



STEM OPT Student Responsibilities to Maintain Valid F-1 Status and Travel Instructions

1. Review your Form I-797 (Notice of Action: Receipt Notice) provide copy to ISSS:

Approximately 30 days after your OPT application is received and receipted by USCIS, you will receive a Form I-797 Receipt Notice at the U.S. mailing address you provided to USCIS on your Form I-765. The notice will contain a receipt number you can use to check the status of your OPT application on the USCIS website - www.uscis.gov. If you do not receive Form I-797 after 30 days, please notify issm@miami.edu.

Upon receipt of Form I-797, please verify that all of your information is accurate and upload a copy at www.miami.edu/optdocs. If the information is not correct, contact issm@miami.edu immediately so that a request for correction can be submitted to USCIS.

Note: USCIS may need additional information to approve your OPT and may send you a Request for Evidence (RFE). Follow the instructions on the RFE and contact issm@miami.edu if you need assistance.

2. Review your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) and provide copy to ISSS:

If your STEM OPT application is approved, between 90 to 150 days from the date USCIS received your OPT application, you will receive work permission from USCIS, which will be in the form of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), at the U.S. mailing address that you provided on your Form I-765. If you change your address before you have received your EAD, you must update your address on the USCIS website - www.uscis.gov/addresschange and email your address to issm@miami.edu.

Upload a copy of your EAD (front and back) at www.miami.edu/optdocs. ISSS will issue and mail you a new I-20 reflecting your STEM OPT approval. You will need this I-20 for employment, travel, and all benefits (e.g. driver's license).

If you file your extension application on time and your OPT period expires while your extension application is pending, USCIS will extend your employment authorization for 180 days.

If your OPT application is not approved, you will receive a Denial Notice at the U.S. mailing address provided on your Form I-765. Notify issm@miami.edu and submit a copy of your Denial Notice for further guidance.

3. Report your employment information and any changes of address:

Your valid F-1 status in the U.S. is dependent on your employment for the duration of your STEM OPT. To maintain valid F-1 status during your OPT, you MUST report any change in employer information and submit a new [Form I-983](#) at www.miami.edu/optdocs within 10 days. This form can also be found at iss.miami.edu under *Common Procedures - Forms for Students*.

Whenever you change employer, you must also include the final self-evaluation on page 5 on [Form I-983](#) for the previous employer.

In addition, both students and STEM employers are obligated to report to iss@miami.edu material changes to or deviations, from the student's formal training plan.

The employer and the student must agree to report the termination or departure of a STEM degree holder to iss@miami.edu with the subject line, "STEM OPT Employer Update".

ISSS will update the employer information in SEVIS.

Note: You may not accrue an aggregate of more than 60 days of unemployment during OPT STEM. This is in addition to the 90-day maximum period of unemployment that students are allowed during the initial period of post-completion practical training.

There is a provision in the STEM OPT rule that allows the Department of Homeland Security to perform site visits at employer locations to ensure that STEM OPT students receive structured and guided work-based learning experiences, and to confirm that information reported on the student's Form I-983 is accurate. Refer to www.studyinthestates.dhs.gov/employer-site-visits for detailed information and additional resources for students and employers. We recommend that you also share this information with your employer.

4. Report STEM OPT Participation

Every 6 months until completion of your STEM OPT, log into www.miami.edu/optdocs and report that your local address and STEM OPT employer information are correctly listed in the SEVP Portal. Upload of Form I-983 with the completed self-evaluation will be required after 12 and 24 months (see below).

5. Complete and submit self-evaluations

Complete self-evaluations on [Form I-983](#) (to be reviewed and signed by the employer) during the 24-month STEM OPT period:

- a. at the conclusion of the first 12 months of STEM OPT, and
- b. at the conclusion of the STEM OPT period. Evaluations must be uploaded at www.miami.edu/optdocs within 10 days after the conclusion of the evaluation period, and/or
- c. at the end or termination of STEM OPT employment.

Submit Form I-983 at www.miami.edu/optdocs.

6. If traveling while engaged in the 24 months OPT STEM extension, follow these instructions:

You must present the following documents to USCIS at the port-of-entry in order to seek reentry to the U.S.:

- EAD issued by USCIS
- A letter from the U.S. employer regarding the employment for optional practical training.
- SEVIS Form I-20, endorsed for travel by your ISSS advisor within the last six months
- Valid passport
- Valid F-1 visa

Absence from the U.S. during OPT is limited to 90 days, or 5 months if on authorized leave or traveling as part of your U.S. employment.

Important Reminders:

Termination of Optional Practical Training: Authorization to engage in OPT STEM is automatically terminated when you transfer to another school or begin study at another educational level.

Health insurance through United Healthcare: International students who are no longer enrolled at the University but remain in the U.S. to engage in post-completion OPT may still be insured under the Student Insurance policy if they originally purchased a plan that continues beyond the completion of their studies. Visit iss@miami.edu for more information.

Note: It is your responsibility to retain copies of all your immigration documents and all immigration applications (Form I-20, employment, change of status, program extension, etc.) for your records/future use. ISSS is required to keep copies of your documents and applications for only three years beyond the end of your program of studies at UM and any authorized post-completion OPT/OPT STEM.