

VERY IMPORTANT OPT RULES FOR GRADUATES FRONT PAGE AND BACK PAGE

You remain in the F1 status linked to the Georgetown Law Center during OPT. MAINTAIN YOUR F1 STATUS AND OPT by emailing Indira Dingledine at img4@law.georgetown.edu:

- change of address within 10 days of moving
- your employer's name and employer address (paid and unpaid)
- Employment termination
- If your employer files an H1b application on your behalf

In addition, to maintain your F1 status and OPT

- Secure paid or unpaid employment during your OPT period, not exceeding an aggregate of 90 days of unemployment among the entirety of the 365 OPT days. [at least 20 hours a week of paid or unpaid employment fulfills this requirement] - see your EAD (OPT) card for the applicable OPT period.

If you exceed an aggregate of 90 days of unemployment US officials may determine that you have not maintained your F1 status, and you may have future problems in your obtaining US visas, change of status, and entry into the US.

- Only participate in paid or unpaid legal employment. OPT only authorizes you to work in legally related employment and volunteer positions.

You may begin paid or unpaid employment **ONLY** when your Employment Authorization Document (OPT card) is in your possession **AND** you may only work in paid and unpaid employment on the dates listed on your OPT card.

Do not receive any compensation or perform any employment related service **until the start date of your OPT period or after the end date of your OPT period**. This includes service for no compensation.

Report to Indira Dingledine your leaving the country permanently, if you will no longer remain in the US for the remainder of your OPT period.

When traveling outside of the US after graduation, be sure to carry:

- The Official OPT Receipt confirming that USCIS is processing your OPT application or EAD (OPT) Employment Authorization Card
- I-20 with a travel endorsement signature **no older than 6 months**
- **US Job offer letter** (on employer letterhead/signed by supervisor/job description of job within the field of law) There is **serious** risk of not being allowed to reenter without a job offer letter (if you do not have a job offer letter, **have evidence you are actively seeking employment** – cover letters, emails etc..)
- I-94 card (small white card). Upon reentry check to be sure your new I-94 card says **F1 D/S**. If it does not say F1 D/S phone Indira (202) 662 -9319 IMMEDIATELY.

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- Valid F1 entry visa: (Please note when your F1 visa expires – **you will not be allowed to reenter** the US without **obtaining a new F1 visa** if your F1 visa will have expired before reentry.)

You can use the US Department of State website to check the visa information. Go to www.dos.gov and find your home country (or the country where you want to get an F1 visa covering your OPT period.)

If you are traveling to a third country, prior to travel, contact the US Embassy in the third country to be sure they allow third-country nationals to get a new F1 visa and under what circumstances.

Please check with the US Embassy or Consulate where you will interview to see if that office has specific requirements. You should not have to pay another SEVIS fee to obtain this new F1 visa.

Exception for non-Mexican students: If you are traveling to Canada, Mexico, or adjacent islands, you are entitled to return without renewing your F-1 entry visa under the "automatic revalidation" rule. Your visa will not be renewed but you will be readmitted to the U.S. with your I-20 form, EAD or receipt notice from USCIS and a job-offer letter.

Mexican Students: The special "automatic revalidation" rule **does not** apply to Mexican citizens when you go to Mexico. If you travel to Mexico on an expired F-1 entry visa, you need to go to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to obtain a new F-1 entry visa. [If you go to Canada or adjacent islands, you get the benefit of the "automatic revalidation" rule, however, and you do not need to do the renewal to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status.]

Using any other type of visa other than F1 (e.g. the B1/B2 visitor visa) when entering the US ends your OPT benefit and ends your F1 status.

You are at **serious risk of not being allowed to reenter** the US under the F1 status (and this means you lost your OPT) if:

- you remain outside of the US for long periods of time during your OPT period
- AND/OR you work or study outside of the US during your OPT period.

You have **60 days** at the end of your OPT period to remain in the US. You have up to 60 days you can remain in the US and prepare to depart the US, but you cannot work. If you leave the United States at any point during the grace period before the end of the 60 days, you cannot return to the US under the F1 status. You could re-enter in another appropriate status. Check in advance!

If you are admitted to another academic program contact Indira Dingleline prior to the end of the 60 day period following your OPT.