

An Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card is issued by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and provides authorization to work in the United States. F-1 students that have applied and been approved for Optional Practical Training will receive this card after such approval. Employment authorization is subject to all rules and restrictions as stated in the USCIS regulations (www.uscis.gov) and on attached paperwork with the card. Below is a **brief overview** of some of the rules that govern Optional Practical Training;

- Your employment is most often only valid for the period of time as it is listed on your EAD card. The only exception to this is for students that qualify to receive an extension of their employment authorization as part of the “Cap Gap Relief”. If this pertains to your situation please contact the Global Engagement Office to obtain a new I-20 with this extension noted on it.
- Your authorization to engage in OPT is **automatically terminated** when any of the following occur (even if the end date on the card has not occurred);
 - Transfer to a different school
 - Depart the U.S. and re-enter on an I-20 issued either by another school or by Samford University for another academic program
 - Begin another level of study at any institution in the U.S., including Samford University
 - Change my status to any other non-immigrant or immigrant category (i.e. F-2, H-1B, J-1, and Permanent Resident)
- If I continue my employment after one of the above actions occurs, the employment will be considered to be unauthorized according to USCIS regulations.
- If I terminate my OPT earlier than the end date as stated on my EAD card, USCIS does not allow for recovery of unused work time.
- It is my responsibility to provide notice to the Global Engagement Office (GEO) and USCIS with my current address and contact information as well as the name. **If my physical address or contact information changes, I will notify GEO within 10 days.** I will utilize the SEVP Portal to update my contact information.
- I will also inform the Global Engagement Office if there is a change to my immigration status and provide copies of approval notices upon those changes.
- It is my responsibility to report any **changes to my employment information within 10 days** throughout the duration of my approved OPT. I will utilize the SEVP Portal to update my employment information.
- I understand that per USCIS regulations if I accumulate **more than 90 aggregate days of unemployment** while on post-completion OPT, I will be in **violation of my visa status.**
- I will be eligible for another 12 months of OPT only when I move to a higher educational level (i.e. Bachelor’s to Master’s)
- International travel while on post-completion OPT is possible. However, students are strongly advised not to leave the U.S. prior to securing employment. Students that have not obtained a job prior to leaving the U.S. may be denied reentry at the Port of Entry by immigration officials. Students who do have a job should travel with a letter from their employer, OPT I-20 signed for travel within the last year, EAD card, and a valid F-1 visa. If your visa has expired, you will need to apply for a renewal at your local consulate prior to returning to the U.S.

It is important that you read and understand the conditions of OPT outlined above and agree to adhere to all Samford University and USCIS policies.