Optional Practical Training (OPT) 24-Month STEM Extension Tutorial

How to prepare your application materials for submissions to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS)

STEM OPT Tutorial Outline

OPT STEM Extension Eligibility

Requirements:

- You must be a recipient of a U.S. Bachelor's or Master's degree in a STEM (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, or **M**ath) designated degree program.

- You are currently authorized for 12-month OPT and have not exceeded 90 days of unemployment.

- Employed within your field of study from an employer who is registered in the USCIS E-Verify Program. Must complete Form I-983 with employer and all employers must have an EIN number.

- Your employer can work with you to fully complete the Form I-983 and abide by all employer obligations, including Department of Homeland Security Site visits.

- You are applying no more than 90 days before your 12-month OPT expires and no later than the expiration of your 12-month OPT.

<u>Two 24-month STEM extensions may be granted per lifetime.</u>

Types of Allowable Employment

- Volunteer/Unpaid positions and self-employment are **<u>NOT</u>** supported by the 24-Month OPT STEM Extension.

- STEM-eligible employers must have e-Verify & EIN numbers and the students must have a "bona fide employer-employee relationship."

According to USCIS updates April 2018:

- Under no circumstances would another F-1 student on OPT or a STEM OPT extension (who is undergoing training in their own right) be qualified to train another F-1 student on a STEM OPT extension.

- The employer that signs the Form I-983 must be the same entity that provides the practical training experience to the student.

- The training experience must take place on-site at the employer's place of business or worksite(s). Online or distance learning arrangements may not be used to fulfill the employer's training obligation to the student.

Temp/Staffing Agencies & 3rd Party Worksites

According to USCIS updates April 2018:

□ Staffing and temporary agencies may employ students under the STEM OPT program, ONLY if they will be the entity that provides the practical training experience to the student at its own place of business and they have a bona fide employer-employee relationship with the student.

□ Such entities may not, assign or contract out students to work for one of their customers or clients, and assign, or otherwise delegate, their training responsibilities to the customer or client. The employer that signs the Form I-983 must be the same entity that provides the practical training experience to the student.

Temp/Staffing Agencies & 3rd Party Worksites

- The practical training experience must be provided by the employer's own trained or supervisory personnel at the employer's own place of business or worksite(s).

- According to prior guidance from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program: If a student uses a temporary or staffing agency to place them in a training opportunity, the agency cannot complete and sign the Form I-983, "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students." Only the E-verified employer that provides the actual training relevant to the student's qualifying STEM degree is authorized to sign and complete the Form I-983.

Application Process Overview

1. Prepare your application materials

Allow approximately 1 week to gather and organize the required documents.

2. Request an STEM OPT I-20

The STEM OPT I-20 will be ready for pick-up after [1] you have submitted the OPT request form and [2] Career Services has reviewed your completed application, and [3] DSO has reviewed your documentations.

3. Mail your STEM OPT application packet

4. Receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

5. Maintain your F-1 status while on STEM OPT Extension.

Step 1:

Prepare Your STEM OPT Application Materials

Application Materials

Required documents for STEM OPT application:

- 2 U.S. Passport Photos (with name and I-94 number written lightly in pencil on back of each) which are less than 30 days old
- USCIS Fee of **$410**. Credit Card, Check, or Money Order made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"
- Original form I-765 (https://www.uscis.gov/)
- Photocopy of STEM OPT I-20 that was issued by DSO within the past 60 days (Page 1-3). Don't forget to sign it!
- Photocopy of OPT I-20 (showing the initial 12-month OPT)
- Photocopy of passport biographical page and F-1 visa stamp, if applicable
- Photocopy of paper Form I-94 (both sides) or electronic I-94 record.
- Photocopy of current OPT EAD card & I-797 approval notice.
- Proof of degree: official transcript (preferred) or photocopy of diploma.
- Form G-1145 to confirm receipt and obtain case number in advance of paper notification.

Gather the Required Documentation

Passport Photo Requirements

The photos required to use for the STEM OPT application must meet the specifications of U.S. style passport photos. To see a full description of these specifications, go to the [U.S. Department of State](#) website.

- Submit 2 identical color passport photos taken within 30 days of filing your application. The photos must have a white to off-white background, be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish, and be unmounted and unretouched. The passport-style photos must be 2" by 2". You must remove your glasses and your head must be bare unless you are wearing headwear as required by a religious order of which you are a member.

- Use pencil or felt pen, lightly print your name and I-94 number on the back of the photo. Do not damage the photo surface by pressing hard while writing.

Gather the Required Documentation

Credit Card, Check, or Money Order

- **USCIS Payment Methods**: Check/Money Order or Credit Card Payment for $410

- **Check/Money Order** should be made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" with SEVIS number in the memo line. Money order can be purchased at banks, post office and some local grocery stores. Make sure a name and address are printed on the check. If the address has changed, that is fine.

  - Do not use "temporary checks" often issued by the bank when opening a new account. These checks have no name or address in the upper left hand corner.

- For Credit Card payment, submit form G-1450, authorize payment amount $410.

Gather the Required Documentation

Form I-765

Download the I-765 form from the [USCIS website](#).
Important: Use the most current version. It is best to download and completes the form prior to submitting to Career Services. Verify the form again just before mailing the application since USCIS updates it frequently.

Complete form by typing answers into the PDF or print legibly in **black ink**. Answer all questions fully and accurately. State that an item is not applicable with "N/A." If the answer is none, write "None."

Completing the I-765 is simple, but some parts can be confusing. The following slides will help you complete those "tricky" questions.

On July 16, 2018, the current version of the I-765 was updated. This tutorial reflects the newest version.

Complete the Form I-765

Top Portion: Leave the entire section "For USCIS Use Only" and " To be completed by an attorney or Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA)-accredited representative" blank.

Part 1. Reason for Applying

Check the "1.c." box for "Renewal of my permission to accept employment."

Part 2. Information About You

#1 **Name**: Your entire family name should be in CAPITAL letters. Use upper and lower case for the first name. Please write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20.

#2-4 **Other Names Used**: Enter your previous names, including names you have used on official records or documentation. If none, write "N/A."

Complete the Form I-765

If you are typing the I-765 electronically, be aware that the form does not allow you to write the "/" character into these fields. You will need to hand-write the "N/A" wherever this appears in the instructions.

Part 2. Information About You (Continued)

#5.a. If the mailing address belongs to someone other than yourself, put their full name (First Name Last Name) here. If this is your address, write "N/A".

#5.b.-5.e. Write a valid mailing address in the U.S. It may be a residence, commercial address, or P.O. Box.

U.S. Mailing Address
This is where you would like the Receipt Notice and the EAD card to be mailed. *This is very important!*

The address should be valid for at least 3-5 months, the length of time it will take to process the application. If you have plans to move during this time, use a reliable friend or family member's address to receive the EAD (indicate this in #5.a.)

Complete the Form I-765

#6 If you listed a mailing address that is NOT your physical living address, select "No" and complete **#7.a.-7.d.** with your current physical address. If "Yes", write "N/A" in **#7.a.-7.d.** Physical address should reflect where you actually live.

Other Information

#8 F-1 students do not have an A-number, leave this blank.

#9 F-1 students do not have an USCIS Online Account Number, leave this blank.

#10-11 The responses to these questions should be straightforward. Please complete them accurately.

#12

Check "Yes" since you have previously applied for an EAD. You will need to provide copies of your previous EADs.

Complete the Form I-765

#13.a.-17.b. **Social Security Number (SSN)**

#13.a.

Check "Yes" as you have been issued an SSN from your previous OPT. Enter your SSN with one letter in each box in #13.b.

#14

Check "No" if you do not want a replacement SSN card.

Check "Yes" if you want a replacement SSN card and complete #15-17.b.

#16.a.-17.b. **Parents Names (If applicable)**: Your father's and mother's family name should be in CAPITAL letters. Use upper & lower case for the first name.

You should receive your Social Security card from SSA about **two weeks** after receiving your approved EAD from USCIS.

Complete the Form I-765

#18 **Countries of Citizenship**: List all as applicable or write "N/A" in #18.b. if you do not have multiple citizenships.

#19 **Place of Birth**: List the name of the country as it was named when you were born, even if its name has changed.

#20 Make sure your Date of Birth is in the correct format of Month – Date – Year.

Information About Your Last Arrival

#21.a. **I-94 Number**: Use your current I-94 number. This is the number found on the electronic I-94 record or on the top left corner of the paper Form I-94 card.

#21.b-e. **Passport Information**: Enter the information directly from your passport; use the information of the passport you last used to enter the U.S. (this should match the country on your I-20).

#21.c. **Travel Document**: Write "N/A" here.

Complete the Form I-765

#22 Date of Last Entry into the U.S.: Your most recent entry date can be found on your passport admission stamp electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card.

#23 Place of Arrival into the U.S.: Name of the Port of Entry city from your most recent entry. This information can be found on your passport admission stamp, electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card (usually as a code, i.e. "LOS" for Los Angeles.) If you drove across the border, write the name of the city where you entered the U.S.

#24 Immigration Status at Last Entry: Status in which you entered the U.S. If you entered with an I-20 as a student, write "F-1 Student."

#25 Current Immigration Status: Current status should be "F-1 Student".

#26 SEVIS ID: Your SEVIS ID appears on the top left side of your I-20 and starts with N00….

Complete the Form I-765

#27 Eligibility Category: Use the following code for post-completion OPT: *(c)(3)(C)*.

#28.a. Degree: Indicate here the name of your PSU qualifying major. (*Note that for some program, the name of your major differs from the way it appears on your I-20. This will be addressed in section 6 of the I-765*).

#28.b. Employer's Name: Your employer should be able to provide you with this information.

#28.c. E-Verify Number: Your employer should be able to provide you with this information. For more information about the E-Verify program, see http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify

#29-31.b Other Eligibility Categories: Write "N/A" in these fields or leave check boxes blank as they are not applicable to applying for STEM OPT.

Complete the Form I-765

Part 3. Applicant's Statement

#1.a. Select 1.a. to indicate that you have read and understood the questions.

#2 Write "N/A" in this field.

#3-6 Provide your information as request.

Applicant's Declaration and Certification:

Read the entire declaration carefully.

Applicant's Signature

#7.a.-7.b. Hand sign your name and provide the date of the signature.

Complete the Form I-765

IMPORTANT!
Your signature will be scanned and must fit within the box. It must NOT touch the box outline. If the signature is too big and crosses a line, your application could be delayed. Be conservative and use a signature smaller than normal.

Troubleshooting Signature Line:
In some cases, the "Don't forget to sign!" automatic reminder will not disappear when you print the form.

You should remove the auto-filled "Don't forget to sign!"

We recommend trying:

➢ To open the form in the most recent version of Adobe Reader
➢ To print a blank version of the form's second page from your web browser.

Complete the Form I-765

Part 4-5. Applicant's Statement

This sections are not applicable to you, since you've completed the form yourself, so write "N/A." This section is for those who use an interpreter or other paid preparer to complete the form.

Part 6. Additional Information (Only if this is applicable to you)

#1.a.-1.c. Provide your name again as listed in Part 2, 1.a.-1.c.

#2 Leave blank.

#3.a.-3.c. Reference Page **2**, Part **2**, Item **12**

#3.d. Write "Previous OPT Authorizations" and list your previous OPT start & end dates and receipt numbers. Write "See attached documentation for previous OPT authorizations" and include copies of all previous OPT I-20s and EAD cards with your application.

Complete the Form I-765

#4.a.-4.c. Reference Page 3, Part 2, Item 28

#4.d. **Academic Info**

Write "Name of major in SEVIS:" and list your major as written on your I-20

Write "Pacific States University Approved CIP Code for Major:" and list the CIP Code as written on I-20

Write "See attached I-20 and diploma or transcript"

Include copies of your I-20 and diploma or transcript.

Since you COMPLETED Page 7, Part 6:

You must add your signature and the date to Page 7. Simply sign and date in the blank space at the bottom of Page 7.

Complete the Form I-765

You are done with the I-765!

Review all the information on the form for accuracy. You must submit **ALL 7 pages** of the I-765.

Make a copy of your completed I-765 application to keep for your records, in case there is a problem with the application.

Gather the Required Documentation

Photocopy of STEM OPT I-20 (All pages):

- ☐ Must be received by USCIS within 60 days of being issued by DSO.

- ☐ Original must be signed by the student at the bottom of Page 1.

- ☐ The requested STEM OPT start and end dates will appear on Page 2.

- ☐ **Do not mail the original I-20!**

Gather the Required Documentation

Photocopy of Initial OPT I-20 (All pages):

- ☐ Second page should show your initial 12-month OPT authorization.

- ☐ **Do not mail the original I-20!**

Gather the Required Documentation

Photocopy of Passport and Visa:

□ Photocopy the passport biographic page (with photo and passport expiration date)

□ **Passport must be valid!**

□ Photocopy the F-1 visa, if applicable.

□ **Visa does not need to be valid.**

Gather the Required Documentation

Photocopy of I-94 Information:

The I-94 can be *either:*

- An electronic I-94 record. Visit https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94 to access and print your record. (Select: Already Visiting & Need Proof of Visitor Status?)

OR

- A paper I-94 card stapled into your passport. Include a copy of both sides, even though the back side may be blank.

Gather the Required Documentation

Photocopy of Current OPT EAD & I-797 Notice of Approval:

- Include a copy of the front and back of the card.

- Include I-797 notice of approval.

Gather the Required Documentation

Official Transcript or Photocopy of Diploma

- The official transcript or diploma must show the major and degree level that makes you eligible for the STEM extension. Final transcripts are preferred.

- For information on how you can order an official transcript or obtaining your diploma, please contact Student Services (studentservice@psuca.edu).

Gather the Required Documentation

Form G-1145:

This is an optional form.

☐ Attached to the top of the OPT application packet. Use this form to request text and email notification(s) regarding your application. Download the form at: https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145

WARNING!

USCIS will <u>rarely</u> contact you by phone regarding the status of your OPT application.

If you receive a phone call from a person claiming to work for USCIS or any other government agency, do not provide your personal information to them. Note the person's name and phone number and contact a PSU Career Services Officer before responding.

Step 2:

Request an STEM OPT I-20 &

Completing the I-983

STEM OPT I-20 Application Materials

In addition to all the required documents for STEM OPT application, PSU requires the below documents prior to issuing the STEM OPT I-20:

- Instruction for OPT Application

- Original form I-983 (https://www.uscis.gov/)

- Job offer letter

Requesting for STEM OPT I-20

Complete the Instruction for OPT Application
(http://www.psuca.edu/download-forms/)

□   Complete the Student Information Section

□   Submit the form and the STEM OPT application material to Career Services for review.

Form I-983

Form I-983

The formal training plan must clearly articulate the STEM OPT learning objectives and affirm the employer's commitment to helping you achieve those objectives. To fulfill this requirement, you and your employer must complete and sign Form I-983 and then submit it to the DSO.

Download the I-983 form from the [Department of Homeland Security website](#). The website also provides a detailed tutorial on completing the I-983. The following slides provide specific details regarding the I-983.

Page 3-4 contain the details of the required Training Plan to be determined by you and your employer. To avoid rejection of your application, think carefully about each question and answer fully and completely.

Form I-983

Information to fill out on the I-983

Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:

Pacific States University

Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned:

Pacific States University

SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT:

LOS214F00196000

Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information:

Kuang Kai Lu

3424 Wilshire Blvd., 12th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90010

323-731-2383

rex@psuca.edu

Form I-983

Student SEVIS ID No:

Found on Page 1 of your I-20

STEM OPT Requested Period: (mm-dd-yyyy)

From: [One day after current EAD ends]

To: [24 months from STEM start date]

Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code:

The CIP code is a 6-digit code (XX.XXXX) found on Page 1 of your I-20.

What are CIP Codes? *Classification of Instructions Programs (CIP) codes are published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and are used by SEVIS to designate a student's major. Your CIP code determines whether your major has been designated as a STEM degree.*

Form I-983

Based on Prior Degree?

Check "No"

Employment Authorization Number:

"USCIS #" listed on your 12-Month OPT EAD.

Other Points for Consideration:

- We do not accept electronic signatures on the I-983. Please obtain handwritten signatures.
- Please ensure all responses are visible (fillable PDF cuts off. If you do not have enough room, please submit an attachment.)

Check your STEM OPT I-20 for Accuracy

After receiving your STEM OPT I-20, notify DSO immediately if there are any errors.

PAGE 1

School Attestation
Make sure there is a DSO signature. Check the date – USCIS must receive your application within 60 days of this date.

Student Attestation
You should sign & date I-20. Students 18 and over do not need a parent's signature.

Check your STEM OPT I-20 for Accuracy

After receiving your STEM OPT I-20, notify DSO immediately if there are any errors.

<u>PAGE 2</u>

Employment Authorization Dates
Check 24-Month STEM OPT start and end dates. Verify employer name for accuracy.

Travel Endorsements
Check for DSO signature. Endorsements are good for 6-month periods.

Step 3:

Mailing Your STEM OPT Application Packet

Mailing the OPT Application from Outside of California

If using a mailing address in...	Mail your application to...	
	USPS	**Express Deliveries**
Alaska, Arizona, **California**, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands.	**USCIS** **P.O. Box 21281** **Phoenix, AZ 85036**	**USCIS** **Attn: AOS** **1820 E. Skyharbor, Circle S, Suite 100** **Phoenix, AZ 85034**
Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia	**USCIS** **P.O. Box 660867** **Dallas, TX 75266**	**USCIS** **Attn: AOS** **2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400** **Lewisville, TX 75067**

If using USPS, choose Express or Priority Mail option and choose Certified Mail.

The Application Deadline

- USCIS must **receive** your complete STEM OPT application no later than **60 days after the STEM OPT I-20** has been issued.

- The issue date is located next to the advisor's signature on Page 1 of the STEM OPT I-20.

- No later than the end date of your current 12-month as noted by your EAD.

- You may apply up to 90 days before your current OPT end date.

> Please account for mailing time. We recommend that you apply early.

Step 4:

Receive Your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Card

I-797 Notice of Action

You should receive the notice by mail within 2-4 weeks after mailing the STEM OPT application to USCIS.

- □ **The I-797 is very important**.
  If you lose the receipt, there is no way to replace it.

- □ The I-797 is necessary if you want to:
  1) Inquire about the status of your STEM OPT application
  2) Travel outside the U.S. when your STEM OPT is pending.

Receipt Number
The case number for the OPT application at USCIS. Check the status of the case on the USCIS website at:
https://www.uscis.gov/

Received Date
Date when USCIS begins processing the application. (It may not be the actual date the application was received, but it is when the case was entered into the system.)

Address Information
Verify your name, date of birth, and address on the I-765 receipt notice.

Tracking Your Case

Your Case Updates:

You can track your case using the "Check Your Case Status" tool on
https://www.uscis.gov/

Address Change:

If your address changes, you can update it online through the "Change of Address" tool. Keep in mind that address changes can take 10 business days to process and could jeopardize your STEM OPT EAD delivery. We recommend keeping the same address for your entire STEM OPT processing, if possible.

Case Inquiries:

You can submit inquiries about your case using the Case Inquiry tool, if you don't receive your receipt or other notification, or if your EAD has been pending for more than 75 days.

If There is a Problem with Your Application…

If there is a problem with your application, the USCIS will send you a notice by mail called a "**Request for Evidence" (RFE)**. An RFE does not mean that your application has been rejected. It simply means that you need to send in additional documents before your EAD can be issued.

□   Getting an RFE will delay the processing of your application.

□   In some cases, if too many items are missing from your application, the USCIS will return the entire application to you. If this happens, you must make the corrections and send the application before the end date of your 60-day grace period.

To avoid delays, review your application materials for completeness and sign all forms before mailing them to USCIS.

The Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

- ☐ Review card to make sure the information is accurate.

- ☐ Present your EAD to employers as proof of your legal work authorization in the US.

- ☐ The EAD is a required document for entry to the US during OPT.

- ☐ **Send a copy of your EAD card to PSU Career Services (careerservices@psuca.edu).**

Student's Responsibilities

Your Responsibilities During STEM OPT

□ Reporting Requirements

□ Important Information on Travel

□ Applying for an F-1 Visa on OPT

Reporting Requirements

The following must be submitted to PSU Career Services (careerservices@psuca.edu)

▢ You **MUST** report any changes to your employment, address, and/or name within 10 days.

▢ You **MUST** submit a copy of your EAD card upon receipt.

▢ You **MUST** report to Career Services every 6 months, within 10 business days.

▢ You **MUST** submit your Annual Evaluation of Student Progress due at 12 month and 24 month.

▢ You **MUST** report status change to Career Services while you are on STEM OPT.

SEVP Portal

The Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has its own "SEVP Portal" for students on OPT/STEM. One Day 1 of your approved OPT, you will receive an email from SEVP with instructions on how to create an account. This email will come from do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov

☐ Be aware of scams – SEVP will NEVER ask you for a payment to register to register for the optional SEVP Portal.

☐ Registration for SEVP Portal is OPTIONAL.

☐ **The SEVP Portal will NOT replace our student reporting requirement. We ask that ALL PSU students on STEM OPT continue to report to PSU for all STEM OPT reporting requirements.**

Report Material Changes to Form I-983

Material changes may include, but are not limited to:

- Any change of the employer's Employer Identification Number, (i.e., the company's Federal Tax ID number) resulting from a change in the employer's ownership or structure.

- Any reduction in your compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked.

- Any significant decrease in hours per week that you engage in a STEM training opportunity.

- Changes to the employer's commitments or your learning objectives as documented on the Form I-983.

- Updated Material Changes via a revised I-983 needs to be submitted to Career Services within 10 business days.

6-Month Report

- STEM OPT students must submit a report to Career Services every <u>six months</u> starting from the date the 24-month extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status ends to confirm that the employer information you submitted with this request is still correct.

- Your F-1 record may be terminated if you fail to report each 6 months.

- Check your STEM start date and mark your calendar for each 6 month interval of your STEM extension for your reporting deadlines. (Example: Your STEM extension starts January 1, 2018. You must submit 6 months validations on July 1, 2018, on January 1, 2019, July 1, 2019, and on January 1, 2020.)

- As regulations may change, PSU Student & Career Services must have your current email address at all times.

Annual Evaluation

☐ You must submit Form I-983 page 5 "Evaluation of Student Progress" to Career Services each 12 months and/or any time you leave an employer.

☐ Your employer must review and sign the self-evaluation to attest to the accuracy.

☐ Your F-1 record may be terminated if you fail to submit your evaluations.

☐ Check your STEM start date and mark your calendar for each 12 month interval of your STEM extension for your reporting deadlines. (Example: Your STEM extension starts January 1, 2018. You must submit an annual evaluation on January 1, 2019 and a final evaluation by January 1, 2020.)

Important Information on Travel

- Avoid long absences from the U.S. during the STEM OPT period. Time spent outside of the U.S. while unemployed by a U.S. employer counts toward your 150 days of unemployment.

- Attempting to re-enter the U.S. close to the expiration date of your STEM OPT can be risky.

- You must not enter the U.S. in a status other than F-1. This may result in the loss of your STEM OPT eligibility.

Travel While STEM OPT is Pending, But Before STEM OPT Card is Received

- There is a high risk associated with travel and return while your STEM OPT is pending <u>after</u> the initial OPT completion date. If there are any problems with your application, you may not be able to respond to USCIS in a timely manner, which could delay processing of your STEM OPT EAD.

- If your STEM OPT application is denied while outside the U.S., you will not be able to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status and will not be able to reapply.

Applying for an F-1 Visa on OPT

If you are traveling abroad and your F-1 visa has expired, you must obtain a new F-1 visa before returning to the U.S. When going to your visa interview, bring the documents below.

1. Valid passport
2. Valid STEM OPT I-20 with travel endorsement from PSU DSO within the past 6 months
3. STEM OPT EAD card
4. Job offer in field of study
5. Evidence of sufficient funds (e.g. a bank statement, a letter from a sponsor or a job offer letter)
6. Any additional supporting document

Check the U.S. Department of State website for more information about getting a visa and specific requirements at the local embassy or consulate.

Additional Information

Important Information

- If you file your STEM OPT extension application on time and your OPT period expires while your extension application is pending, USCIS will automatically extend your employment authorization for 180 days. This automatic 180-day extension ceases once USCIS adjudicates your STEM OPT extension application.

- You may accumulate up to 150 days of unemployment on STEM OPT inclusive of any time used during the initial 12-month OPT.

- You must work full-time in your field of study while on your STEM OPT Extension.

Additional Questions?

Please speak with Career Services.

To make an appointment, email:
careerservices@psuca.edu