



OPT

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

RULES FOR F-1 STUDENTS



Ms. Karin Griffith

WHAT IS OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING?

- Employment opportunity for F-1 students in the student's major field of study.
- Pre-Completion and post-completion OPT in student's field of study.
- Post-Completion OPT – Must complete degree.



FILING DEADLINES FOR INITIAL OPT APPLICATIONS

- Student must file the OPT application up to 90 days before the end date of the degree program, and up to 60 days after the end date of the degree program.
- Students may want to apply 60 days after if there is a question about meeting the thesis/defense deadline.



BEGINNING AND ENDING DATES OF OPT

- Requested start date cannot be more than 60 days past the student's program end date.
- Requested end date cannot be more that 12 months after the requested start date.
- The start date will be the requested start date or the date of approval, whichever is later. If USCIS adjudicates the I-765 after the requested start date, the end date may be extended.
- The end date cannot be more than 14 months.



COMPLETION DATE CHANGES AFTER FILING OPT

What if student applies for OPT and fails to complete the requirements for the program?

Scenarios:

- Request a withdrawal of the OPT.
- Continue to complete the degree and work part time on OPT until the new graduation date.



HOW DO I APPLY?

1st Step: Complete form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization)

Prepare check or money order for \$380 (Three-Hundred and eighty) made payable to the U.S Department of Homeland Security.

Obtain two color passport-style photos

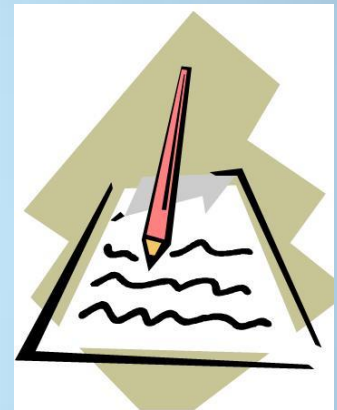
Go see Ms. Karin Griffith with all the above documents and:

- ❖ **Letter or email from Advisor confirming Graduation Date**
- ❖ **All Previous Forms of I-20**
- ❖ **Passport and I-94.**



FORM I-765 CHANGES

- The eligibility code for an F-1 seeking OPT HAS THESE THREE CODES. (c) (3) (A) for pre-completion OPT, (c) (3) (B) for post-completion OPT, (c) (3) (C) for a 17-month STEM OPT extension.
- On item 17 – asks for information needed to process applications for the 17-month STEM OPT extension, including space for the degree conferred, and the employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number. Also, required is a copy of the conferred degree as well as an official transcript.



EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT (EAD)

- Ms. Griffith recommends the OPT

The next step is the authorization of employment from USCIS (it takes 60-90 days)

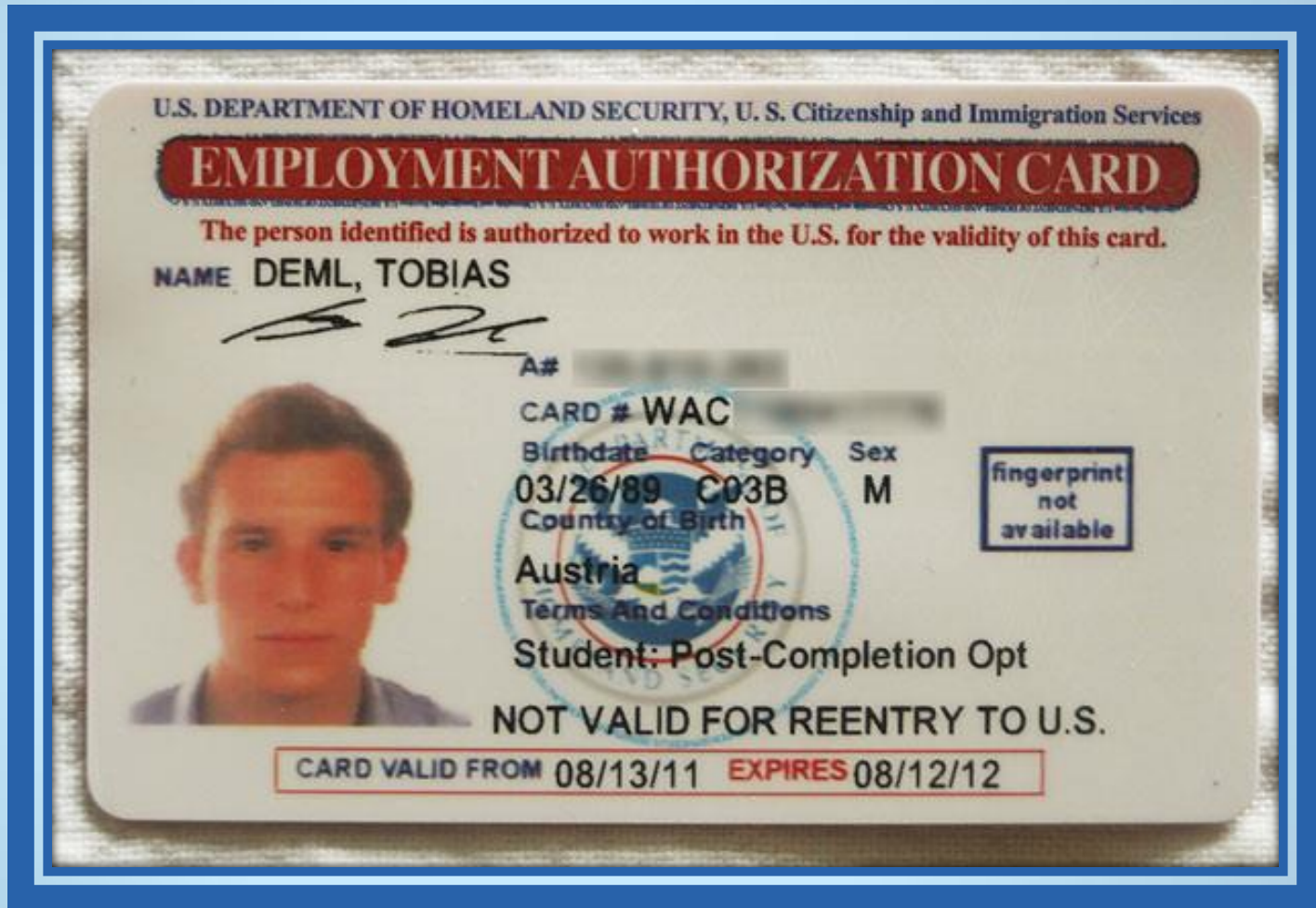
Authorization= EAD (Employment Authorization Document)

The dates of employment are the official dates on the EAD

Students can only begin employment upon receipt of the EAD with the date of approved employment

Report employer name and address to Ms. Karin Griffith

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT (EAD)



LIMITS ON PERIODS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

- Students on post-completion OPT may not accrue an aggregate of more than **90 days** of unemployment under the initial 12-month period of OPT.
- Students granted a 17-month OPT extension may not accrue an aggregate of more than **120** days of unemployment during the total 29-month OPT period.
- Students must work at least 20 hours per week in a qualifying position to be considered employed.

CONSEQUENCES OF EXCEEDING THE PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT

- Be advised if reaching the limit of authorized employment, student should prepare to transfer to another institution, change educational level, or depart the U.S. or change status.
- DHS enforcement may cause a denial in future benefits or ICE/SEVP may select an individual or groups of students and request proof of employment. The student will need to show OPT compliance. Keep records.

EMPLOYMENT ALLOWED ON OPT



- Unpaid employment (volunteer) – student may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern, where this practice does not violate any labor laws.
- The unpaid employment must be at least 20 hours per week.
- Student must be able to provide evidence acquired from the student's employer to verify the 20 hours a week and period of unpaid employment.

HOW TO SHOW THAT EMPLOYMENT IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO FIELD OF STUDY

Document of the position held

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graph TD; A[Document of the position held] --> B[Proof of the duration of the position]; B --> C[Job title]; C --> D[Contact information of supervisor]; D --> E[Job description]; E --> F[For clarification, a letter from the employer may be needed to show work performed is in the field of study];
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Proof of the duration of the position

Job title

Contact information of supervisor

Job description

For clarification, a letter from the employer may be needed to show work performed is in the field of study

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS

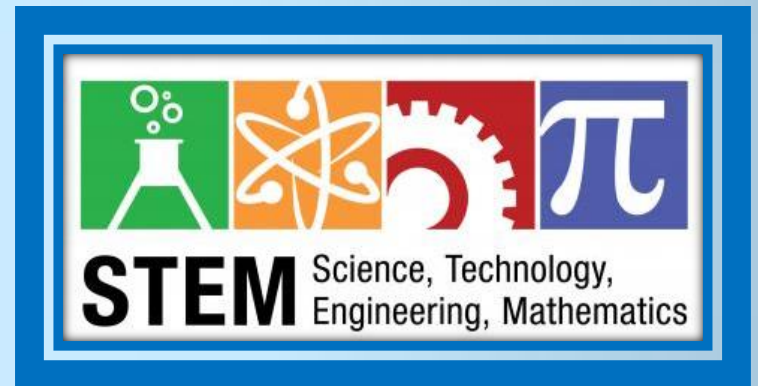
- All students on OPT must report to Ms. Karin Griffith the following information:
 - ❖ Any change in name or address
 - ❖ The name and address of their employer
 - ❖ Any change to the name and address of the employer
 - ❖ Any interruption of such employment (laid off dates)



ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR 17-MONTH EXTENSION OF OPT

Besides having to be enrolled in a “ STEM “ field of study, there are additional requirements for the 17-Month extension of OPT:

- The student must be currently authorized for a 12-month period of OPT and working for a US employer in a job directly related to the student’s field of study.
- The student must have successfully completed a bachelor’s master’s or doctoral degree in a field on the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program list, from a SEVIS-certified US college or university. See <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>
- At the time of application for the 17-month extension, the student must have a job-offer or be employed by an employer registered with the “E-Verify” federal employment verification system.



CONTINUED...

- Only one STEM OPT is available per student
- M. Karin Griffith must recommend the extension and issue a new I-20 with the recommendation noted.
- The student must file the extension application in a timely manner, generally 90 and 120 days before the current period of OPT expires.
- A student who files the application timely may continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision is made, or for 180 days, whichever comes first.



CHANGING OF EMPLOYERS WHILE 17-MONTH EXTENSION IS PENDING



- Student must report the change in employment to Ms. Karin Griffith.
- Ms. Griffith updates student's SEVIS record.

GRACE PERIOD AFTER OPT

The 60 day period is given to F-1 student after the completion of a course of study, or an authorized period of post completion OPT. It allows the student time to prepare for departure from the U.S, apply for a transfer to another institution, request a change of level at the current school, or take steps to change to a legal status.



THANK YOU

