You need to keep this and reference it while on OPT

Optional Practical Training - General Information

US Immigration offers students with F-1 status who are in good standing the privilege of paid work experience prior to program completion (Pre-completion OPT) or after program completion/graduation (Post-completion OPT). Students who have attended Calvin for 9 consecutive months and have maintained a full-time course load (12 credit hours per semester) are eligible to apply for a maximum 12 month OPT Employment Card (EAD). A student does not need to have a job offer prior to receiving the EAD card but must use the card for work experience in their program of studies/major.

You must update your address within 10 days with the Registrars Office during your OPT – Very Important

USCIS case status check available online at www.uscis.gov. You will receive a receipt that provides the information necessary to check the status of your application.

Be advised of the 90 day application time. Applications take 90 days at least. You may apply up to 90 days before your actual grad date and in your 60 day grace period. Do not plan to travel until you have your EAD. You may stay in the U.S. during the 60 day grace period after graduation or after the end date on your OPT card.

- You may begin work only after the start date AND you have received the EAD card.
- You should not leave the USA after graduation if you do not have a job. The CBP can REFUSE re-entry into the USA without the card or if you have no job. They need only give admission to RESUME employment only.
- Required documents to regain entry to the US if you choose to travel outside the US during the OPT year:
  - Employment (Letter optional)
  - Un-expired Passport
  - Un-expired visa
  - An un-expired EAD card
  - I-20 (needs to be signed every 6 months during your OPT year)

After you graduate from Calvin, you may not work as a student employee whether you have applied for OPT or not. If you have applied for OPT, you may be hired as a regular employee of Calvin if the employment is in your field of study.

YOU MUST REPORT ADDRESS, E-MAIL, AND PHONE CHANGES within 10 days. YOU MUST ALSO REPORT CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT AND UN-EMPLOYMENT, EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYER’S ADDRESS. FAILURE TO REPORT WILL CAUSE YOUR RECORD IN SEVIS TO BE AUTOMATICALLY TERMINATED.

If you have a major in STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics you may be eligible for a 24 month extension of your OPT. Your CIP Code on page 1 must be one of the codes found on this website: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm. If your CIP code ends in .xx99 you will not be eligible as it is a generic “catch all” category and the DHS does not recognize it.

You get up to 90 days of unemployment in your initial year of OPT, 150 days of unemployment if there is a STEM extension.

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