligible for an extension of your OPT period.

If you wish to apply for an extension of your OPT period, you must be employed and your employer must be participating in the federal E-Verify program (a program similar in some respects to SEVIS for employers).

You may not apply for a second 17-month extension of your OPT period. The totally OPT period per level of study is now 29 months for those students whose degrees allow for an extension.

For additional information about the 17-month extension, please see the OPT Extension Instructions.

If you have questions about any of these details, please ASK!  
Our contact information is at the bottom of this page.