



24-Month STEM OPT Extension

Introduction to STEM OPT



What is the STEM OPT Extension?

The STEM OPT Extension is an additional 24-months of Optional Practical Training authorized by USCIS for additional training in certain STEM fields.

- [STEM Eligible CIP Codes](#)



What is a Qualifying STEM Degree?

- The STEM OPT Extension must be based on a Bachelor's, Master's, or Ph.D.
- The degree must be earned from an accredited SEVP certified school and must be in an eligible STEM field as noted on the [STEM Designated Program List](#).
- Note: The thesis requirement or equivalent can be outstanding at the time of application (although this is not an available option when using a previously obtained STEM degree).



Can I have STEM OPT based on a previously obtained qualifying STEM degree?

Yes.

The previously obtained qualifying STEM degree must meet the following requirements:

- Conferred from a U.S. educational institution that is accredited and SEVP-certified.
- In a degree program category included on the current [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#) at the time of the DSO recommendation.
- Conferred within the 10 years preceding the date the DSO recommends the student for the 24-month STEM OPT Extension.



Additional Eligibility Requirements

- ✓ Maintaining lawful F-1 status in a valid period of post-completion OPT authorization.
 - ✓ Reporting all post-completion OPT employment in a timely manner.
 - ✓ Accruing no more than 90 days of unemployment while on Post-Completion OPT.
- ✓ Working for an E-Verify Employer.
- ✓ Having a *paid* job/internship offer directly related to your major STEM Extension field of study for at least 20 hours per week.



Do I need to have a job before I apply for STEM OPT?

Yes. When you apply for STEM OPT, you are requesting authorization to work in a specific job that is **directly related to your major field of study**.

Additionally, you are requesting authorization to work for an employer that is already registered in [E-Verify](#), has an IRS Employer Identification Number (EIN), and sufficient resources to provide a training program.

- The employer's E-Verify number is required as part of the STEM OPT application.
- The employer's E-Verify number is NOT the employer's EIN!

You will complete the Form I-983 training plan with your specific employer prior to applying for STEM OPT.



More About the STEM OPT Qualifying Job

- The job must assist the student with their STEM OPT practical training and goals.
- The job *must be paid*, it cannot be a volunteer position.
 - Salary must be commensurate "with the terms and conditions applicable to the employer's similarly situated U.S. workers in the area of employment."
- The employer must fulfill all terms and conditions outlined on the Form I-983.
- Cannot be self-employment.
 - Requires a bona-fide employer-employee relationship.



How do I choose my start date?

- The STEM OPT *authorization* start date must be the date immediately after your post-completion OPT end date.
- Example:
 - Post-completion OPT end date is June 1.
 - STEM OPT authorization start date will be June 2.
- If your STEM OPT *employment* start date is after your STEM OPT *authorization* start date, then you will accrue unemployment days.
- Example:
 - STEM OPT authorization start date is June 2.
 - STEM OPT employment start date is July 2.
 - You will accrue 30 unemployment days for the days between June 2 and July 2.



Application Timeline

- Your STEM OPT application must be receipted by USCIS:
 - No earlier than 90 days prior to your current post-completion OPT EAD expiration date; *and*
 - No later than your current post-completion OPT EAD end date; *and*
 - Within 60 days of the “School Attestation” signature date on page 1 of the STEM OPT I-20.

If your current post-completion OPT authorization has already expired, you cannot apply for STEM OPT.

You **MUST** submit your application to USCIS while you are **inside** of the United States.





Applying for STEM OPT



Step 1: I-983

Complete the [I-983 Training Plan for STEM OPT Students](#) with your employer.

- Signatures for the I-983 can be the following: Wet signature (ink), electronic signature using software programs or applications, or an electronically reproduced copy of a signature.

The [Form I-983](#):

- Clearly articulates the STEM OPT student's learning objectives
- Affirms the employer's commitment to helping the student achieve those objectives.

The Form I-983 is not mailed to USCIS with your STEM OPT application, but ISSS uploads it to SEVIS when recommending STEM OPT.

The STEM OPT Training Plan (Form I-983) Sections 1-2

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

OMB APPROVAL NO. 1653-0054
EXPIRATION DATE: 5/31/2025

TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS

Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Optional Practical Training (OPT)

SECTION 1: STUDENT INFORMATION (Completed by Student)			
Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name):		Student Email Address:	
Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:	Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned:	SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT (including 3-digit suffix):	
Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information:		Student SEVIS ID No.:	STEM OPT Requested Period (mm-dd-yyyy): From: _____ To: _____
Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: _____			
Level/Type of Qualifying Degree: _____			
Date Awarded (mm-dd-yyyy): _____			
Based on Prior Degree? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Employment Authorization Number: _____			
SECTION 2: STUDENT CERTIFICATION			
I declare and affirm under penalty of perjury that the statements and information made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that the law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willfully falsifying or concealing a material fact, or using any false document in the submission of this form.			

The CIP code is found on the I-20, it is the six-digit number next to the name of your major.

- Example: 14.1010

Based on Prior Degree – Check NO if using the same major that was used for your recent Post-Completion OPT.



Form I-983 Sections 3-4

The Employer Official with Signatory Authority should review the certification and affirm the statement with their signature for sections 3 and 4.

- An appropriate individual in the employer's organization who is familiar with the student's goals and performance.
- Has signatory authority for the employer.

SECTION 3: EMPLOYER INFORMATION (Completed by Employer)			
Employer Name:		Street Address:	Suite:
Employer Website URL:		City:	State: ZIP Code:
Employer ID Number (EIN):	Number of Full-Time Employees in U.S.:	North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code:	
OPT Hours Per Week (must be at least 20 hours/week):	Compensation:		
Start Date of Employment (mm-dd-yyyy):	A. Salary Amount and Frequency: _____		
	B. Other Compensation (Type and Estimated Amount or Value):		
	1. _____		
	2. _____		
	3. _____		
	4. _____		
SECTION 4: EMPLOYER CERTIFICATION			
I declare and affirm under penalty of perjury that the statements and information made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that the law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willfully falsifying or concealing a material fact, or using any false document in the submission of this form.			
I certify on behalf of the employer that this Training Plan for STEM OPT Students ("Plan") is approved and that:			
1. I have reviewed and understand this Plan, and I will ensure that the supervising Official follows this Plan;			
2. I will notify the DSO at the earliest available opportunity regarding any material changes to this Plan, including but not limited to, any change of Employer Identification Number resulting from a corporate restructuring, any reduction in compensation from the amount previously submitted on the Plan that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked, any significant decrease in hours per week that a student engages in a STEM training opportunity, and any decrease in hours below the 20-hours-per-week minimum required under this rule;			
3. Within five business days of the termination or departure of the student during the authorized period of OPT, I will report such termination or departure to the DSO (<i>Note: business days do not include federal holidays or weekend days; and an employer shall consider a student to have departed when the employer knows the student has left the practical training opportunity, or when the student has not reported for practical training for a period of five consecutive business days without the consent of the employer</i>); and			
4. I will adhere to all applicable regulatory provisions that govern this program (<i>see 8 CFR Part 214</i>), which include, but are not limited to, the following:			
a. The student's practical training opportunity is directly related to the STEM degree that qualifies the student for the STEM OPT extension, and the position offered to the student achieves the objectives of his or her participation in this training program;			
b. The student will receive on-site supervision and training, consistent with this Plan, by experienced and knowledgeable staff;			



SECTION 5: TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS (Completed by Student and Employer)

Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name):

Employer Name:

EMPLOYER SITE INFORMATION

Site Name:	Site Address (Street, City, State, ZIP):
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Name of Official:	Official's Title:
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Official's Email:	Official's Phone Number:
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Note: for the remaining fields in this section, employers who already have an internal/pre-existing training plan in place may fill in the details based on that plan.

Student Role: Describe the student's role with the employer and how that role is directly related to enhancing the student's knowledge obtained through his or her qualifying STEM degree.

Goals and Objectives: Describe how the assignment(s) with the employer will help the student achieve his or her specific objectives for work-based learning related to his or her STEM degree. The description must both specify the student's goals regarding specific knowledge, skills, or techniques as well as the means by which they will be achieved.

Employer Oversight: Explain how the employer provides oversight and supervision of individuals filling positions such as that being filled by the named F-1 student. If the employer has a training program or related policy in place that controls such oversight and supervision, please describe.

Measures and Assessments: Explain how the employer measures and confirms whether individuals filling positions such as that being filled by the named F-1 student are acquiring new knowledge and skills. If the employer has a training program or related policy in place that controls such measures and assessments, please describe.

Form I-983 Section 5

Enter the name of the appropriate individual in the employer's organization who is familiar with, and will monitor, the student's goals and performance. This may or may not be the same Employer Official listed in Section 4.

Please provide detailed information regarding the student role, goals and objectives, employer oversight, and measures and assessment.

Page 5 of the I-983 (Evaluations)

- At the time that you submit your STEM OPT Extension I-20 Request to ISSS, page 5 of your I-983 should be left blank.
 - This page will be used for your 12-month and 24-month (or final) evaluations. It will be completed by you and your employer later.
- Additional Form I-981 Instructions can be found on the [ISSS STEM OPT Extension webpage](#).
 - Scroll down to the FAQ section titled **Form I-983 Instructions**



The STEM OPT Training Plan (Form I-983) Evaluation on Student Progress (page 5)

EVALUATION ON STUDENT PROGRESS

Provide a self-evaluation of your performance, using the measures previously identified, in applying and acquiring new knowledge, skills, and competencies identified in the Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. Discuss accomplishments, successful projects, overall contributions, etc., during this review period. Address whether there are any modifications to the objectives and goals for projects, or new areas for skill and competency development.

Range of Evaluation Dates: From (mm-dd-yyyy): _____ To (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

Signature of Student: _____

Printed Name of Student: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority: _____

Printed Name of Employer Official with Signatory Authority: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____



Step 2: ISSS Request

2. Complete the [STEM OPT Extension I-20 Request Form](#) and attach a copy of your:

- Form I-983 Training Plan (complete and signed);
- most recent EAD card; and
- documentation of the completion of your STEM degree course work.
 - If you have completed the degree, attach a copy of your diploma and/or a copy of your final transcript indicating the degree and major.
 - If you have only completed the course work for the degree, attach a signed letter on letterhead from your academic department indicating the degree's major, when the course work was completed, and that the degree is still in progress.

You must first receive the I-20 recommending STEM OPT from ISSS before submitting your I-765 to USCIS.

What happens while ISSS is reviewing my STEM OPT I-20 Request Form?

- ISSS will review your request. ISSS will contact you if any questions arise or if any edits are required.
- ISSS will recommend the STEM OPT Extension in SEVIS and upload your completed Form I-983 to SEVIS.
- ISSS will issue you a signed I-20 recommending STEM OPT. You must sign this I-20 by hand and include a copy of it in your application that you submit to USCIS. **You must first receive the I-20 recommending STEM OPT from ISSS *before* submitting your I-765 to USCIS.**
- Please note that ISSS only *recommends* that you receive the 24-month STEM OPT Extension; the final decision is made by USCIS.



What happens if I apply to USCIS first without an ISSS OPT STEM Extension recommendation?

If a student first submits the USCIS online application and *then* requests the STEM OPT recommendation I-20 from ISSS, the STEM OPT application will be **denied**, as the regulations require the recommendation be entered into SEVIS *prior* to the STEM OPT filing.



Step 3: Form I-765

The USCIS Form I-765 is used to request employment authorization and an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

The Form I-765 must be submitted online *or* mailed to USCIS.

Submitting Your STEM OPT Application



Have you moved in the last 12 months?

If you have moved or changed addresses since filing your Post-completion OPT I-765, use the new USCIS Enterprise Change of Address (E-COA tool) to update your address with USCIS.

- Requires a [USCIS online account](#)
- Only available in English

Submit the change of address with USCIS **before** initiating a new I-765 form online.



Filing electronically

Create or log in to your USCIS online account at myaccount.uscis.gov.

Within your USCIS account, you will be able to:

- Complete the online [Form I-765](#).
- Upload required evidence.
- Pay the [I-765 filing fee](#).

Please note: filing online does not expedite the [USCIS processing times](#).



What evidence do I need to submit to USCIS for my online STEM OPT application?

Evidence (as listed in online filing system)	Example	Notes
2 x 2 photo of you	Passport Photo	See “ Photo Requirements ” U.S. Department of State photo requirements. DOS also has a photo check tool that you can use to check the photo ahead of time.
Form I-94	Entry I-94 Or Change of Status I-797 Approval	Download your most recent I-94 here: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/
Employment Authorization Document	Post-completion OPT EAD Card	
Form I-20	Newest I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation	This is only referring to the recommending I-20, not to prior I-20s.
College degree	Diploma and / or transcripts showing degree conferral	
Institution accreditation	Proof of Accreditation (screenshot from school or accreditor's website)	Only required if you are filing STEM OPT based on a prior degree (i.e. not the OPT degree).

Submission Note

- USCIS is not open on the weekends or on federal holidays. If your Post-Completion OPT ends on a weekend day or federal holiday, USCIS must receive your application the morning of the weekday before.

Timely Filing Consideration!

- ISSS has noticed that I-765 applications submitted through the USCIS online filing system are often receipted the day *after* the student submits the application.
- To be safe, ISSS recommends you submit your I-765 application no later than **57 days** after receiving the recommending I-20 from ISSS.

Pay.gov Payment Confirmation: USCIS I-765

1 message

ELISdonotreply@uscis.dhs.gov <ELISdonotreply@uscis.dhs.gov>

Tue, Apr 11, 2023 at 9:17 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Your payment has been submitted to Pay.gov and the details are below. If you have a question about this notification or need technical support, please contact us online at <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/contactus> and reference the receipt number(s) shown below.

Application Name: USCIS I-765

Pay.Gov Tracking ID: [REDACTED]

Agency Tracking ID: [REDACTED]

Transaction Type: Credit Card

Transaction Amount: \$410.00

Payment Date: Apr 12, 2023

Transaction Date: Apr 12, 2023 03:17:50 AM

Your payment was applied to the following case(s):

[REDACTED]

How can I check USCIS processing times?

- Go to <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>
- Select:
 - I-765 Application for Employment Authorization
 - Based on a request by a qualified F-1 academic student [(c)(3)]
 - Potomac Service Center

There you will be able to see the USCIS estimated time range for processing OPT (including STEM OPT) applications.



Premium Processing Option for e-filed I-765s!

- Online filing of [Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service](#), is now also available to F-1 students
- Premium Processing- Expedited Processing for a fee
 - Fees are subject to change
 - Premium Processing fee is *in addition* to the I-765 application fee
- Guarantees some sort of adjudicative action within 30 business days of receipt.
 - Does not include time for printing and mailing EAD


Case Was Changed To A Premium Processing Case

We changed your case, Receipt Number IOE9605064368, from a standard case to a premium-processing case. The premium-processing clock started on April 14, 2023. Your premium-processing receipt notice contains contact information for direct inquiries on your case. Please follow the instructions in the notice. If you move, contact the premium-processing unit directly to update your address.

When can I start working on STEM OPT?

You may continue to work on your expired EAD for post-completion OPT for up to **180 days** while your STEM OPT petition is pending if you meet the following conditions:

- You are currently in a period of post-completion OPT.
- You properly, and in a timely manner*, filed your application for the 24-month STEM OPT Extension with USCIS.

*Receipt Notice must show a receipt date that is prior to your current post-completion OPT EAD end date.

You can learn more about the 180-extension on the [USCIS website](#).



What do I do while I wait for USCIS to approve my application?

- Pay attention to receipt notices and notifications from USCIS.
 - Make sure your date of birth and name are correct on the receipt notice.
 - **Make sure you receive a paper receipt notice.**
- Contact ISSS if your STEM OPT application is rejected, denied, or if you receive a Request for Evidence (RFE).
- If you move from the U.S. address you entered on the Form I-765 or are no longer receiving mail there and have not yet received your Employment Authorization Document (EAD Card), login to USCIS online and complete the Enterprise Change of Address (E-COA).
- Be mindful of the 180-day extension.



USCIS Case Inquiries & Status Requests

In addition to the National Customer Service Center phone line, 800-375-5283, USCIS offers several [online tools](#).

- [Check your case status](#) online.
- Get automatic updates about your case.
- Submit an online case inquiry or service request.
- Get a tracking number and register for Informed Delivery through USPS to get previews of the mail in transit.

Case Inquiry

 Case outside normal processing time <i>Think a case is taking longer than expected?</i>	 Did not receive notice by mail <i>Think a notice is lost or missing?</i>	 Did not receive card by mail <i>Think a card is lost or missing?</i>	 Did not receive document by mail <i>Think a document is lost or missing?</i>
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Service Request

 Appointment Accommodations <i>Request accommodations for an interview appointment</i>	 Typographic Error <i>Make typographic corrections for a case</i>	
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EAD: Employment Authorization Document

STEM OPT work authorization is granted in the form of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

Dates of employment authorization:
You CANNOT work outside of these
dates.



The image features a background of a document with a line graph and a pen. The graph shows a fluctuating line with several peaks and troughs. A pen is positioned at the top right, appearing to have just finished writing or about to write. The overall color scheme is a muted blue-grey. The text 'STEM OPT Reporting Requirements' is centered in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

STEM OPT Reporting Requirements

What is the SEVP Portal?

The SEVP Portal allows students in F-1 status to:

- monitor their employment authorization.
- update their address and telephone.
- monitor their employer information to meet regulatory reporting requirements.

Access to the SEVP Portal is granted when a student is on an authorized period of post-completion OPT. Students on STEM OPT should be familiar with the SEVP Portal and have experience using it. Please review the [SEVP Help Hub](#) for additional resources (e.g., user guide, instructional videos).



STEM OPT Reporting Requirements

STEM OPT reporting requirements are **different** from Post-completion OPT reporting requirements.

- **General Reporting:**
 - Any changes in legal name, address, phone number → SEVP Portal (student reports).
 - Change in employment → Student must notify ISSS within 10 days of a change.
 - Updates must be first reviewed by ISSS. Please contact ISSS if you have questions.
- **Validation Reporting:**
 - An ISSS DSO will reach out to collect a 6-, 12- and 18-month validation report confirming your name, address, employer name and address, and employment status are correct.
- **Self-Evaluations:**
 - Self-evaluations are submitted to the Designated School Office (DSO) at the 12- and 24-month marks from the start date of the STEM OPT Extension.
 - A concluding self-evaluation occurs at the end of *any* period of employment, regardless of its duration.

For alumni purposes, you can update your address in [Buff Portal](#) and with [Alumni Association](#). Any changes to your name or citizenship should be communicated to [ISSS](#).



Failure to Report

Reporting OPT participation is a requirement of the OPT STEM Extension regulations.

Failure to report in a timely manner will result in the **termination of your F-1 status and subsequently the loss of your OPT work authorization.**



Employer Reporting Requirements

- Evaluation on Student Progress
 - The STEM OPT employer must review the student's annual self-evaluation on their own progress and sign it to attest to its accuracy.
- Material Changes to an Existing Form I-983
 - Employers must work with the STEM OPT student to report to the Designated School Official (DSO) any material changes to the Form I-983.
- Loss of Employment
 - The employer and student both must notify the Designated School Official (DSO) when the student's employment is terminated for any reason before the end of the authorized extension period. The employer must report such a change in employment to ISSS no later than five business days after the student's employment terminates or the student has departed the United States. Employers and students can satisfy this requirement with an email to the ISSS indicating that the student was terminated or has otherwise departed, as well as the applicable date of such termination or departure.



What do I do if my employer changes?

If your STEM OPT application is *pending* and your employer changes:

- Submit a new Form I-983 to ISSS for the new employer.
 - Use the Document Submission Form (available in [MyISSS portal](#)).
- You will receive the I-20 from ISSS with the new employer information on page 2.
 - Print and sign the I-20
 - log in to the myaccount.uscis.gov account and upload the I-20 to *Unsolicited Evidence* under the Documents tab.



What do I do if my employer changes?

If your STEM OPT application is ***approved*** and your employer changes:

- Report the end date of your current employer to ISSS. Send [ISSS](#) an email.
- Your current employer is required to report the termination of your employment to ISSS within 5 business days. They can send [ISSS](#) an email.
- You must complete your Form I-983 **final evaluation (page 5)** for your current employer.
 - Submit via the Document Submission Form (available in [MyISSS portal](#)).
- Complete the ISSS [OPT Information Update Form \(name, address, citizenship, and employment\)](#).
 - Here you will upload a copy of the **new** completed and signed Form I-983 Training Plan for your **new** STEM OPT training opportunity.



Unemployment Days while on STEM OPT

A student on the 24-month STEM OPT Extension can be unemployed for a total of 150 days.

- This includes any of the remaining 90 days of unemployment allotted from the standard post-completion OPT.



What documentation should I keep for my records?

The list below is a suggestion of records you may be asked to present to prove STEM OPT training (during or after your STEM OPT authorization):

- Documentation that the training is in your major field of study.
- Copies of offer letters and agreements/contracts with all STEM OPT employers including: start/ end dates, pay rate, and number of weekly work hours.
- Copies of job descriptions including job title, duties, location, and supervisor's contact information.
- If you worked for an agency or consultancy, keep evidence of the projects you worked on.
- Copies of your pay vouchers/pay stubs, copies of your bank statements that show direct or corresponding deposits from your employer(s), and associated W-2 tax forms.



Can I extend my employment period after STEM OPT?

A student in F-1 status is eligible for a **cap-gap** extension if:

- student is the beneficiary of a H-1B petition; and
- a change of status was requested on the Form I-129; and
- the change of status Form I-129 was received by USCIS before the OPT STEM Extension authorization end date; and
- the H-1B start date is October 1 of the current year
 - If eligible, your duration of status (D/S) and any post-completion OPT (including STEM OPT) work authorization is extended to September 30 or until the H-1B petition is withdrawn or denied.
 - An automatic cap-gap extension of the record also applies to the duration of status of any dependents in F-2 status.
- To request an I-20 noting this extension, sign in to [MyISSS](#) and complete the **Cap-Gap I-20 Request** under *Training/Employment-Related Forms*.



Do I get a grace period after STEM OPT?

There is a 60-day grace period following the completion of your 24-month STEM OPT Extension (starting from the day after your EAD end date) for students who maintained status and did not accrue more than 150 days of unemployment.

- You are **not** eligible for employment or to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status during the 60-day grace period.
- Students should plan to exit the United States on or before the end of their 60-day grace period.
- Note: Students in F-1 status can request that their SEVIS record be transferred to another institution during their grace period if they have been admitted and will begin the program within 5 months.
- Note: Students in F-1 status can also apply for a change of status during the grace period.



What happens if I begin a new degree program or need a SEVIS transfer while I am on STEM OPT?

- If you choose to enroll in a course of study while participating in STEM OPT, it may impact your work authorization.
 - Consult ISSS if you are considering beginning a new course of study or will seek to [transfer your SEVIS record](#) to another institution.
- STEM OPT work authorization is **terminated** when your SEVIS record is transferred to a new school and/or you begin a program at a new degree level.



Can I travel while I am on an authorized period of STEM OPT?

If you depart the U.S. while authorized for STEM OPT for a temporary absence, you must have **proof of employment**, or a job offer in your major field of study in order to re-enter the U.S.

- If you seek re-entry to the U.S. in F-1 status while authorized for STEM OPT, carry the following documents:
 - I-20 ISSS issued with STEM OPT employment information on page 2 and travel signature dated less than six months from your date of re-entry to the U.S.
 - Valid Passport (validity should extend at least 6 months beyond your date of re-entry to the U.S.)
 - *Valid F-1 visa (exception- Canadians)
 - *As noted on the EAD, the EAD (alone) is not valid for reentry to U.S.
 - Unexpired Employment Authorization Document (EAD card).
 - Evidence that you have a job or a job offer in your major field of study in the United States and [documentation](#) of your employment history.
 - I-901 SEVIS fee receipt - a copy can be printed from [online](#).



Travel while on STEM OPT

Things to keep in mind if you choose to travel while authorized for the OPT STEM Extension:

- **A temporary absence from the U.S. should be less than 5 months.** Even with a job offer and valid EAD, an absence greater than 5 months may not be considered temporary and you may be denied re-entry.
- **Do NOT leave the U.S. if you have a pending change of status application as it will likely be considered abandoned.** Please consult an immigration attorney if you have questions about this.
- **Do NOT re-enter the U.S. in another status (e.g., B) if you intend to work on the OPT STEM Extension.** You must be present in the U.S. in F-1 status to work on the OPT STEM Extension.



Additional Travel Resources:

- [ICE Travel FAQ](#)
- [ISSS OPT Travel FAQ](#)
- [Visa Renewal](#)
- [Printing a Copy of Your I-94](#)

I-94 Arrival Record

- Review your [I-94 arrival record](#) every time you re-enter the U.S. to ensure that your entry was recorded properly. Check your biographical information as well as your Class of Admission (F-1) and Admit until Date (D/S).

Travel to Third-Country Destinations

- Depending on the country you are traveling to and/or through, you may be required to have a transit visa (to travel through an intermediary country on your way to your final destination) or a tourist visa to enter your final destination. Please consult the appropriate embassy or foreign consular office to determine if an additional visa is necessary. ISSS cannot give advice on visa procedures or application requirements for other countries.



Additional STEM OPT Resources

- [DHS STEM OPT Hub](#)
- [USCIS OPT Extension for STEM Students](#)
- [I-983 Training Plan for STEM OPT Students](#)
- [Form I-983 Training Plan Resources](#)
- [STEM OPT Reporting Requirements Handout](#)



Applying for STEM OPT can be a complicated process.

If you have questions after reviewing this presentation:

- Email your questions to iss@colorado.edu.
- Speak with an ISSS advisor during in-person or remote [ISSS Advising](#).

