

Post-Completion OPT Acknowledgement Form

There are several important rules and procedures that must be followed after applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment authorization. Complying with these rules and procedures is necessary to maintain lawful F-1 immigration status.

Please carefully review each item below and then sign this form to confirm that you understand and will abide by each item. Your signature also confirms your requested OPT start date. Return this signed form to ISO to request your OPT Form I-20.

- 1. Failure to complete the program requirements:** I understand that if I fail to complete all of my program requirements by the expiration date on my Form I-20, that I must notify ISO. I understand that this will impact my ability to continue receiving my GSBS stipend and may impact my ability to begin certain types of employment (i.e. a postdoc position at UMass Chan) using OPT.
- 2. Timely filing of the OPT application to USCIS:** I understand that for post-completion OPT, the earliest I may file for OPT is 90 days prior to completion of my program. The latest my application can be receipted by USCIS is 60 days after my completion date. Failure to file my OPT application in a timely manner may cause my application to be denied or returned to me by USCIS. The completion date is the date that GSBS certifies that I have submitted my dissertation, along with all of the appropriate items listed on the GSBS check out form.
- 3. Cancelling or changing my application:** I understand that once my OPT application is filed, it is extremely difficult to cancel or change the requested OPT dates on my application and can only be done if the application has not yet been adjudicated (approved) by the USCIS Service Center. I will contact ISO if I need to change anything about my application.
- 4. Submission of EAD Card copy to the ISO:** I understand that the ISO requires a copy of my OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card for their records. If I choose to have my EAD sent to my home address, I will provide a copy of the EAD (front and back) to ISO as soon as I receive it.
- 5. Unemployment on OPT:** During post-completion OPT, I understand that my F-1 status is dependent upon employment. I understand that I may not accrue an aggregate of 90 days of unemployment during the 12 months of initial post-completion OPT. If I cannot get a paying job in my field, I understand that if I pursue an internship or other volunteer work in my field for 20+ hours a week, it will count as employment so I will not be accruing days of unemployment. I may check with ISO to confirm the total unemployment days reported in SEVIS.
- 6. Notifying ISO of employer information:** I understand that I must update ISO on my employment status while on OPT. Within 10 days of starting employment, I must inform ISO of the name and physical street address of my employer, including my employer's EIN and my position title. I must also indicate if my job is full-time (20+ hours per week) or part-time (less than 20 hours per week) and confirm in writing that my new employment is related to the field of biomedical sciences. I will also notify ISO of any change or termination in my employment within 10 days of the effective date that such a change or termination occurs.
- 7. Notifying ISO of other changes:** I understand that I am required by federal regulations to notify the ISO of any change to my legal name, visa status, or my local U.S. address within ten days of the change occurring.
- 8. Invalidating OPT:** I understand that my OPT will be cancelled or invalidated if I commence a new program of study, transfer my SEVIS record to a new school, engage in unauthorized employment, or otherwise violate my F-1 immigration status.
- 9. Limits on future periods of OPT:** I understand that I am eligible for one 12- month period of OPT per educational level (e.g. Bachelor's, Master's, PhD. etc.) and that all of my OPT employment must be directly

related to my major field(s) of study. I understand that as a PhD graduate, I will be ineligible to pursue additional OPT following any future degree that I may pursue.

- 10. STEM OPT:** I have been advised by ISO that my program is in a DHS designated STEM field (Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics). I am aware that I will need to contact ISO 90 days prior to OPT expiration date to determine my eligibility to apply for this additional 24-month period of OPT. If I am eligible for, and am granted a 24-month OPT STEM extension, I understand that I may not accrue an aggregate of more than 150 days of unemployment during the total OPT period comprising of both the initial 12-month post-completion OPT authorization and the subsequent 24- month extension period.
- 11. Traveling outside the U.S.:** I understand that if I travel outside the US without the following items, I will likely experience difficulty when returning to the U.S. and could, in fact, be prohibited from re-entering the US.
- a. Travel Signature on my Form I-20 that is less than six (6) months old.
 - b. Letter from my employer to prove that I have a job to resume when I return to the U.S. or an offer letter to show that I will begin a job upon my return to the U.S.
 - c. Financial documentation: I understand that if I have a low-paying job or unpaid internship, I should carry financial documentation to show that I have sufficient finances to live in the U.S. Offer letters should contain salary information.
 - d. F-1 visa in my passport must be valid on the day I plan to return to the U.S.
 - e. OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD, also known as “OPT Card”)
 - f. Valid Passport
 - g. Diploma or certification of completion of studies from the university Registrar, especially if I need to renew my F-1 visa stamp
- I understand that I cannot enter the U.S. in any other visa status except F-1 during my OPT. If I re-enter as a tourist, visa waiver, visa exempt (Canadians), or on any other visa status, it will interrupt my F-1 status, and invalidate my OPT.
- 12. 60-Day “grace period” after OPT/STEM:** I understand that I am permitted a period of 60 days to remain in the U.S. following the end date on my OPT/STEM EAD. I may not work during this period unless my immigration status is changed to a classification that permits employment. I can also use this time to transfer my F-1 status to another school, apply for a change of status, or depart the U.S. (which I must do no later than the 60th day).
- 13. Beginning employment:** I know that I may not begin working until I have the EAD Card for OPT in my possession and reach the start date listed on the EAD. Beginning employment prior to receiving the card and prior to the start date listed on the card constitutes unauthorized employment and is a violation of my F-1 status.
- 14. OPT start date:** I am responsible for choosing the employment start date below which will be reflected on the ISO’s recommendation on the Form I-20. I know that I will not be able to change this start date if becomes incompatible with a future offer of employment.

I request the following **OPT start date:** _____

I have read and understand the above rules and procedures and will abide by them. I verify that I have not used any period of OPT at my current educational level that would disqualify me from OPT authorization I now seek.

Student’s Name (Printed): _____

Signature of Student: _____ Today’s Date: _____

US Address: _____

Non-UMass Chan email*: _____ Cell # if available: _____

***Note to students:** ISO is requesting your non-UMass Chan email address for use in the SEVIS OPT Portal, so that you can access the portal after your UMass Chan email is deactivated. Please be sure to report a new email address to ISO if your email address changes.