



**Student Reporting Responsibilities & Travel Resources for  
STEM Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

*This information sheet is for students who have been approved for a STEM OPT Extension*

**QUICK LINKS**

- [STEM OPT Reporting Form](#) → report changes to Office of International Affairs
- [SEVP Portal](#)
- [STEM OPT Help Hub](#)

**EAD Card**

If you successfully file the application for STEM OPT with USCIS during the final 90 days of post-completion OPT, then you may continue working with your current employer. This automatic extension of post-completion OPT is valid until your STEM OPT application is processed or until 180 days has passed from the expiration date of your post-completion EAD card, whichever is sooner.

You must submit a copy of your EAD card to the Office of International Affairs, via email: [international@northpark.edu](mailto:international@northpark.edu). If there is a mistake on your EAD card, please contact the Office of International Affairs for further guidance.

**Types of Employment**

All STEM OPT employment must meet the following requirements:

- At least 20 hours per week of work
- Paid work (unpaid employment is not permitted on STEM OPT)
- Employment which is directly related to the STEM-eligible field of study
- Employment must be with an employer enrolled in E-Verify
- Employee and employer must complete the I-983 form
- The employer agrees to comply with the STEM OPT Employer Requirements and Responsibilities, as outlined on the [USCIS website](#)

Students may change employers during STEM OPT, and/or work for more than one employer simultaneously, but all employment must meet the criteria of qualifying STEM OPT employment as outlined above.

**Unemployment**

Students on STEM OPT are allowed a maximum of 150 days of unemployment time. This includes the unemployment time accrued during **both** post-completion OPT and STEM OPT, combined. During the STEM OPT period you are limited to 60 days of unemployment. The SEVP Portal should display your total number of accrued unemployment days.

**SEVP Portal**

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) Portal is an online tool that F-1 students on STEM OPT can continue to access, to comply with reporting requirements. During STEM OPT, students can report changes to contact information, but cannot update employer information in the Portal. Please visit the [SEVP Portal Help Hub](#) for more information about accessing and maintaining your SEVP Portal.

### **STEM OPT Ongoing Reporting Responsibilities**

➔ **Link to [STEM OPT Reporting Form](#)**

Students on OPT must report the following within 10 days of the change:

- Address/phone number updates
- Changes to employer (add or end employment)
- Changes to employer/employment information that would require changes to your Form I-983

Report via the [SEVP Portal](#) (address changes only) **and** report employer updates to the Office of International Affairs by completing the [STEM OPT Reporting Form](#).

### **STEM OPT Reporting Schedule**

F-1 STEM OPT students are required to complete STEM employment reporting tasks at the 6, 12, 18, and 24 months of STEM OPT. The 12 and 24 month evaluations will be added to your original [Form I-983](#). SEVP Portal users will [receive a reminder](#) via email 30 days before their self-evaluation is due. You can also calculate these dates based on your EAD card validity dates. Please complete the following reporting forms every 6 months and email the updated I-983 to the Office of International Affairs.

- ✓ **6 month:** complete [STEM OPT Reporting Form](#)
- ✓ **12 month:** complete [STEM OPT Reporting Form](#) & Evaluation on Student Progress (Form I-983)
- ✓ **18 month:** complete [STEM OPT Reporting Form](#)
- ✓ **24 month:** complete [STEM OPT Reporting Form](#) & Final Evaluation (Form I-983)

*\*This final assessment must be submitted within 10 days following the conclusion of STEM OPT.*

**For more detailed information about STEM OPT Reporting Requirements, please refer to the US Department of Homeland Security's website [Study in the States, STEM OPT Hub](#).**

### **Documenting STEM OPT Employment**

It is recommended that you keep documentation of all your employment. In the future, you may be asked to provide proof of your detailed employment history during OPT and STEM OPT. Your documentation should ideally include an offer letter from your employer HR or manager containing the following information: position held, proof of the duration of that position, the job title, the hours worked per week, contact information for your supervisor or manager, and description of the work. Keep this in your personal records, along with copies of your OPT application materials, receipts, I-20s, Form I-983, and EAD cards.

### **Travel**

**While your STEM OPT application is processing:** If you are still waiting for your STEM OPT approval and EAD card, we do not recommend travel outside of the U.S. It is possible, but generally not recommend. If you need to travel outside of the U.S., please set up an appointment with the Office of International Affairs to discuss the risk and the necessary documentation you must bring.

**If you are on STEM OPT AND have your EAD card,** you can travel outside of the U.S. Please make sure to bring the following documentation with you in your carry-on bag:

- (1) Form I-20 with a travel signature from within the past **6 months**
- (2) Unexpired EAD card
- (3) Valid passport
- (4) Valid F-1 visa *\*If your visa is expired, please consult OIA for more information and instructions on process for visa renewal while on STEM OPT.*
- (5) OPT employment evidence (job offer or evidence of your current job)
- (6) Office of International Affairs contact information

*\*Note: Even with the above listed documents, reentry to the U.S. is never guaranteed.*

**After STEM OPT**

You must stop your employment when the end date on the EAD card is reached, but may remain in the U.S. for the 60-day grace period. You have the following options after OPT:

1. Apply for another degree program. You will need to receive a new I-20 from your school before the 60-day grace period ends and begin the program within 5 months of your STEM OPT End Date. Please provide OIA with a copy of your acceptance letter during the 60-day grace period and before your departure from the U.S. If you depart the U.S. before your transfer is complete, you will have to re-enter on a new SEVIS record and pay a new I-901 fee.
2. You can depart the U.S. within 60 days of the OPT end date. During your 60-day grace period, you may not study or work.
3. Change of status. Please consult your employer and/or immigration attorney if you plan to complete a change of status application.