



Important Requirements for Students on Optional Practical Training

90 Days of Employment

Immigration regulations for Optional Practical Training (OPT) state that if a student is not employed 90 days after the start date of the EAD card, the student is considered out of status. Unemployment is described as time spent without a qualifying job during OPT and each day that the student is not employed is counted toward the limit on unemployment time. The limit is 90 Days for students on post-completion OPT.

If a student is not able to secure a paid job and is coming to the 90 days of unemployment he/she may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern, where this does not violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week for students on post-completion OPT and students **must** be able to provide evidence from the employer that they worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of unpaid employment.

If a student exceeds the 90 day period of unemployment then he/she has technically violated his/her status. Therefore the student is required to either:

- 1. Apply to continue his/her education by a change of level or transfer to another SEVP certified school.**
- 2. Take action to otherwise maintain legal status by applying for another immigration status or**
- 3. Depart the United States**

Although schools are not required to alert the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) if a student has exceeded the 90 days of unemployment, the student should be aware that he/she may be denied future immigration benefits that rely on valid F-1 status if DHS determines that the student exceeded the limitations on unemployment. Additionally, SEVP may examine SEVIS data for an individual, a selected group, or all students on post-completion OPT and terminate a student's record if it fails to show the student maintained the proper period of employment.

Reporting OPT Employment to OIS

In such cases, the student will be given an opportunity to show that he/she complied with all OPT requirements, including maintaining employment.

To report any OPT employer information, changes to employment, or any periods of unemployment please go to <https://sait.usc.edu/ois/infoupdate/>. OIS recommends that any employer updates be made immediately after any changes to employment.

Students are also required to send OIS a copy of their EAD upon receipt of the card. This is to help ensure that your OPT is valid as OIS will check on the status of your SEVIS record.

Please scan and email a copy of the EAD card to ois@usc.edu or mail a copy of the EAD to the address below:

Attention: EAD Copy, USC Office of International Services
3601 Trousdale Parkway
Student Union 300
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0899
Attention: EAD Copy

Please be advised that any new information regarding immigration regulations that could affect you while on OPT will be sent to your USC email address, it will be your responsibility to check this email address for these updates.