OPT – My Responsibilities

v. 2/3/15

Congratulations on receiving your EAD (Employment Authorization Document) also known as "OPT Card". ISSS is excited that you have been granted this opportunity to extend your learning in the US.

11 Important Reminders About YOUR OPT RESONSIBILITIES:
After reading and acknowledging this information, you will receive your EAD card.

1. **Q:** Is OPT a work visa?
   N: OPT is a benefit of F1 student status. Therefore, you are still considered a GSU international student for immigration purposes during your OPT period. You have employment authorization, <u>not a work visa</u>.

2. **Q**: When and how do I report my jobs during OPT?
   A: You must inform the US Government within 10 days of starting each new job. This is done via a Google form found at isss.gsu.edu/opt-reporting. This link is also on the ISSS homepage.

3. **Q:** What if I change addresses?
   A: SEVIS requires you to update your local US address within 10 days of each move. Continue to update your address in PAWS!

4. **Q:** What if I travel outside of the U.S. and want to re-enter during OPT?
   A: You will need the following each time you wish to re-enter the United States during OPT:
   a. valid travel signature by a DSO on page 3 of your I-20
   b. valid passport and F1 visa
   c. your original EAD/OPT card from USCIS
   d. a support letter from your employer briefly explaining the job offer or job continuation
   e. Note that OPT does not grant unlimited re-entry. Travel outside the US during OPT is at your own risk and should be done carefully after consulting with ISSS.

5. **Q:** What if my immigration status changes? (Ex. F1 to H1-B)
   A: You must update ISSS with appropriate documentation immediately.

6. **Q:** What if I want to attend school again at Georgia State or another university?
   A: Contact ISSS first! Beginning a new degree program automatically cancels OPT.

7. **Q:** Can I repeat OPT?
   A: OPT can only be approved once per degree level. In the event you choose a lower degree program, such as a Master's after being in a PhD program, you cannot request OPT for the Master's level. OPT is only available at the primary (highest of the two) degree levels.

8. **Q:** What if I am unemployed during OPT?
   A: 12- month OPT entitles you to 90 days of unemployment. 17-month STEM extensions receive 120 days of unemployment. After these limits, you are considered in violation of OPT status, which could put your F1 or future immigration status at risk. *Source: CRF 214.2(f)(10(ii)(E)*

9. **Q:** What forms of OPT employment or activity are acceptable?
   A: You must be engaged in OPT at least 20 hours per week. There is no upper limit, and you can work anywhere in the US in activity related to your field of study. OPT can include: regular, full-time, payroll employment, a paid or unpaid internship, volunteer work, or free-lance work.

10. **Q:** Is there a limit on my work time or earnings? What about US taxes?
    A: You can work and earn as much as you want anywhere in the US if the work is related to your degree. All income earned in the U.S. is subject to U.S. income taxes, for which you must file a U.S. income tax return each Spring. Failure to file an income tax return on U.S. earned income will negatively affect future immigration status.

11. **Q:** What if I don't maintain the responsibilities summarized above?
    A: Students may be denied future immigration benefits if DHS (Dept. of Homeland Security) determines that the student exceeded the limitations on unemployment. Additionally, ICE/SEVP may examine SEVIS data for an individual on post-completion OPT and terminate a student's record if the record fails to maintain proper periods of employment. In all cases, it is the student's responsibility, not ISSS's to maintain proper status and requirements during OPT.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the above information, had an opportunity to ask questions about it, and I understand my reporting duties while on OPT.

_____   _____
Print: First Name and Family Name   Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

_____
Signature of student receiving EAD card