

Scenarios with Travel and OPT/STEM OPT

I. Travel while STEM OPT application to USCIS is pending, but before the Post-Completion OPT EAD expires and returning before expiration of post completion OPT EAD

You must have ALL documents listed below in order to travel and reenter the U.S.:

- unexpired Post-Completion OPT EAD card
- proof of employment (recommended)
- a valid Form I-20, signed on page 2 by an DSO (the signature must not be more than six months old at the time of reentry to the U.S.)
- an unexpired passport
- an unexpired F-1 visa in the passport. If your F-1 visa is expired at the time of your reentry to the U.S. you must apply for a new visa to reenter the U.S.
- SEVIS fee payment receipt

II. Travel while STEM OPT application is pending AND after the Post-Completion OPT EAD expires (NOT RECOMMENDED)

If you attempt to travel abroad and reenter the U.S. with your expired Post-Completion OPT EAD card and the original receipt notice for your STEM OPT application issued by USCIS, it is not guaranteed that CBP will allow entry after expiration of your Post Completion OPT EAD.

You cannot travel with an email or text confirmation, or a printout of your online case status, in lieu of the physical receipt notice if still considering travel.

This only applies during the 180 day period of authorized employment while your STEM OPT application is pending.

To attempt reentry to the U.S. with a pending STEM OPT application, you should carry:

- Expired Post-Completion OPT EAD card
- **USCIS-issued paper receipt notice** for your STEM OPT application
- a valid Form I-20, signed on page 2 by a DSO (the signature must not be more than six months old at the time of reentry to the U.S.)
- an unexpired passport
- an unexpired F-1 visa in the passport. If your F-1 visa is expired at the time of your reentry to the U.S. you must apply for a new F-1 visa to reenter the U.S. with. For instructions, please see below.
- Evidence of a job offer or evidence of resumption of employment on STEM OPT
- SEVIS fee payment receipt

Please Note: USCIS advises against tourism travel while you are waiting for the approval of the

24-month extension. Please travel at your own risk and consider changing travel plans until your STEM OPT is approved and you receive the EAD card.

III. Travel after STEM OPT approval

You must have ALL documents listed below in order to travel and reenter the U.S. while on an approved period of STEM OPT

- a STEM OPT EAD issued by USCIS. Printed on the EAD is the statement "Not valid for reentry." This statement means that the EAD alone is not valid for reentry.
- a valid Form I-20, signed on page 2 by a DSO (the signature must not be more than six months old at the time of reentry to the U.S.)
- an unexpired passport
- an unexpired F-1 visa in the passport. If your F-1 visa is expired at the time of your reentry to the U.S. you must apply for a new F-1 visa to reenter the U.S.
- evidence of a job offer or evidence of resumption of employment
- SEVIS fee payment receipt

To Place a Travel Signature Request:

1. Login with your credentials to **International Student Services Request Portal** via <https://iss.wvu.edu/requests>
2. Go to "Requests and Documents"
3. Select "Travel Endorsement" and complete the required steps.
4. Submit your request

The travel endorsement can be provided electronically and you will be e-mailed via your mix for directions on how to access, print, and sign the I-20 needed for re-entry to the U.S.

/ International Students Services Team
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