

Follow transfer procedures if you wish to return to full-time study.

Students on Post-Completion (after graduation) OPT are only permitted to enroll in recreational or vocational courses. New regulations do not allow you to pursue a degree program while participating in Post-Completion OPT. To return to school after completing OPT, you need to obtain an I-20 for the next program and have your SEVIS record transferred by MSU to the new school before the OPT ends, or within 60 days of the OPT end date. To resume studies at MSU, we must create a new I-20 in the same time period. Note: You must begin the new program within 5 months of your OPT end date. Failure to comply with either of these items will leave you needing Reinstatement, or the need to get an "Initial Attendance" I-20 to use to re-enter the U.S. within 30 days of the new program start date. The MSU SEVIS "Transfer Out" form is available at www.mnsu.edu/iso/forms/.

Notify the ISO if you change status (such as H-1B temporary worker) or leave the U.S.A prior to the end of your OPT end date.

If you have an employer who has indicated they are interested in pursuing an H-1B for you, please work very closely with them to ensure that they apply for the H-1B in a timely manner. Only a certain number of H-1B's are available for a year from October through next October, and this limit/cap is quickly reached (for some employers – colleges/universities are exempt from this cap). It is to your benefit to have your employer apply for the H-1B as quickly as possible, even if your OPT is still pending or valid. If your status changes or you re-enter the U.S.A. in H-1B status, please provide the ISO with a copy of the approval (I-797) so we can notify Immigration that you are no longer considered an F-1 student. Also, if you decide to depart the U.S.A. prior to the end of your OPT, we can enter that information.

Inform your OPT employer that F-1 students are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A) withholding.

According to the IRS, there should be no withholding of social security or Medicare taxes from your pay if you are considered a non-resident for tax purposes [been in the U.S. less than five years]. For reference, see last FAQ on IRS website at <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p519/ch08.html#d0e9609> or www.irs.gov/business/small/international/article/0,,id=31635.00.html and/or IRS Publication 519, "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens."

Retain Alumni contact.

Please register on www.MSUGrads.com after your graduation to stay in touch and receive the Today magazine. Sign up for the "International Community" and find the e-mails from old friends. We wish for you to remain connected to MSU long after your academic experience. Best wishes from the ISO!

International Student Office
219-B Centennial Student Union
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Mankato, MN 56001

Tel: (507) 389-1281
Fax: (507) 389-6225
iso@mnsu.edu



Information in the brochure will be made available in alternative format, such as large print or cassette tape, upon request. Minnesota State University, Mankato is an affirmative action/equal opportunity educator and employer



Checklist reminder about your status once you are in
Optional Practical Training (OPT) after you graduate:
KEEP THIS CARD for future reference

Ensure your graduation date is correct.

Your SEVIS I-20 will be shortened to your graduation date. If you will not graduate before the expected term, please inform the ISO immediately.

Work in your field of study - begin/end work on dates listed on your EAD.

OPT is considered gaining work experience in your field of study. You are not eligible to begin working until you have received the Employment Authorization Document [EAD] card and the beginning date of the EAD has arrived. You may change employers during the OPT/EAD dates as long as the work relates to your field of study. If you cannot find a job, you should document that you have been continually and actively been looking for a job during that OPT period. You may stay in the U.S.A 60 days after your OPT/EAD expires as a "grace period" but you may not work.

Keep ISO and Immigration / Dept. of Homeland Security updated on your address.

The new Immigration regulations that took effect 1/1/03 require you to report changes in your name or address within 10 days. You may complete this process by updating the address at the HUB at www.mnsu.edu/thehub/addressform.html, and follow the process.

Special Registrants (I-94 contains a FIN number) should update any address change to the ISO and Homeland Security. Use the form AR-1ISR and send to the address indicated. Follow this link <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/specialregistration/index.htm>

Restrict any travel outside the U.S. or at least receive guidance from ISO before you depart.

We strongly suggest that you do not travel outside the U.S.A while your application is in progress. The Immigration official could deny you re-entry into the U.S.A if you do not have the EAD card to show proof of OPT authorization. Once you receive your EAD card, overseas travel is still risky and your return to the U.S.A is not guaranteed. If the F-1 Student Visa stamp in your passport has expired, you may have a difficult time obtaining a new Visa. Be prepared to show Immigration officers proof that you are Interviewing or that you have secured a job (e.g., a letter from an employer and/or a recent pay stub, or interview appointment). If you will travel while on OPT, make sure your I-20 has been signed/endorsed by the ISO within the last six months.

