**F-1 Status on STEM OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)**

It is your responsibility to know and comply with all immigration regulations, which apply to you as an international student. While you are on F-1 OPT, you are still an international student on an F-1 student visa.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **READ ALL COMMUNICATION FROM BECHTEL INTERNATIONAL CENTER** | Read carefully the pick-up email that you received regarding your OPT I-20. Always read immigration update emails from Bechtel International Center and visit our website. |
| **ONCE YOUR OPT IS APPROVED BY USCIS** | You are welcome to request that we reprint a new I-20 for you. This new I-20 will accurately reflect the fact that your OPT is now approved and is no longer pending or requested. |
| **UPDATE EMAIL ADDRESS** | Update your primary email address in Axess AND ensure that the “Preferred” check box to the right of your primary email address is also checked. This email must be one that you will check regularly after graduation, as we and Department of Homeland Security will continue to correspond with you on immigration updates. |
| **UPDATE PHYSICAL ADDRESS** | Update your physical address through SEVP portal within 10 days of moving. This address must be a physical residential address and not a PO BOX. This update will be reported directly to the SEVIS database. |
| **REPORT OPT EMPLOYMENT** | While on OPT, you must report all information on your employment including start/end dates, employer name and address, verify how the employment is related to your studies, and all periods of unemployment. All reporting must occur within 10 days of employment changes. Failure to report employment will be viewed, as unemployment and the SEVIS database will automatically terminate your record after 90 consecutive days of unemployment. There is no avenue for correcting that fatal error, so please be vigilant of your legal responsibilities and reporting requirements.  More information on how to update OPT employment can be found: <http://stanford.io/2tt0GWL>  If you would like to request a new I-20 reflecting the changes (once your STEM OPT request has been approved), please complete the form:  <https://tinyurl.com/4w6t7yy9> |
| **WATCH FOR UNEMPLOYMENT** | F-1 regulations state that students authorized on OPT must leave the U.S. before accruing an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment (150 days of unemployment for STEM OPT). There is no 60-day grace period after accruing the total unemployment limit. |
| **TIMELY FILE YOUR STEM OPT IF ELIGIBLE** | To apply for a STEM OPT, you must be eligible, employed by an E-verified company, and working in your field of study. This application is very time-sensitive, and may be received at the earliest 90 days before the post-OPT EAD expires. The USCIS must acknowledge receipt of your application BEFORE your EAD expires! If it is not received in a timely manner, the request will be denied. If your request is denied AFTER the EAD expires, you may not re-apply for the STEM OPT extension! |
| **REPORT STEM OPT EMPLOYMENT** | While on STEM OPT, you must:   * report on the form below every 6 months (including 12 months and 24 months self-evaluation)   <https://tinyurl.com/rxzxe6xh>   * report changes to STEM OPT employment on the form below   <https://tinyurl.com/tzu8hdvv> |
| **INFORM: CHANGE OF STATUS** | If you change your visa status, complete the Change of Status (COS) Reporting Form (within 10 days of the COS being approved).  <https://tinyurl.com/4p93nunw> |
| **TRAVEL PREPARATION** | To reenter the U.S. while on OPT or STEM OPT, you must have:   * a valid passport * valid visa (exception: Canadians)-can only be renewed outside U.S. * I-20 with a valid travel signature within the last 6 months * EAD card * job offer * and financial documents * F-2 carry both copy of spouse I-20 and copy of EAD card   If you are renewing your F-1 visa while on OPT, please check the visa requirements of the specific U.S. Consulate. |
| **TRAVEL SIGNATURES** | While on OPT or STEM OPT, your travel signature is only valid for six months at a time. You may request a new I-20 with updated travel signature at:  <https://tinyurl.com/4w6t7yy9>  (During the pandemic, DHS is permitting our office to send PDF copies of the I-20 to the student. Once the PDF of the I-20 is received, you will then print, sign and date page 1 of the new I-20, and use it for re-entry to the U.S. along with other supporting documentation.) |
| **IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS** | You have a few ways of contacting us:   * Send an email to [internationalstudents@stanford.edu](mailto:internationalstudents@stanford.edu) (Please allow three business days for a response) * Walk-in advsing (No appointment necessary. Please check our website for more information <https://bechtel.stanford.edu/about-us/hours>) * To schedule an appointment for either an in-person, Skype or phone call, please use the following website:   [**https://bechtel.stanford.edu/about-us/appointments**](https://bechtel.stanford.edu/about-us/appointments) |