

Travel Outside of the U.S. During OPT or STEM OPT

It is generally safe to travel outside of the United States during your approved Post-Completion OPT or STEM OPT period. If you have accrued more than 90 days of unemployment during Post-Completion OPT or 150 days of unemployment during your combined Post-Completion OPT and STEM OPT, then you are considered out-of-status and reentry may be denied.

To avoid issues with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), be sure to hand-carry these items at the port of entry (POE) upon your return to the U.S.:

Required:

- **Passport**
 - Valid at least 6 months into the future on the date you return
- **F-1 visa**
 - Valid on the date that you return
- **Most recent I-20 signed for travel**
 - Must have your current Post-Completion OPT/STEM OPT job noted
 - DSO's travel signature must be no more than 6 months old
- **EAD card**
 - With valid Post-Completion OPT/STEM OPT approval dates
- **Letter from your current employer**
 - Should state that you are currently employed and are expected back to work after your travels

Strongly Recommended:

- **I-901 SEVIS fee payment receipt**
 - www.fmjfee.com
- **Proof of financial support**
 - Your employer's letter may contain your base salary as proof of sufficient funds
 - You may also carry your most recent pay stubs
- **All previous I-20s**
- **Previous EAD card**
 - If you are currently on STEM OPT, carry your Post-Completion OPT EAD card also

Traveling with pending OPT or STEM OPT

It is not recommended that you travel outside of the U.S. while your OPT or STEM OPT application is pending. If you travel without OPT approval and try to reenter after the program end date on your I-20, then you will be denied reentry. If your OPT or STEM OPT is approved while you are outside of the U.S., then you will need someone to mail your new EAD card to you for your reentry. It is also highly recommended that you show proof of a job if you are reentering after your Post-Completion OPT has just been approved.