



OPT Approval Next Steps

Do not plan to leave the country until you have received your EAD card, new I-20 and proof of employment. You have 90 days of unemployment.

1. After ISS receives your EAD card, they will email you. If you are still in the Rocky Mount area, we will let you know so you can come and pick it up.
If you are no longer in the area, please send your current mailing address with the name of the person who receives mail there to Suzanne Hening. If your name can receive mail at that address, your name can be added to the address, but if not, it must say, IN CARE OF (C/O) and the person's name who receives mail. If not, it will not be delivered and be sent back to USCIS. Not good! Once Suzanne Hening has the correct mailing information, she will take your EAD card to the bookstore to be Fed Ex'd to you (with a tracking number.) Then, you will be notified, and you can contact the bookstore for your payment arrangements to have the card shipped to you.
2. Update the ISS team with your new contact information: Physical/ mailing address, cell phone, and email. Your responsibility.
3. Update your SEVIS OPT portal at any time you make any changes. This is your responsibility.
4. Once you secure employment, ask your employer to prepare a letter for you that meets the guidelines below. You must send it to Suzanne Hening before you start work. (ISS will provide a sample letter): Your responsibility.
 - a. Letter should be addressed to you
 - b. Letter should be on company letterhead
 - c. Letter should state your job title
 - d. Letter should state what you will be doing in the job and how it matches your major.
 - e. Letter should list all of the employer's contact information (STEM OPT employers must have an EIN number). It should include the supervisor's name, direct phone number, and email.
 - f. Letter should include the physical address of where you will be working.
5. Once the letter has been received by Suzanne Hening, you will be issued a **new OPT I-20** within five to seven business days. Please print this, sign it and keep it for your records, travel, and as proof of employment.

6. Please make a copy of your OPT I-20 for your employer as well.
7. Also send international@ncwu.edu a scanned copy of your signed I-20. (The copy with your signature on page one.) We need to keep it in your electronic file.
8. Do not start to work until you have the new OPT I-20 stating who your new employer is on the second page and with the proper start date. Your responsibility.
9. Federal regulations state that you must update ISS within 10 days with any new information regarding your contact information, new employment, loss of employment, etc. ISS will issue you a new I-20 upon receiving this information. Your responsibility.
10. OPT I-20s must be signed and dated for travel every 6 months, so please check your travel dates on your I-20 and contact us for signatures. Your responsibility.
 - a. When you have completed your OPT year, you will then have a grace period of 60 days. If you wish to apply for STEM OPT, you must do this before your regular OPT ends. (you can apply within 90 days of the end date of OPT)
 - b. If you do not apply for STEM OPT or grad school, then you will have 60 days to leave the country.
 - c. Notify Suzanne Hening by email with your plans after OPT completion.

If you decide to leave the country for a vacation or any reason, you must notify ISS. We will need to give you the necessary information you need before you travel. If you leave the country, it is at your own risk. There are no guarantees you will be granted re-entry. You must have a valid visa to re-enter the country.

A-Leaving the country before approved for OPT: Not advised.

B-Leaving the country after OPT approved but not employed. -Not Advised.

C-Leaving the country after OPT approved and employed- At your discretion. If your visa has expired, you must renew your visa before you return, or do not plan to leave the country.

Please contact ISS for that process for an OPT visa renewal.

- Ask your supervisor or employer to write you a letter stating you are currently employed and they are giving you permission to leave and to return on _____ date.
- Take your form I-20 with your signature and an updated travel signature on the 2nd page within the last 6 months.
- Passport, that is valid for at least 6 months in the future.
- Valid Visa. Not expired.
- EAD Card

Remember, it is always at the discretion of the US government and CBP at the airport to allow you to re-enter the US. Travel at your own risk if you leave the country.