

Now That You Are in SEVIS . . . (F-1 Students – Optional Practical Training)

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is an Internet-based tracking system that replaces the old paper-based records for F-1 students. With SEVIS, your I-20 information is kept electronically and the paper I-20 is used as documentation of the database information. SEVIS also imposes new regulations and reporting requirements for F-1 students

New SEVIS I-20

Your I-20 information has now been entered into SEVIS and a new SEVIS I-20 has been issued for your period of OPT. Some of the differences you will notice on the new I-20 are a bar code on the first page and a record of F-1 events and applications on the third page.

- ❑ **Review your I-20** and make sure the information is accurate. Contact OIP if you find an error.
- ❑ **Sign your I-20.** Read the sign item #11 on page 1. Print your name, sign your name, and date. If you have F-2 dependents, you must also sign each dependent's document.
- ❑ **Remember** the number printed above the bar code on your I-20. This is your SEVIS ID number.
- ❑ **You should always keep** all of your current and previous I-20 forms. Over time you may accumulate multiple I-20 forms. We suggest you keep them all together in a folder or binder and in a safe place.
- ❑ **You must have a current travel signature** from an OIP adviser/Designated School Official on page three whenever you are traveling back to the U.S. (together with a valid F-1 visa and EAD card). Each travel signature is valid for six (6) months while on OPT.
- ❑ **If you have F-2 dependents,** a SEVIS I-20 has been printed for each dependent. Each dependent must have his or her own I-20 to apply for an F-2 visa and/or to enter the U.S. Each dependent should carry his or her own current I-20 and keep all copies. Dependent also need current travel endorsements on their I-20s when traveling outside of the U.S.
- ❑ **Contact OIP** if you change your date of degree completion, plan to travel/renew visa during the last half of your OPT, or change your plans for using OPT (cancel/change it).

What California State University Monterey Bay Must Do:

California State University Monterey Bay is required to enter and regularly update certain information into SEVIS. Some information will be reported once a semester and other information will be reported as soon as a change happens. California State University Monterey Bay does not report any other information into SEVIS. California State University Monterey Bay will only report what is required by law and federal regulation

and will take all steps necessary to keep your information secure and confidential. CSU Monterey Bay must report:

- ❑ The information on your I-20
- ❑ Your residential address
- ❑ Early termination of OPT

New SEVIS F-1 Regulations

SEVIS imposes new regulations and reporting requirements for F-1 students. The Immigration Service is very strict about the rules and requirements. Because SEVIS is an electronic database, it instantly detects late dates and students who fail to comply with the regulations. Missing an application deadline or failure to follow the requirements can immediately result in losing your F-1 status.

Overseas Travel While on OPT

We strongly recommend that you **DO NOT** travel outside of the U.S. after you have graduated from CSUMB and while your application for OPT is pending with the U.S. Immigration Service. An International Student Advisor will not be able to sign page three of your SEVIS I-20 because you will have already graduated from your F-1 approved program. Also, if you travel while your application is still pending, the Immigration Service will **CANCEL YOUR APPLICATION** and assume that you have changed your mind and that you are no longer interested in obtaining an OPT work permit.

Once you receive your work permit (EAD card), overseas travel is still very risky and your return to the U.S. is not guaranteed. If the F-1 student visa stamp in your passport has expired, you may have a very difficult time obtaining a new visa. Our experience has been that many visa officers at U.S. consulates/embassies do not like to grant F-1 student visas to individuals who have already completed their U.S. studies but who want to return to the U.S. to work. Furthermore, even if your F-1 student visa stamp is still valid, current U.S. Immigration Service regulations only permit students on OPT to return to the U.S. in order to “resume employment.” This means that you should have a letter from an employer verifying that you already started to work. Failure to prove that you have already found a job and started to work could result in your being denied entry into the U.S.

Studying While on OPT

Students who have been authorized by the Immigration Service to participate in post-completion practical training are only permitted to enroll in recreational or vocational courses. You are not permitted to enroll in academic courses that may be used towards the completion of a degree program. Doing so may be a violation of your F-1 student status and could result in the loss of your work permit. **Please be advised that if you**

apply for admission to another U.S. school, receive a new I-20 form and enroll in classes, your OPT work permit will be cancelled by the Immigration Service! New regulations do not allow you to pursue a degree program while participating in post-completion OPT!

What You are Required to do While on OPT

- **Report any change of address or residence within 10 days of the change.**
Report your local residential address to OIP and to Admissions & Records. The address must be your physical residence—P.O. boxes or business addresses are not acceptable.
- **Report a legal name change (i.e. a name change in your passport) within 10 days of the change.** Report a passport name change directly to OIP.
- **Request an I-20 “release” to transfer to another school.** If you are planning to transfer to another school after completing your OPT, you should contact OIP and speak to an adviser well in advance to plan your immigration transfer to your new school. OIP must initiate a transfer “release” of your SEVIS record before the completion date on your EAD. **Please be aware that enrollment in a new program of study will result in the cancellation of your OPT.**
- **Report the end of your use of OPT and reason, and your expected departure date.** OPT is only valid as long as you are using it. If you are not working, it is expected that you are actively looking for work. If you are not actively looking for work, you are expected to leave the U.S. You are required to inform OIP **in writing** (via e-mail, fax or letter) if your OPT employment ends before the end date on the EAD (work permit), and you will either leave the U.S. or you have changed your immigration status.

Staying in Touch With OIP

As stated above, you are required to report certain information to OIP during your entire period of OPT. **You can contact OIP with this information via email, fax or regular mail.** We cannot accept reporting by phone or voicemail; we must have the information in writing.

- EMAIL richard_donovan@csumb.edu
- MAIL Office of International Programs
California State University Monterey Bay
100 Campus Center, Bldg 18
Seaside, CA 93955

When contacting OIP, please include the following information:

- Full name
- BANNER System ID or SSAN
- Residential address, phone number, and email address
- End date of OPT and reason (if applicable)

If you have any questions or concerns about SEVIS, your immigration status, or your responsibilities to maintain your status, please feel free to contact OIP. We are happy to help.

Rick Donovan
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CSU Monterey Bay
831.582.3512
831.582.4502 (Fax)