



Traveling Outside the US while on OPT

When you travel outside the United States during your OPT, you must have the following documents with you to re-enter the United States:

1. Valid passport

2. Valid F-1 visa stamp in passport

Visa stamps may only be renewed outside of the United States, ideally in your home country. Renewal is not guaranteed.

3. Original "OPT Requested" I-20 with travel signature on page 2*

*OPT travel signatures are only valid for six months from the date of signature. If your travel signature will be older than six months by the time you return to the United States, please contact ImmigrationOfficials@ce.uci.edu at least two weeks before your departure date to assist you.

4. Employment Authorization Document (OPT card).

WARNING! If you are planning to apply for OPT do not leave the U.S. until you have done so AND received your EAD card. Once you have graduated you are required to show your EAD card along with your I-20 to the Customs and Border Protection officer in order to be permitted to re-enter the U.S. Keep in mind, if you leave the U.S. after you graduate and have not applied for Optional Practical Training, you will lose your eligibility to apply.

5. Job Offer Letter (or Proof of funding)

If you have secured a job, please have your employer write a letter verifying your hire date. You may be asked to show it to the Customs and Border Protection officer at the port of entry.

If you do not have a job offer and you travel for a brief period, you should carry with you a bank statement that will reflect enough funds to support your living expenses while you are in the United States. Please note, you may have trouble re-entering the United States if you do not have a job offer after your OPT start date.

Important Reminders:

- An F-1 student who has a valid OPT card and a valid F-1 visa, who is otherwise admissible may return to the United States to resume employment after a temporary absence. The OPT card must be used together with an "OPT Requested" I-20 signed for travel by an International Student Advisor.
- Be advised, if you travel for long periods of time (more than 30 days) or if you do not have a job offer, and you plan to re-enter the United States, the Customs and Border Protection officer may question why you are returning to the United States.

Please contact an International Student Advisor at ImmigrationOfficials@ce.uci.edu if you have any questions or concerns about traveling outside the United States while on OPT.