

OPT Reporting Responsibilities

Reporting responsibilities of F-1 International Students while on Optional Practical Training (OPT)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued new rules on F-1 Student Optional Practical Training (OPT) on April 8, 2008, and made changes to SEVIS on April 18.

“An F-1 student authorized by the SERVICE to engage in Practical training is required to report any change of name or address, or interruption of such employment to the DSO for the duration of the authorized training. A DSO who recommends a student for optical training is responsible for updating the student’s record to reflect these changes for the duration of the time that the training is authorized” 8CFR 214.2(f)(12)

The new rule allows a wider range of possible circumstances for “employment,” which include **self-employment, contract work, and even volunteer work** in certain situations. However, it does not allow more than 90 days of **UNEMPLOYMENT** during the approved period of OPT.

As indicated above all employment and unemployment periods, during OPT, must be reported to the Office of International Students & Scholars who will be responsible to report it to DHS via SEVIS.

Failure to report this information or having more than 90 days of unemployment may result in DHS not approving future benefits or requests. All changes in employment or unemployment, and legal changes to a student’s name or address must be reported within **10 business days**. 8 CFR 214.2(f)(17)

What counts as time unemployed?

Each day during the period when OPT authorization begins and ends that the student does not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment. The only exception is that periods of up to 10 days between the end of one job and the beginning of the next job will not be included in the calculation for time spent unemployed.

How does travel outside the United States impact the period of unemployment?

If the student whose approved period of OPT has started travels outside of the United States while unemployed, the time spent outside the United States will count as unemployment against the 90/120-day limits.

If a student travels while employed either during a period of leave authorized by an employer or as part of their employment, the time spent outside the United States will not count as unemployment.

Please Note

*The Department of Homeland Security defines the duration of status F-1 students as “the time during which an F-1 student is pursuing a full course of study at an educational institution approved by the Service for attendance by foreign students, or **engaging in authorized practical training following completion of studies**. 8 CFR 214.2(f)(5)*