

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR POST-COMPLETION OPT

NAME: _____ **UNC PID:** _____

F-1 students must follow several important procedures and federal regulations while applying for and participating in Optional Practical Training (OPT). Compliance with these rules and procedures is necessary to maintain lawful F-1 immigration status. Please carefully review each item below and sign this form to confirm that you understand and will abide by the rules and procedures set forth in this memorandum. Your signature also confirms your requested OPT start date. A full description of eligibility for Post-Completion OPT and the application process can be found on the [ISSS website](#).

1. Filing deadlines: I understand the following:

- My OPT application cannot be received at United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) more than 90 days prior to my program end date.
- My OPT application must be received at USCIS prior to the end of my 60-day grace period.
- ISSS requires 2-3 weeks to review my request and to process the Form I-20 recommending OPT.
- My OPT application must reach USCIS no later than 30 days after my Form I-20 recommending OPT is issued.

2. Review of OPT application materials by ISSS: I understand that preparation of Form I-765 and all supporting documents is my responsibility and that I must read all USCIS instructions carefully and follow all required procedures when filing my application. I understand that ISSS student advisors will answer general questions I may have about preparing my OPT application documents but it is my responsibility to complete forms accurately, include all required materials, and track delivery of my application to USCIS.

- 3. Reporting requirements:** I understand that in order to maintain my immigration status while on Post-Completion OPT, I must:
- Submit a copy of my EAD (OPT card) to the ISSS office once I receive it from USCIS.
 - Report the start of employment, termination of employment, and any changes to employer information within 10 days of the change; I must submit an OPT Employment Reporting Form to ISSS in order to confirm these events/changes.
 - Update my address, phone #, and email in ConnectCarolina (<http://connectcarolina.unc.edu>) within 10 days if they change.
- 4. Failure to complete program requirements:** I understand that if I will not be able to complete all of the requirements of my program on time, I must request a program extension and new Form I-20 prior to the program end date found on my most recent I-20. Failure to request an extension prior to the expiration of my I-20 may invalidate or otherwise affect the OPT authorization as well as my F-1 status.
- 5. Working in my major field of study:** I understand that any employment or activity in which I participate must be directly related to my major field of study and must be commensurate with my current level of education. It is my responsibility to explain how my employment is directly related to my field of study and degree level and I should retain documentation for my records, as well as report this information on the OPT employment reporting form.
- 6. Periods of unemployment during Post-Completion OPT:** I understand I should not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during my Post-Completion OPT period. I will keep thorough and accurate records of my employment or other OPT activities in order to verify compliance with immigration regulations. I also understand that *if I accrue more than 90 days of unemployment **OR** if I fail to properly report my employment to ISSS I will immediately fall out of status and this will invalidate my employment authorization. I understand that in order to continue to maintain F-1 status, before accruing 150 days of unemployment I must either depart the U.S., begin a new program at UNC, or transfer to another program/school.*
- 7. Traveling outside the U.S.:** I understand that if I travel outside of the U.S. after my program end date and/or during the OPT period, I should review the travel information on the [ISSS website](#) and bring all required documents with me
- 8. Invalidating OPT:** I understand that if I commence a new program of study and/or transfer my SEVIS record to a new school, any remaining time in my OPT period will be cancelled. I understand that if I engage in unauthorized employment or otherwise violate my F-1 immigration status, my OPT will be invalidated.

9. **Sixty-day “grace” period after OPT:** I understand that I am permitted a period of 60 days to remain in the U.S. following the end of my OPT. I may **NOT** work during this period unless my immigration status is changed to one that permits employment. I understand that by the end of the 60-day grace period I must do one of the following: transfer my F-1 status to another school and/or process a change of education level to begin a new program of study, depart the U.S., or change my immigration status.
10. **Limits on periods of OPT:** I understand that I am eligible for 12 months of OPT per education level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, Ph.D.) but if I have been granted 12 months of OPT based on a previous degree, I am eligible for an additional period of OPT only if I am currently studying at a *higher* educational level. I also understand that I cannot recoup any period of OPT at a later time even if I did not work for the entire OPT period
11. **Impact of Curricular Practical Training (CPT) on OPT:** I understand that I am ineligible for OPT if I have been approved for more than 12 months of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) at my current education level
12. **Withdrawing my application:** I understand that I can attempt to withdraw my OPT application only if the application has not yet been adjudicated by USCIS. I will notify ISSS immediately if I plan to withdraw my application
13. **Requested OPT start date:** I understand that I am responsible for choosing an employment start date below which will be recorded by ISSS in SEVIS and on my Form I-20 recommending OPT. I understand the requested start date for Post-Completion OPT must be no earlier than the day after my program end date and no later than 60 days after my program end date. I understand that I will not be able to change the start date after my application has been submitted to USCIS.
14. **Program end date and on-campus employment:** I understand that upon submission of OPT request forms to ISSS, my program end date in SEVIS will be updated if necessary; my program may be shortened to reflect the expected date of completion. I understand that if I am working on-campus, I must stop working as of the program end date on my I-20 and may not resume employment until I have received my EAD and the EAD start date has been reached. It is my responsibility to notify my department and Human Resources about the new end date on my Form I-20.
15. **Beginning employment:** I understand that I may not begin work until I have the EAD in my physical possession and that I may not begin work before the start date as listed on the EAD. I understand that based on USCIS processing time, the start date on my EAD may be later than the requested start date on my Form I-20 recommending OPT.

OPT RECOMMENDATION REQUEST AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

List all previous periods of F-1 Practical Training (CPT or OPT) or write “N/A” if not applicable:

BEGINNING DATE	ENDING DATE	FULL-TIME/PART-TIME	TYPE: CPT/OPT	DEGREE LEVEL

Indicate the OPT start date you are requesting: _____

Confirm your current residential U.S. address and contact information:

NOTE: You must check your [Student Center in ConnectCarolina](#) to make sure your current physical U.S. residential address has been reported under the “*SEVIS Immigration Reporting Address*” and the phone number you want reported to SEVIS (listed below) has been set to your “*Preferred*” phone number. If this information is not up to date it may delay the processing of your new I-20.

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

NON-UNC EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

Acknowledgement: *I have read and understand the rules and procedures outlined above and those in the OPT section of the ISSS website and I will abide by them. I verify I have not used any period of OPT at my current educational level or a higher educational level that would disqualify me from the OPT authorization I now seek.*

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT: _____ DATE: _____

****Students should keep a copy of this signed memorandum for their own records. A copy will also be kept on file at ISSS.****