Optional Practical Training (OPT) 24-Month STEM Extension Tutorial

How to prepare your application materials for submission to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS).

Berkeley International Office (BIO)
2299 Piedmont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94720
(510) 642-2818

http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu
STEM OPT Tutorial Outline

• STEM Eligibility & Allowable Employment
• Application Process Overview
• Step 1: I-983
• Step 2: Updating SSU
• Step 3: BIO STEM I-20 Request Process
• Step 4: Preparing your OPT Request to USCIS
  • Application Deadlines
  • Mailing your Application
• Step 5: Receiving Your EAD & USCIS Documents
  • I-797C receipt Notice
  • Application, Tracking Problems & Requests for Evidence
  • Your EAD card
• Step 6: Maintaining Your F-1 Status & STEM Reporting Requirements
  • BIO SSU Hub & Reporting
  • Changes in Employer
  • Material Changes to the I-983
  • 6 Month Updates and Annual Evaluations
  • Travel during STEM OPT
• Frequently Asked Questions
OPT STEM Extension Eligibility

Requirements:

• You must be a recipient of a U.S. Bachelor’s, Master’s or Doctoral degree in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, or math) designated degree program. See this list of STEM Majors. (You can check the CIP code listed on your I-20.)

• You are currently authorized for 12-month OPT and have not exceeded 90 days of unemployment.

• Can apply based on any previous STEM degree from an SEVP, accredited U.S. institution within the last 10 years

• Employed or have a job offer related to your field of study from an employer who is registered in the USCIS E-Verify Program. Must complete Form I-983 with employer and all employers must have an EIN number.

• Your employer can work with you to fully complete the Form I-983 and abide by all employer obligations, including Dept. of Homeland Security Site visits.

• You are applying no more than 90 days before your 12-month OPT expires and no later than the expiration of your 12-month OPT.

Two 24-month STEM extensions may be granted per lifetime.
Types of Allowable Employment

• Volunteer/Unpaid positions and self employment are NOT supported by the 24-Month OPT STEM Extension.

• **STEM-eligible employers** must have e-Verify & EIN numbers and the student must have a "bona fide employer-employee relationship".

According to [USCIS updates April 2018](#):

• Under no circumstances would another F-1 student on OPT or a STEM OPT extension (who is undergoing training in their own right) be qualified to train another F-1 student on a STEM OPT extension.

• The employer that signs the Form I-983 must be the same entity that provides the practical training experience to the student.

• The training experience must take place on-site at the employer’s place of business or worksite(s). Online or distance learning arrangements may not be used to fulfill the employer’s training obligation to the student.
Temp/Staffing Agencies, 3rd Party Worksites

According to USCIS updates April 2018:

• Staffing and temporary agencies may employ students under the STEM OPT program, ONLY if they will be the entity that provides the practical training experience to the student at its own place of business and they have a bona fide employer-employee relationship with the student.

• Such entities may not, assign or contract out students to work for one of their customers or clients, and assign, or otherwise delegate, their training responsibilities to the customer or client. The employer that signs the Form I-983 must be the same entity that provides the practical training experience to the student.

• The practical training experience must be provided by the employer’s own trained or supervisory personnel at the employer’s own place of business or worksite(s)

• According to prior guidance from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program If a student uses a temporary or staffing agency to place them in a training opportunity, the agency cannot complete and sign the Form I-983, "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students." Only the E-verified employer that provides the actual training relevant to the student's qualifying STEM degree is authorized to sign and complete the Form I-983.
Application Process Overview

In most cases we recommend beginning the OPT STEM application process 90 days before the expiration of your 12-month OPT period. The following slides will give you detailed information about each step.

1. Complete I-983

2. Update SSU

3. Request OPT STEM I-20 from Berkeley International Office.
The I-20 will be ready for pick up 5 business days after submitting the [OPT 24 Month STEM application](#) and all supporting documents to Berkeley International Office. Arrangements can be made to send you the new I-20 by mail. Please allow enough time for mailing USCIS must receive your application within 60 days of BIO recommending you, which is the date on the school attestation section of your I-20.

4. Prepare, collect & mail your application materials to USCIS.
Allow approximately 1 week to gather and organize your materials for mailing. A complete application must be received by USCIS before the end date of your current OPT as noted on the EAD card. You must be in the United States to file the OPT STEM application with USCIS.

Average processing time at the United States Citizenship and Immigrations Services (USCIS) is 90 days. However, you may continue to work on OPT for up to 180 days while the STEM application is pending.

6. Maintain your F-1 status while on OPT STEM Extension.
You must report general address and employer updates to Berkeley International Office within 10 days of any change. 24 Month STEM Extension students must also submit a validation report every six months and training evaluations each 12 months. Find information about STEM Reporting [here](#). Your I-20 travel endorsement is valid for only 6 months while on OPT STEM. Failure to provide timely updates may result in termination of the F-1 record.
OPT STEM Application Timeline:
(Example: July 9 12-month OPT end date)

1. **Step 1: Request your OPT I-20**
   - Prepare I-983 w/employer; Update SSU
   - Submit STEM OPT request form to BIO as early as 90 days before OPT ends

   - STEM OPT I-20 processed by BIO in 5 business days; Submit I-765 & supporting materials to USCIS
   - 12-month OPT end date (example); last possible date for USCIS to receive STEM application
   - 24-month STEM EAD received; Upload image of STEM EAD card to SSU

   - Application processing with USCIS (3-month average)

   - You may continue to work on OPT for up to 180 days after your OPT expires while the STEM application is pending
Step 1: Complete Form I-983

The formal training plan must clearly articulate the OPT STEM learning objectives and affirm the employer’s commitment to helping you achieve those objectives. To fulfill this requirement, you and your employer must complete and sign Form I-983 and then submit pages 1-4 to BIO.

The following slides provide specific details regarding the I-983; please confirm your application follows the requirements, even if your employer plans to prepare the form on your behalf.
Complete I-983

Use the UC Berkeley School code found here, even if your STEM degree was from a different school.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th><a href="mailto:Oski@email.com">Oski@email.com</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Email Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Oski@email.com">Oski@email.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:</td>
<td>University of California, Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned:</td>
<td>University of California, Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT (including 3-digit suffix):</td>
<td>SFR214F00615000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information:</td>
<td>Student SEVIS ID No.:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM OPT Requested Period: (mm-dd-yyyy)</td>
<td>From: __________, To: __________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code:</td>
<td>Level/Type of Qualifying Degree:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Awarded: (mm-dd-yyyy)</td>
<td>Date Awarded: (mm-dd-yyyy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on Prior Degree? □ Yes □ No</td>
<td>Based on Prior Degree?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Authorization Number:</td>
<td>Employment Authorization Number:</td>
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Complete I-983

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Student Email Address:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bear, Oski</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Oski@email.com">Oski@email.com</a></td>
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<td>University of California, Berkeley</td>
<td>University of California, Berkeley</td>
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<tr>
<th>Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mikaela Auerbach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2299 Piedmont Ave, Berkeley, CA 94720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>510-642-2818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:SEVISCoordinator@berkeley.edu">SEVISCoordinator@berkeley.edu</a></td>
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<th>STEM OPT Requested Period: (mm-dd-yyyy)</th>
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<th>Level/Type of Qualifying Degree:</th>
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<th>Date awarded (mm-dd-yyyy)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Based on Prior Degree?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<th>Employment Authorization Number:</th>
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</table>
Complete I-983

The CIP code is a 6-digit code (XX.XXXX) found on your I-20
- Page 1 if I-20 issued on/after 6/26/2015
- Page 3 if I-20 issued before 6/26/15

<table>
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<th>Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:</th>
<th>Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned:</th>
<th>SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT (including 3-d suffix):</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of California, Berkeley</td>
<td>University of California, Berkeley</td>
<td>SFR214F00615000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information:**

Mikaela Auerbach 2299 Piedmont Ave, Berkeley, CA 94720 510-642-2818 SEVISCoordinator@berkeley.edu

**Student SEVIS ID No.:**

Found on page 1 of your I-20

**STEM OPT Requested Period: (mm-dd-yyyy)**

One day after current EAD ends 24 months from STEM start date i.e.: - 1/01/2017 i.e.: 01/01/2019

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What are CIP Codes? Classification of Instructions Programs (CIP) codes are published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NES) & are used by SEVIS to designate a student’s major. Your CIP code determines whether your major has been designated as a STEM degree.
Complete I-983

If your STEM degree is listed on your UC Berkeley I-20, check “no.”

Check “yes” ONLY if your STEM degree is NOT the degree listed on your UC Berkeley 12-Month OPT I-20.

Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: Example: Computer Science, 11.0701

Level/Type of Qualifying Degree: I.e. Bachelors, Masters, PhD

Date Awarded: (mm-dd-yyyy)

Based on Prior Degree? □ Yes □ No

“USCIS #” listed on your 12-Month OPT EAD
Complete Form I-983

For detailed tutorial on completing the rest of the I-983, see: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview

Pages 3-4 contain the details of the required Training Plan to be determined by you and your employer. To avoid rejection of your application, think carefully about each question and answer fully and completely. Imagine this is an essay exam to be graded- have you and your employer addressed all parts of each question, clearly and specifically? See the next 2 slides slides 14-15 for more details.

Other points for consideration:
• We do not accept electronic signatures on the I-983. Please obtain handwritten signatures.
• Please ensure all responses are visible and upload a corrected I-983. (fillable PDF cuts off. If you don’t have enough room, please submit an attachment.)
• Responses that don’t include the name of your STEM degree and a description of the relationship between your role and your degree will be rejected.
• Example of response: [Description of role]. The student’s role enhances their knowledge related to their [STEM Degree] by [describe relationship].

• Responses that don’t include learning objectives or how they will be achieved will be rejected.
• Example of response: The student’s work-based learning goals/work objectives related to their STEM degree are [describe goals & relation to degree] and they will be achieved by [describe methods].
Responses that do not include description method(s) of oversight and supervision will be rejected.

Example of response: The employer provides oversight and supervision through [describe methods].

Responses that do not include description of how knowledge and/or skills are assessed will be rejected.

Example of response: The employer will measure and assess the student’s new knowledge and skills by [describe methods].
Step 2: Update SSU

Log in to the Student SEVIS Update (SSU) system DIRECTLY BEFORE you submit your STEM paper form to BIO. (Most processing delays are due to failure to update all new required fields in SSU.)

Before applying for STEM, you must:

1. Update your current address/email/phone
2. Update all current & previous OPT employment
3. Upload a copy of your OPT EAD (if you haven’t already)

After you have done this, click the “Apply for STEM OPT Extension” link in the Other Requests and Reporting Forms section.

See next slide for instructions...
Step 2: Update SSU (Apply for STEM)

On the STEM OPT Application page SSU Indicate with which employer you will be applying for your STEM Extension

- If applying with a **current employer**, select the employer, and click “Apply with this Employer”
- If applying with a **new employer**, click “Add New Employer and Apply”

This will lead you to the Employer Information form...see next slide..
Step 2: Update SSU (Employer info)

Current Employer: you’ll be asked to complete the extra STEM section of this form (see next slide)
New Employer: you’ll be asked to complete all fields

Address: We recommend that you verify the standard formatting of your employer’s address by using the “look up a ZIP code” feature on USPS.com.

*Address Street 1 should NOT contain the suite or office number. Please enter that in the field Address Street 2.*
Step 2: Update SSU (Employer info)

For your STEM employer, please also complete sections 13-18. This information is required for STEM reporting.

**Employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number:** Your employer should be able to provide you with this information. More information about the E-Verify program at [http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify](http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify)

**Employer Identification Number:** Your employer should be able to provide you with this information.

**Company Official Information:** This should match the information you listed on I-983 form section 5.

On the next pages, you will asked to upload your I-983.
Step 2: Update SSU (Upload I-983 & EAD)

Upload Documents

Please upload your completed I-983(s) following the instructions below.

Important Points for consideration:
- The I-983 is a 1-page form and must be uploaded in ONE FILE, not as individual pages.
- We do not accept electronic signatures on the I-983. Please obtain handwritten signatures.
- Please ensure all responses are visible on the I-983. The fillable PDF is cut off, so if your text exceeds the space allowed, please submit a separate attachment.
- Do not fill Section 1, DSO Name and Contact Information. These fields look like this? If no, please edit it before uploading.

TO UPLOAD:

1. Click the green Add Files button.
2. Select the correct file to upload.
3. Once file has been uploaded, identify your document by selecting an option in the drop down menu under “Type of Document” on the right.
4. Repeat this process for all required documents. You may upload more than one type of each document, if necessary.
5. To finish the process, click Submit Uploads. You will not be able to make changes after you click Submit.

According to your profile information, Granoll, Vanina, we need the following documents from you:
- Additional I-983

Note: Maximum File Size limit is 10MB.

Select I-983
Step 3: Request OPT STEM I-20

STEM OPT I-20 Timing Considerations:

- You may apply as early as 90 days before your OPT EAD end date.
- You must submit your STEM I-20 request AT LEAST 2 weeks before your current OPT EAD expires.
- USCIS must receive your application before the end date of your OPT.

We’ll cover the following steps in the next slides:

- Complete the **OPT 24 Month STEM Extension Form**
- Attach check or money order for $300 Post-Completion Services fee.
- Submit the completed form by mail or in-person with fee to the Berkeley International Office

* Your OPT will be automatically extended for 180 days while your OPT STEM application is pending.
Step 3: Request OPT STEM I-20

You must complete all sections of the [OPT 24 Month STEM Extension Form](#). Most questions are straightforward. Contact internationaloffice@berkeley.edu with questions regarding completing the form.

Unemployment
Dates between positions, including weekends. For example, if you were unemployed from 7/10 - 8/10, that is 31 days of unemployment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Date (Month/day/year):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC Berkeley OPT Degree Major(s):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expiration Date of OPT EAD:</td>
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Days of unemployment since the start date of your OPT EAD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEM Degree Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you receive your STEM degree at UCB?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If NO, then at what school?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior STEM Extension Usage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever had an OPT STEM Extension before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List the dates of your previous STEM Extension:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the degree level for your previous STEM Extension?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Primary Email Contact:
(This email should match your primary email in SSU.)

Telephone:

☐ “I have read the [STEM OPT Application Guide](#), I understand the responsibilities required for maintaining F-1 status during my period of STEM OPT authorization as stated on the reverse and in the [STEM OPT Application Guide](#), and I am responsible all reporting requirements.”

Signature of Student:  
Date:
Step 3: Request OPT STEM I-20

Again, on the OPT 24 Month STEM Extension Form most questions are straightforward. Please make sure to indicate your preference for the I-20 delivery method.

If you cannot take time away from work, standard postal mail takes 7-10 business days for delivery. This is free, but there is no tracking available. If you want speedier delivery or tracking, you may want to purchase a FedEx express mail label for delivery outside the Bay Area. If someone other than yourself will be picking up the form, please email your permission and their name to internationaloffice@berkeley.edu.
Step 3: Request OPT STEM I-20

A check or money order for $300 Post-Completion Services fee should be attached to your 24-month STEM Extension Form. Your name and student ID must be on the check.
Step 3: Request OPT STEM I-20

BY MAIL:

Berkeley International Office
2299 Piedmont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94720-2321
*If express mail, use the phone number 510-642-2818

IN-PERSON:

During business hours listed on our contact page
Check your OPT I-20 for accuracy

Notify BIO immediately if there are any errors with your I-20.

School Attestation
Make sure there is a BIO advisor signature. Check the date – USCIS must receive your application within 60 days of this date.

Student Attestation
You should sign & date I-20. Students 18 and over do not need a parent’s signature.
### Employment Authorization Dates
Check 24-month STEM OPT start and end dates. Verify employer name for accuracy.

### Travel Endorsements
Check for adviser signature. Endorsements are good for 6-month periods.

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#### Employment Authorization Dates

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### Change of Status/CAP/GAP Extension

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<tbody>
<tr>
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### Travel Endorsements

<table>
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<th>TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENDORSED BY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berkeley International Office</td>
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</tbody>
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**Step 1: Request your OPT I-20**
Step 4: Prepare & Mail Your Application Materials
Required documents for STEM OPT application

- 2 U.S. Passport Photos (with name and I-94 number written lightly in pencil on back of each), taken within the past 30 days.
- USCIS Fee of $410. Check, Money Order, or Credit Card Payment made payable to: “U.S. Department of Homeland Security.” Write your SEVIS ID in the memo line.
- Photocopy of STEM OPT I-20 that was issued by BIO within the past 60 days (page 1-3). Don’t forget to sign it!
- Photocopy of your previous UC Berkeley OPT I-20 showing the initial 12-month OPT.
- Photocopy of current OPT EAD & I-797 approval notice
- Photocopy of passport biographical page and F-1 visa stamp, if applicable.
- Print out of electronic I-94 record (or photocopy of both sides of paper Form I-94)
- Proof of final STEM degree: Final Transcript (preferred) or photocopy of STEM-eligible diploma
- If the OPT STEM extension is based on a prior degree, include the I-20 from your previous school. If the I-20 is not available, request a screenshot of your SEVIS record
- If you previous had another STEM extension at another degree level, include photocopy of previous STEM EAD cards and previous STEM OPT I-20s,

No documents are required for F-2 dependents.
Gather the required documentation

Passport Photo Requirements

The photos required to use for the OPT application must meet the specifications of U.S. style passport photos. To see a full description of these specifications, go to the U.S. Department of State website.

• Submit 2 identical color passport photos taken within 30 days of filing your application. The photos must have a white to off-white background, be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish, and be unmounted and unretouched. The passport-style photos must be 2” by 2”. You must remove your glasses and your head must be bare unless you are wearing headwear as required by a religious order of which you are a member.

• Using pencil or felt pen, lightly print your name and I-94 number on the back of the photo. Do not damage the photo surface by pressing hard while writing.

Professional Photography

USCIS has been examining passport photos more strictly. BIO recommends students have their photos taken professionally. Recently, students have been visiting the following locations to obtain their photos.

Metro Publishing
2440 Bancroft Way
Berkeley, CA 94704
http://www.yelp.com/biz/metro-publishing-berkeley

Foto Shop
131 Berkeley Sq
Berkeley, CA 94704
http://www.yelp.com/biz/foto-shop-berkeley
Gather the required documentation

Check, Money Order, or Credit Card:

- **USCIS Payment Methods:** Check/Money Order or Credit Card Payment for $410.
- **Check/Money Order** should be made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" with SEVIS number in the memo line. Money orders can be purchased at banks, post office, and some local grocery stores. Make sure a name and address are printed on the check. If the address has changed, that is fine.
  
  ✓ Do not use “temporary checks” often issued by the bank when opening a new account. These checks have no name or address in the upper left hand corner.

- **For Credit Card** payment, submit form [G-1450](#), authorized payment amount $410. You may only use a credit card account with a U.S. billing address - no foreign billing address is allowed.

Money orders and cashier checks should include the same information as a personal check.
Gather the required documentation

Form I-765

Download the I-765 form from the [USCIS web site](#). **Important:** Use the most current version. It is best to download it just before mailing the application since USCIS updates it frequently.

Complete form by typing answers into the PDF or printing legibly in black. Answer all questions fully and accurately. State that an item is not applicable with “N/A.” If the answer is none, write “None.”

Completing the I-765 is simple, but some parts can be confusing. The following slides will help you complete those “tricky” questions.
Complete the Form I-765

**Top Portion:** Check the box for “Renewal of my permission to accept employment.”

**#1 Name:** Your entire family name should be in CAPITAL letters. Use upper & lower case for the first name.

**#2 Other Names Used:** Enter your previous names. If none, write “None.”

**#3 Address in the United States:** This is where you would like the Receipt Notice and the EAD card to be mailed.

- The address needs to be valid for at least 3 months, the length of time it will take to process the application.
- **DO NOT USE THE C/O NOTATION IF YOU USE YOUR OWN ADDRESS.** If you have plans to move during this time, use a reliable friend or family member’s address to receive the EAD. If your name is not registered at the address, you must use the C/O notation and the name of the friend of family member who lives at the address to ensure delivery. If you fail to use this notation, the card may be returned to the Service Center as undeliverable.

*If the address listed is outside of California, please pay attention to the special mailing instructions later in the tutorial.*
#4-8 General Information

The responses to these questions are straightforward. Please complete them accurately.

4. Country of Citizenship or Nationality
   Australia

5. Place of Birth
   Town or City: Brisbane
   State/Province: Queensland
   Country: Australia

6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)
   01/31/1998

7. Gender
   - Male
   - Female

8. Marital Status
   - Single
   - Married
   - Divorced
   - Widowed
#9 Social Security Number - YES

You will already have an SSN from your previous OPT. Check “Yes” and enter your SSN with one letter in each box.

#10-13 Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? – NO

Again, since you already have an SSN, you will not need to apply for one. Check “No” and leave questions 11,12, and 13 blank.
Complete the Form I-765

**#14 I-94 Number**

Use your current I-94 number. This is an 11-digit number found on the top left corner of the paper Form I-94 card or on the electronic I-94 record. Alien Registration Numbers are not issued to F-1 students. (see example on slide 30).

14. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or Form I-94 Number (if any)

2123456789

[Image of Form I-94 card]
#15: Previous Employment Authorization - YES

- Check “yes.”

- Fill the next two lines (show below) with the information related to the previous 12-month EAD.

- The authorized dates may need to be neatly handwritten in black pen as the field is too small.

- To answer which USCIS Office, List your previous OPT receipt number. The letters before the numbers indicate the service center to the officer adjudicating the case.

- If you have been authorized for other employment (other than CPT) through USCIS, be sure to include that information in this section as well. Use a separate piece of paper if necessary.

---

### 15. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (Complete the following questions.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Which USCIS Office?**
- **Dates**
- **Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List your previous OPT receipt number(s)</th>
<th>06/01/2015 – 05/31/2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Granted**

- **No (Proceed to Item Number 16.)**
Complete the Form I-765

#16: Date of Last Entry into the U.S.
Your most recent entry date can be found on your passport admission stamp, electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card.

#17: Place of Last Entry into the U.S.
Name of the Port of Entry city from your most recent entry. This information can be found on your passport admission stamp, electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card (usually as a code, i.e. “SFR” for San Francisco). If you drove across the border, write the name of the city where entered the U.S.

#18: Manner of Last Entry
Status in which you entered the U.S. If you entered with an I-20 as a student, write “F-1 Student.”

16. Date of Your Last Arrival or Entry Into the U.S., On or About (mm/dd/yyyy)
   08/27/2013

17. Place of Your Last Arrival or Entry Into the U.S.
   SFR

18. Status at Last Entry (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)
   F-1 Student
Complete the Form I-765

**#19: Current Immigration Status**
Current status should be “F-1 student.” If not, talk to a BIO advisor.

**#20: Eligibility Category**
Use the following code for post-completion OPT: (c) (3) (C).

19. **Current Immigration Status** (Visitor, Student, etc.)
   - F-1 Student

20. **Eligibility Category.** Go to the Who May File Form I-765? section of the Instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.
   - (C) (3) (C)
Complete the Form I-765

#21: 24-Month Extension

• **Degree:** Indicate here the SEVIS degree name as it appears on your I-20. Also include the CIP Code found next to your degree name. You may have to handwrite this section.

• **If you qualify for the OPT STEM extension based on your 2nd major, you must also include the name of this major and its CIP code.**

• **You cannot qualify based on a minor.**

• **Employer’s Name as listed in E-Verify:** Your employer should be able to provide you with this information.

• **Employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number:** Your employer should be able to provide you with this information.

• **For more information about the E-Verify program, see [http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify](http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify)**

#22: (c)(26) Eligibility Category

Write “N/A” in this fields. The question is not applicable to you because it relates to H4 status holders, and you are in F-1 status.

#23: (c)(35) and (c)(36) Eligibility Category

Write “N/A” for part a. These eligibility categories are not related to F-1 status holders. Leave part b blank because, again, this question is not applicable to you.

21. **(c)(3)(C) Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(3)(C) in Item Number 20. above, list your degree, your employer's name as listed in E-Verify, and your employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in the space below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Major(s) as listed on I-20 &amp; CIP Code</th>
<th>Employer's Name as listed in E-Verify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. **(c)(26) Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(26) in Item Number 20. above, please provide the receipt number of your H-1B principal spouse's most recent Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-129.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer's E-Verify Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. **(c)(35) and (c)(36) Eligibility Category**

a. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) or (c)(36) in Item Number 20. above, please provide the receipt number of the Form I-140 beneficiary's Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-140.

| N/A                        |

b. **Have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime?**

[ ] Yes [ ] No

**NOTE:** If you answered "Yes" to Item Number 23.b., refer to Item Number 5., Item H. or Item I. in the Who May File Form I-765 section of these Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.
Complete the Form I-765

Certification

• Sign your name
• Fill in the date of signature
• Fill in your telephone number

Important!
Your signature will be scanned and must fit within the box. It must NOT touch the box outline. If the signature is too big and crosses a line, your application could be delayed. Be conservative and use a signature smaller than normal. Please see the example

Signature of Person Preparing the Form, If Other Than Applicant

This section is only applicable to you, if an attorney or other paid preparer completed on your behalf. Otherwise, you can handwrite in “N/A.”
Complete the Form I-765

Troubleshooting Signature Line:
In some cases the “Don’t forget to sign!” automatic reminder will not disappear when you print the form.

You should remove the auto filled “Don’t forget to sign!” We recommend trying:
• To open the form in the most recent version of Adobe Reader.
• To print a blank version of the form’s second page from your web browser.

Certification
I certify, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the Who May File Form I-765 section of the Instructions and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in Item Number 20.

Applicant's Signature
Don’t forget to sign!

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

Telephone Number
Gather the required documentation

Photocopy of STEM OPT I-20 (all pages):

- Must be received by USCIS within 60 days of being issued by BIO (see slide xxxx on I-20).
- Original must be signed by the student at the bottom of page 1 before copying.
- The requested STEM OPT start and end dates will appear on page 2.
- Do not mail the original I-20.
Gather the required documentation

Photocopy of PREVIOUS OPT I-20 (all pages):

Second page should show your initial 12-month OPT authorization.
Gather the required documentation

Photocopy of Passport and Visa:

- Photocopy the passport biographic page (with photo and passport expiration date); passport must be valid 6 months into the future.

- Photocopy the F-1 visa, if applicable; visa does not need to be valid.
Gather the required documentation.

Photocopy of I-94 Information:

The I-94 can be either:


OR

• A paper I-94 card stapled into your passport. Include a copy of both sides, even though the back side may be blank.
Gather the required documentation

**Photocopy of current EAD:**
*and previous STEM EADs if applicable*

- Include a copy of the front and back of the card.
- Include I-797 notice of approval if available.
Photocopy of Diploma or Official Transcripts

• Your diploma or official transcripts must show the major and degree level that makes you eligible for the STEM extension. Final Transcripts are preferred.

• For information about obtaining your UC diploma if you do not have it, see [http://registrar.berkeley.edu/diplomas.html](http://registrar.berkeley.edu/diplomas.html)

Previous Degrees or Previous STEM Extensions

- If the OPT STEM Extension is based on a prior degree not listed on your current 12-Month OPT, you must also include a copy of your I-20 from the previous school.
- If you have previously had another STEM extension, you must include a copy of your previous STEM I-20.
- If the I-20 is not available, either request 1) a screenshot of your F-1 SEVIS record from the previous school OR 2) a letter from your previous international office stating your name, SEVIS ID, the dates of your attendance, and your STEM major and CIP code.
Gather the required documentation

**Form G-1145**
- Attach to the top of the application packet. Use this form to request text and email notification(s) regarding your application. Download the form at [http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf)
- OPT application packet.

**WARNING!**

USCIS will rarely contact you by phone regarding the status of your application.

If you receive a phone call from a person claiming to work for USCIS or any other government agency, do not provide your personal information to them. Note the person’s name and phone number and contact a BIO advisor before responding.
Application Deadline

USCIS must receive the OPT STEM application:

• No later than **60 days after the OPT STEM I-20** has been issued by Berkeley International Office.
  - The issue date is located next to the advisor’s signature on page 1 of the OPT STEM I-20.

• No later than the **end date** of your current 12-month as noted by your EAD.  
  *Please account for mailing time.*

• You may apply up to 90 days before your current OPT end date.
  *We recommend that you apply early.*
Mailing the OPT STEM Application

Mail Delivery Options

Express Mail (Federal Express, UPS, etc)

OR

United States Postal Service (USPS)

- BIO recommends FedEx as a reliable option.
- If using USPS, BIO recommends using Priority 1-2 Day service and requesting Certified Mail/Return Receipt service to obtain proof of USCIS receipt.

Where to Mail Your Application

- Use the address of USCIS Service Center that corresponds to the region where you will receive your EAD (the address you listed on Item #3 of your Form I-765).
- You will use a different address depending on whether you choose Express Mail or USPS.
- See the next slide for USCIS Service Center mailing addresses.
## Mailing From Outside California

### If using a mailing address in...

- Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia

### Mail your application to...

#### U.S.P.S.

- **Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia**
  - **U.S.P.S.**
  - USCIS
  - PO Box 660867
  - Dallas, TX 75266

#### Express Deliveries

- **U.S.P.S.**
  - USCIS
  - PO Box 21281
  - Phoenix, AZ 85036

- **Express Deliveries**
  - USCIS
  - Attn: AOS
  - 2501 S. State Hwy 121 Business Suite 400
  - Lewisville, TX 75067
I-797 Notice of Action

You should receive the notice by mail within 2-4 weeks after mailing the OPT application to USCIS.

- **The I-797 is very important.** If you lose the receipt, it may be very difficult to replace it.
- **The I-797 is necessary if you want to:**
  1) inquire about the status of your OPT application.
  2) travel outside the U.S when your OPT is pending.

**Receipt Number**
The case number for the OPT application at USCIS. Check the status of the case on the USCIS web site at [https://www.uscis.gov](https://www.uscis.gov)

**Received Date**
Date when USCIS begins processing the application. (It may not be the actual the application was received, but it is when the case was entered into the system.)

**Address Information**
Verify your name, date of birth, and address on the I-765 receipt notice. If incorrect, contact BIO immediately.

**Contacting USCIS**
If you have any problems or questions with the OPT application, contact a BIO advisor before calling the USCIS Customer Service.
USCIS Issues & Tracking Your Case

Case Status Updates
BIO strongly recommends that you sign up for an account at https://www.uscis.gov. This can allow you to receive automatic updates and monitor your case. Click “Check Your Case Status” and then select “Sign Up”.

General Case Tracking:
If you don’t sign up for an account, you can still track your case using the “Check Your Case Status” Tool.

Address Changes:
If your address changes, you can update it online through the “Change of Address” tool. Keep in mind that address changes can take 10 business days to process, and could jeopardize your OPT EAD delivery. We recommend keeping the same address for your entire OPT processing, if possible.

Case Inquiries:
You can submit inquiries about your case using the Case Inquiry tool, if your don’t receive your receipt or other notifications, or if your EAD has been pending for more than 75 days.
Application Problems- RFE or Rejection/Denial

**RFE-** If there is a problem with your application, the USCIS may send you a notice by mail called a “Request for Evidence (RFE).” An RFE does not mean that your application has been rejected. It simply means that you need to send in additional documents before your EAD can be issued.

- Getting an RFE will delay the processing of your application

**Rejection/Denial-** In some cases, if too many items are missing from your application, the USCIS will return the entire application to you. If this happens, you must make the corrections and send the application before the end date of your 60-day grace period.

Contact BIO IMMEDIATELY if you receive an RFE, rejection, or denial.

To avoid delays, review your application materials for completeness and sign all the forms before mailing them to the USCIS.
The Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

Average processing time at USCIS is 90 days/3 months. While waiting, keep these things in mind.

- Your F-1 status & employment authorization will be **automatically extended** for up to 180 days while your OPT STEM application is pending. You may work during this time.
- A change in employment will require a new BIO 24-Month STEM request AND a new I-983 with the new employer.
- You must work full time in your field of study while on your OPT STEM Extension
- You may accumulate up to 150 days of unemployment on OPT STEM inclusive of any time used during 12-month OPT.
- If you decide to return to school as a full-time student, you must request a [transfer or a change of level from Berkeley International Office](http://io.berkeley.edu) within 60 days of your EAD expiration date.
- Review card to make sure the information is accurate. If not, contact a BIO advisor.
- Present your EAD to employers as proof of your legal work authorization in the US.
- The EAD is a required document for entry to the US during STEM OPT (refer to slide ####).
- Upload a copy of your EAD card at io.berkeley.edu/ssu
Step 6: STEM Reporting Requirements
1. Reporting Requirements

- Submit updates online at [io.berkeley.edu/ssu](http://io.berkeley.edu/ssu)
- You must report any changes to your employment, address, and/or name within 10 days.
- Complete 6 Month validation with BIO.
- Report Material Changes to your I-983 to BIO within 10 days.
- Annual Evaluation of Student Progress due at 12 and 24 Months

See [STEM Reporting Requirements](http://io.berkeley.edu/ssu) for instructions on how to submit updates, validations, & evaluations.
Reporting your Information

While on OPT STEM, you must update the Berkeley International Office **within 10 days** of any changes to the following information:

- Your Name
- Your Residential Address
- Your Phone & Email Address
- Employer Name or Address
- Starting or Ending Employment
- Date of departure from the U.S. if you leave prior to OPT STEM end date and want to end your OPT.
- Change of status to another visa category

*We recommend saving the website page showing your updated information.*

In order to update your information, you will need your UCB Student ID# and SEVIS # (found on your I-20 & starts with N00...).
Reporting Requirements - BIO SSU HUB MANDATORY

- ALL STUDENTS ON OPT/STEM ARE REQUIRED TO USE THE BIO SSU HUB TO SUBMIT OPT UPDATES. BIO SSU Hub is a Berkeley International Office system.

- Submit updates online at io.berkeley.edu/ssu

SEVP Portal - OPTIONAL

- The Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has its own “SEVP Portal” for students on OPT/STEM. On Day 1 of your Approved OPT, you will receive an email from SEVP with instructions on how to create an account. This email will come from do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov

- Be aware of scams - SEVP will NEVER ask you for a payment to register to register for the optional SEVP Portal.

- Registration for SEVP Portal is OPTIONAL. BIO WILL NOT USE the SEVP Portal for OPT reporting purposes. BIO recommends using SEVP Portal as “view-only.”
Changing Employment while on OPT STEM Extension

If you change employers during your 24-Month STEM period, follow these instructions. (If your STEM EAD has not yet been approved by USCIS, contact a BIO advisor for more information.)

1) Log into SSU and do the following:
   • Add the new employer information.
   • Add an end date to your previous employer.
   • Update your address/phone/email.
   • Upload a copy of your STEM EAD.
   • Upload a new I-983 form for the new employer.
   • Upload the Final Evaluation from I-983 page 5 for your previous employer.

2) Submit a new OPT 24-Month STEM Extension request to Berkeley International Office by email to internationaloffice@berkeley.edu or in person- no fee required.
Report Material Changes to Form I-983

Material changes may include, but are not limited to:

- Any change of the employer’s Employer Identification Number, (i.e., the company’s Federal Tax ID number) resulting from a change in the employer’s ownership or structure.
- Any reduction in your compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked.
- Any significant decrease in hours per week that you engage in a STEM training opportunity.
- Changes to the employer’s commitments or your learning objectives as documented on the Form I-983.
- Updated Material Changes via a revised I-983 needs to be submitted to BIO within 10 business days.
6-Month Validation

• STEM OPT students must submit a validation report to BIO every six months starting from the date the 24-month extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status ends.
• 4 validations in total over 24-month OPT STEM Extension time.
• Your F-1 record may be terminated if you fail to report each 6 months.
• Check your STEM start date and mark your calendar for each 6 month interval of your STEM Extension for your reporting deadlines. (Example: Your STEM Extension Starts January 1, 2017. You must submit 6 month validations on July 1, 2017, on January 1, 2018, on July 1 2018 and on Jan 1, 2019.)
• Be sure to check email reminders from BIO
Annual Evaluation

• You must submit Form I-983 page 5 “Evaluation of Student Progress” to BIO each 12 months and/or any time you leave an employer.

• Your employer must review and sign the self evaluation to attest to the accuracy.

• Your F-1 record may be terminated if you fail to submit your evaluations.

• Check your STEM start date and mark your calendar for each 12 month interval of your STEM Extension for your reporting deadlines. (Example: Your STEM Extension Starts January 1, 2017. You must submit an annual evaluation January 1, 2018, and a final evaluation by January 1, 2019)

• Be sure to check email reminders from BIO

• If you received a 7-Month Extension of your previous 17-Month STEM Extension, your annual reporting timeline begins from the date USCIS received your 24 Month STEM request for the additional 7 months. (You will report one year from that date, and at the end of the STEM period.)
Important Information on Travel

• Avoid long absences from the US during the STEM OPT period. Time spent outside of the US while unemployed by a U.S. employer counts toward your 90 days of unemployment.
• Attempting to re-enter the U.S. close to the expiration date of your OPT can be risky.
• You must not enter the U.S. in a status other than F-1. This may result in the loss of your OPT eligibility.

Travel while STEM OPT is pending, But Before STEM OPT Card is received

• There is a higher risk associated with travel and return while your OPT is pending after the program completion date. If there are any problems with your application, you may not be able to respond to USCIS in a timely manner, which could delay processing of your EAD.
• If your OPT application is denied while outside the US, you will not be able to re-enter the US in F-1 status and will not be able to reapply.
Applying for an F-1 Visa on STEM OPT

If you are traveling abroad and your F-1 visa has expired, you must obtain a new F-1 visa before returning to the U.S. When going to your visa interview, bring the documents below. For more information, visit: http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/visa_application

1. Valid passport (at least 6 months in the future)
2. Valid STEM I-20 with travel endorsement from a Berkeley International Office advisor within the past 6 months
3. STEM EAD Card
4. Job offer in field of study
5. Evidence of sufficient funds (e.g. a bank statement, a letter from a sponsor or a job offer letter)

Check the U.S. Department of State web site for more information about getting a visa and specific requirements at the local embassy or consulate at www.travel.state.gov
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

About Employment

**What is considered full-time employment on the 24-month OPT STEM Extension?** Students must work at least 20 hours per week for an E-Verify employer in a position directly related to the STEM degree, following the goals and objectives stated in the I-983 training plan.

**I have two part-time jobs. One of the employers is enrolled in E-Verify but the other is not. Is this allowed?** No, only full time employment is allowed at your STEM-eligible E-Verify registered employer.

**How many days of unemployment am I allowed while on the 24-month STEM Extension?** Students who receive a 24-month OPT STEM extension are given an additional 60 days of unemployment for a total of 150 days over their entire post-completion OPT period. (17-24-Month Transition students with a 17-month Extension who request an additional 7 months of OPT have 120 days of unemployment until the final approval of the 24-Month Extension EAD. Once the EAD is approved, you can claim the 24-Month 150-day unemployment.)

**What counts as unemployment?** Each day during the period when OPT authorization begins and ends that the student does not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment.

**Can I continue to work while my 24-month STEM Extension OPT is pending?** If a student’s EAD expires while the STEM Extension application is pending, the student is authorized to work until USCIS makes a decision about the application, but not more than 180 days from the date the student’s initial OPT EAD expires.

**What documents should I present to my employer once my 12-month OPT expires and my OPT STEM is pending?** The student should present the employer with the expired EAD card, the form I-20 recommending the student for STEM Extension, and proof of the timely filing with USCIS.

**Can I change STEM employers after my STEM EAD is approved?** Yes, see our OPT Reporting page for instructions on submitting a request to change employers.

**Can I switch employers while my OPT STEM application is pending?** Yes, but we do NOT recommend this. We recommend changing employers after the EAD is approved, if possible. Please contact BIO for instructions regarding how to change employers while your application is pending.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

About Travel & Re-entry

**Can I travel outside the US during my approved OPT STEM period?** Yes. However, if the student whose approved period of OPT has started travels outside of the US while unemployed, the time spent outside the United States will count as unemployment against the 90/150-day limits. See the [OPT Travel page](#) for required documents.

*If a student travels while employed either during a period of leave authorized by an employer or as part of their employment, the time spent outside the US will not count as unemployment.

**Can I travel outside the US while my 24-month STEM Extension OPT is pending?** Yes, travel while your OPT STEM application is pending is allowed if you have a valid F-1 visa and I-20 signed within the past 6 months. You should travel with a copy of your I-797 receipt notice and proof of your STEM employment. See the [OPT Travel page](#) for required documents.

**Can I renew my visa while on OPT STEM?** Yes, you are eligible to renew your visa while on OPT STEM. Remember, that you are still applying for an F-1 non-immigrant visa which means you must demonstrate ties to your home country. See [Applying for a Visa](#) for a complete list of documents and advice on renewing the visa during OPT STEM and feel free to discuss your concerns with an advisor. Be advised that you MUST have an approved STEM EAD to apply for a new visa.

**What documents do I need to re-enter the U.S?** If you are eligible for travel, you will need:

- A valid passport with unexpired F-1 visa stamp (if applicable)
- Form I-20, signed on page 2 by an International Student Advisor at Berkeley International Office within the last 6 months
- Unexpired EAD Card.
- Proof of employment (or employment offer)
Office Hours

internationaloffice@berkeley.edu

510-642-2818