

# Plymouth State University

## Global Engagement Office

### *Optional Practical Training (OPT) Contract*

#### *between OPT Recipient and Global Engagement Office*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PSU ID: \_\_\_\_\_

**Applying for OPT is not a guaranteed authorization to work in the U.S. after you graduate. You are responsible for completing and submitting your OPT application and that PSU staff are only able to provide you with information and regulations regarding Optional Practical Training and will not complete the application for you.**

**There are several important rules and procedures that must be followed after applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment authorization. Complying with these rules and procedures is necessary to maintain lawful F-1 immigration status. Please review carefully each item below, then sign this form to confirm that you understand and will abide by them. Your signature also confirms your requested OPT dates. The original, signed copy of this acknowledgement will be kept in your student file and a copy will be given to you for your reference.**

1. *When to Apply and Thirty-day filing deadline:* I understand that I may only apply up to 90 days prior to my program end date, and no more than 60 days past my program end date. I understand that my OPT application must reach the USCIS Service Center no later than 30 days after my international student advisor signs the OPT recommendation on my new Form I-20.

2. *Failure to complete program requirements:* I understand that if I fail to complete all the requirements of my program, I must request an extension of my Form I-20 prior to the program end date found in item #5 of my latest I-20. I know that this may invalidate or otherwise effect the OPT authorization.

3. *Submission of EAD to the GEO:* I understand that I must bring my OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD) to GEO for photocopying as soon as it is issued by the USCIS so that it may be copied and the approval recorded appropriately.

4. *Working in my major field of study:* I understand that any employment I accept, or another OPT activity in which I participate, must be directly related to my academic field of study and must be commensurate with my current level of education. I know that I should keep records that will verify this.

5. *Reporting requirements:* I understand that in order to maintain my immigration status while on OPT, I must:

a. Notify GEO of my new address within ten days if I should move residence. I can do so by sending an email to [rmbryant@plymouth.edu](mailto:rmbryant@plymouth.edu).

b. Report OPT employer name and address, telephone, supervisor name, job description, efforts to seek employment, and interruptions in employment: I understand I am required to report the name and address of my OPT location/employer. If I stop working, I must report that there has been an "interruption in employment".

ALL REPORTING MUST BE PROVIDED WITHIN 10 DAYS OF ANY CHANGE.

6. *Periods of unemployment during post-completion OPT:* I understand that I may 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 job search, employment or other OPT activities, and periods of unemployment.

7. *Traveling outside the U.S.:* I understand that if I travel outside the U.S. without the following items, I will experience difficulty when returning and could, in fact, be prohibited from re-entering the U.S.

a. Valid passport for at least 6 months

b. F-1 visa in my passport that will be valid on the day I plan to return to the U.S. If I do not have a visa that will be valid for my return, I will obtain one at a U.S. consulate or embassy while outside the U.S.

c. Travel signature on my Form I-20 that is less than six (6) months old. (NOTE: This may mean that you need to obtain an updated signature on your Form I-20 while you are on OPT! You may need to mail or personally bring the paperwork to GEO for signing.)

d. OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD, also known as "OPT Card")

e. Letter from my employer or other proof of employment to prove that I have a job or OPT activity to resume when I return to the U.S., or an offer letter to show that I will begin a job/activity upon my return to the U.S.

8. *Invalidating OPT:* I understand that my OPT will be cancelled or invalidated if I commence a new program of study, transfer my SEVIS record to a new school, engage in unauthorized employment, or otherwise violate my F-1 immigration status.

9. *Sixty-day (60) "grace" period after OPT:* I understand that I am permitted a period of 60 days to remain in the U.S. following the end date on my OPT EAD. I may *not* work during this period unless my immigration status is changed to a classification that permits employment, or my employer has submitted a timely filed petition to change status to H-1B or another employment-based visa to begin on October 1<sup>st</sup> following my OPT end date that would enable me to take advantage of an extension of my OPT authorization under "cap-gap" regulations. I can also use this time to transfer my F-1 status to another school, apply for a change of status, process a level change to begin a new program of study, or to depart the U.S. (which I must do no later than the sixtieth day).

10. *Limits on future periods of OPT:* I understand that I am eligible for only one 12-month period of OPT per education level (e.g., bachelor's, master's, Ph.D., etc.). I understand that in limited situations, I may be eligible to apply for a 24-month extension of my OPT authorization, and that I must apply for the extension prior to the end date of my initial OPT period.

11. *Cancelling my application:* If extraordinary circumstances warrant it, I can attempt to cancel my OPT application only if the application has not yet been adjudicated (approved) by the USCIS Service Center. I will work with my ISSO advisor if cancellation becomes necessary.

12. *OPT start and end dates:* I am responsible for choosing the employment dates below which will be recorded in the GEO's recommendation on my Form I-20. I know that I will not be able to change them should the dates become incompatible with a future offer of employment. I also understand that I cannot extend OPT beyond 12 months even I have not worked for the entire OPT period, unless I qualify the STEM OPT extension.

13. *Beginning employment:* I know that I may not begin work until I have the OPT EAD (card) in my possession and the start date of the EAD has been reached. To do so constitutes unauthorized employment and a violation of my F-1 status.

I request the following OPT dates:

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ Full-time \_\_\_ Part-time

Acknowledgement:

*I verify that 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.*

***I have read and understand the above rules and procedures and will abide by them. I acknowledge and fully understand that the correct filing of my OPT application is solely my responsibility and I hold PSU not responsible for any application denials or Requests for Evidence (RFE) by USCIS.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Student*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

*Received and signed by GEO staff:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of GEO staff member*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*