

Graduating on an F-1 Visa

What's next?

Table of Contents

1. Optional Practical Training (OPT)
1. SEVIS Grace Period
1. Transferring out in SEVIS
1. Getting letters of invitation for Graduation Visitors
1. Graduation Sashes and Seniors' Reception
1. Q & A
1. Session Evaluation

Post Completion OPT

1. Post-Completion OPT

- a. The purpose of OPT is to allow F-1 visa students to gain experience in the field legally. OPT Can be used once per degree level
- b. Must be related to field of study (major)
- c. OPT is granted in 12 month increments, but can used utilized in 6 month increments
- d. Is adjudicated (approved) through USCIS
- e. Result is an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card

OPT

1. Application Procedure

- a. Your International Student Services Coordinator must recommend you for OPT in SEVIS, complete Spelman College's [OPT form](#) you will receive email notification within 5 business days to pick up your update I-20

- b. The application fee is 340.00 USD

1. Unemployment within OPT

- a. You may accrue an aggregate of 90 days of unemployment within the 12 month period

Reporting Requirements

3. Reporting Requirements

- a. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and GZ Center recommend that you keep an employment record of all employers with job descriptions, employment dates, and supervisors' name and contact information

- a. You must report in *writing* to your International Student Services Coordinator within 10 business days of any changes in:
 - i. legal name
 - ii. Mailing or residential address
 - iii. Any changes in employment

OPT STEM EXTENSION

1. Overview

- a. Can only be used only once regardless of degree level, a total of 29 months of employment
- a. Can change employers as long as new employer is still related to field of study (major)
- a. If application is denied you will have a 60 day grace period (time the government gives you to prepare to leave the country)

OPT STEM EXTENSION

2. Requirements

- a. Must already be in post-completion 12 month OPT
- a. Must have graduated with STEM approved major
- a. Can be paid or unpaid, a minimum of 20 hours per week

3. Employer requirements

- a. Must be registered with E-Verify (government employment verification system)
- a. Must agree to report to GZ Center termination of employment within 5 business days

OPT STEM EXTENSION

4. Types of Employment

- a. Multiple employers- you may have more than one employer, but they all must be directly related to your field of study

- a. Contract employment- this is a service based relationship, and is also known as 1099 employment

- a. Self-employment- you may start your own business, you must obtain all required business licenses and be able to prove to the US government that your are actively working in your field of study

OPT STEM EXTENSION

5. Applying for Extension

- a. You may apply *no more* than 120 days and *no less* than 30 days of OPT expiration
- b. You will receive a new I-20, if you cannot pick it up, you must provide the GZ Center will a prepaid envelope with mailing address
- c. You will complete a new Form I-765 following the same instructions as listed in slide 4
- d. Use the USCIS new notification system by completing Form G-1145, include the form as the first page in your package

SEVIS Grace Period

1. USCIS provides F-1 students with a 60-day grace period to prepare to leave the country.
2. Your grace period starts the day after your program end date, number 5 on page 1 of your I-20
3. You cannot travel out of the US and return using your grace period
4. You cannot renew your state issued driver's license using your grace period
5. Do not remain in the US past this date, unless you have received your EAD card or your new I-20 from your graduate program, as doing so could cause problems when applying for future visa opportunities in the US

Transferring out in SEVIS

1. Eligibility for SEVIS Records Transfer

- a. The 'start date' must be within 5 months of your program end date
- b. If approved for post-completion OPT, transfer must be within 5 months of the end of your authorization

2. In-eligibility for SEVIS Records Transfer

- a. More than 5 months have passed since your program end date and you are not in OPT. You will receive a new I-20 from your new school
- b. You have not maintained status in SEVIS

3. If you plan to transfer out to a graduate school or other SEVP-certified program, complete the SEVIS Transfer Out form and submit it to your International Student Services Coordinator for approval. You will be notified by email within 5 business day with next steps.

Transferring out in SEVIS

1. Transferring out and OPT

- a. OPT ends on your transfer out date regardless of the date on your EAD card

2. Travel

- a. If you have been out of the country for 5 months or longer, you must wait on your new I-20 (with a new SEVIS Number) to re-enter the US

3. Reporting to your new school

- a. You must report to your new International Office within 15 days of your program start date. Make contact with a campus representative for further instruction

Letters of Invitation

1. If you have not already done so, submit your visitor's full name, as written on their passport, via email to your International Student Services Coordinator.
 - a. You will receive notification by email within 2 business days to pick up letter(s)
 - b. You are responsible for any mailing costs

Graduation

- 1. Order will be placed on March 5.**
 - a. Your choice of one country
 - b. Spelman College will be on other side

- 2. Graduating Seniors' Reception,**
 - a. May 1 Milligan First Floor Conference Room, 12-2 pm
 - b. Group picture to be taken. Sashes will be given out at this time

Test your knowledge

1. How long is your grace period?
 - a. 60 days
2. When does your grace period start?
 - a. After your program end date
3. How long can you be out of the US without needing a new student visa?
 - a. 5 months
4. How long do you have to report status changes to your International Student Services Coordinator while in OPT?
 - a. 10 days

Q & A

1. Questions and Answers
2. Complete session evaluations

Sources

www.uscis.gov

www.sait.usc.edu

www.studyinthestates.dhs.gov

www.ice.gov