

## **TRAVEL ADVISORY FOR F-1 STUDENTS ENGAGED IN POST-COMPLETION OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING – ISSI 216**

Please read the information below carefully if you are an F-1 student planning to travel outside the U.S. while engaging in post-completion OPT. The International Student & Scholar Institute (ISSI) advises F-1 students on post-completion OPT to adhere to the following guidelines set forth by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security:

### **If your OPT is APPROVED:**

- If your OPT application has been approved and you depart the U.S. before you obtain a job or a job offer, you will *not* be allowed to re-enter the U.S.
- If you receive your Employment Authorization Card (EAC) and wish to travel before or during your approved OPT, be sure to carry proof of employment or a job offer letter along with your EAC and other immigration documents. You do not need to have started your employment prior to your departure, *provided that you have already secured a job or a job offer.*

### **If your OPT is PENDING and you must travel after you complete your program of study:**

- It is essential that you contact the ISSI in a timely manner to receive instructions in order to ensure that you maintain proper non-immigrant visa status. Travel under this condition may present risks.

Please keep in mind that these new regulations do not apply to pre-completion OPT. Also, it does *not* mean that you are out of status if you do not have a job offer at the time that your OPT is approved.

- *Be sure that your OPT card and F-1 visa stamp are valid beyond your planned re-entry date. If your F-1 visa has expired, you will need to apply for a new F-1 visa stamp while you are abroad. Be certain to consult with one of the ISSI advisors before you depart the U.S.*
- *Be sure that the signature from the ISSI on page 3 of your I-20 will be less than 6 months old when you re-enter the U.S.*
- *Ask your current or prospective employer to issue a letter stating that you are/will be working for that employer.*
- *It is crucial that you prepare the necessary documents for travel during post-completion OPT. Please contact the ISSI at 617-373-2310 in case you have questions/concerns regarding this new interpretation of the regulations.*