Important Travel Reminders

Make sure your travel documents are properly prepared and endorsed! Remember that a valid I-20 must have a completion date which is in the future, and it must also have a valid travel signature. For F-1 students who are continuing their studies, the travel signature is good for 1 year. For F-1s on OPT, the travel signature is good for 6 months. To re-enter the US, you will need:

- Valid passport
- Valid visa (if your visa will be expired on the day that you will re-enter the US, you must first renew your visa)
- Your I-20/DS-2019 with valid (less than 1 year old) travel signature
- If you are on OPT and will be traveling outside the US, you should also bring your EAD card and proof of your employment (such as an offer letter) or proof of your efforts to find a job. If you have applied for OPT but have not yet received your EAD card, you should bring your Approval Notice and/or Receipt Notice.

When you re-enter the US, if you do not have your I-20 / DS-2019, or if the signature is not valid, you can ask the officer to issue you a Form I-515. This will allow you to enter the US. Once you are in the US, you must make an appointment with us immediately so we can fix your I-515 status.

The OIS does not require you to submit your I-94 to us whenever you travel, but we do recommend that you obtain your I-94 record online from www.cbp.gov/i94 each time you re-enter the US. Your “Admit Until” date should always say “D/S”. You will not be able to retrieve your I-94 if you are outside the US, because the I-94 is an entry document.

Grace Period

F-1 students have a 60 day grace period and J-1 students have a 30 day grace period. During this time, you may stay in the US. However, if you leave the US during the grace period, you will NOT be able to re-enter.

Important Travel Updates

Though it is not required, we advise you to bring proof of your SEVIS Fee (I-901) payment, such as the payment receipt, when you travel. Recently, some students have been stopped because the officer could not locate that proof of payment.

If you have more than one I-20, always make sure you show the officer the current (most recently issued) I-20.

Immigration Attorney Presentation

Topics include immigrant and non-immigrant visas, H-1B, permanent residency, etc.

Date: Thursday, May 2
Time: 12:00pm—2:00pm
Location: Lowenstein Building, room 1114 (open to students from both campuses)

The event will be available by Webex. You can join the meeting virtually by visiting https://fordham.webex.com/meet/ois

Presented by the Law Offices of Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen, Loewy, LLP
I-20/DS-2019 Completion Date Info

Please look at section 5 of your I-20 (or section 3 of your DS-2019). What is the completion date? **If that date is NOT the date that you plan to complete your studies, you must contact us immediately.** If your completion date is at the end of this term, but you will need more time, OR if your completion date is for a future term, but you will complete your studies this term, you must let us know. If for any reason the completion date on your I-20 is not accurate, you must inform us so that we can help you maintain your F-1/J-1 status.

Remember that reality is always more important than what is written on your I-20/DS-2019! You should NEVER try to re-enter the US with an I-20/DS-2019 just because the date is still valid. If you have already completed your studies, the I-20 is no longer valid regardless of the date.

Please note that the graduation date and the completion date are not necessarily the same. The completion date on your I-20/DS-2019 should reflect the date that you intend to complete all degree requirements, not the date of your graduation ceremony.

Celebrate Easter with the Global Transition Society

For undergraduates only

Join the Global Transition Society to celebrate Easter — and Spring! — with food and a traditional Easter activity: EGG DECORATION!

Tuesday, April 16 at 6:30pm in the Lowenstein Café Atrium

This event is open to undergraduates from both campuses.

Share your Fordham Knowledge

Do you enjoy texting? Do you like connecting with international students from all over the world? Do you have 20 minutes a week to spare? Are you an undergraduate? This is for you!

Prospective applicants are eager to learn more about Fordham by connecting with current students at Fordham. The Chat with Ambassadors initiative allows prospective applicants to chat/text current students at Fordham. Click here to see current Fordham Unibuddy ambassadors. We are looking for more international ambassadors! Email Lihuan Lai at llai7@fordham.edu in the Undergraduate Admission office for more information.

Reminder for J-1 Exchange Students

Don't forget to request an official transcript from the Office of Enrollment Services before you leave for the semester. If possible, please pick-up this transcript before leaving New York City and deliver it to your home university's study abroad office.
Immigration Sending Out STEM Alerts with Inaccurate 6-Month Reporting Times to STEM OPT Extension Students

It appears that immigration has started to send out "STEM reporting" email alerts. However, these notices have not been aligning with each student’s 6-month reporting date on STEM OPT, thereby causing students to inaccurately report while on STEM. So this is a friendly reminder that these validation updates must be done every 6 months from the start date listed on your STEM EAD card. Additionally, as part of your 12 and 24 month validation updates, you have to submit an evaluation (page 5 of the I-983), signed by your current supervisor. You can submit this via the STEM OPT Employment Validation portal.

You can easily calculate your 6-month reporting date on STEM OPT and mark your cell phone with reminders. For example, if STEM OPT starts Jan 1, 2018, as listed on your EAD card:

6 month alert is: June 1, 2018
12 month alert is: Jan 1, 2019 (also one year evaluation is due - top of page 5 of I-983)
18 month alert is: June 1, 2019
24 month alert is: Jan 1, 2020 (also final year evaluation is due - bottom of page 5 of I-983)

Please know that you will still be emailed an alert by OIS at the time when immigration posts the alert via SEVIS but in case you don't get the email and now that immigration has been sending out email alerts with inaccurate reporting dates, it is important to remain aware of your reporting times, since this is related to your STEM OPT and immigration matters.

For more answers on your reporting duties while on STEM visit here: Acknowledgement for Maintaining Status on STEM OPT (page 4 of the STEM OPT Extension Application). It is also listed in the responsibilities given to you with your STEM EAD card.

Immigration Sending STEM Evaluation Reporting Alerts to Students on Post-Completion OPT

We have heard about students on post-completion OPT receiving STEM Evaluation Reporting Alerts from immigration recently, with the subject line: Your STEM OPT periodic self-evaluation report is due on MM/DD/YYYY. Please be assured that if you are a student who is on post-completion OPT receiving any message regarding STEM OPT, that immigration's automated email notices are sending you the wrong information.

If you are currently on regular post-completion OPT, and your start and end dates indicate a year on your EAD card, then please ignore the STEM evaluation reporting alerts that you receive. Post-completion OPT does not require filling out STEM reports or the Form I-983. Employment reporting for post-completion OPT should be done in the SEVP Portal.

For more information regarding your post-completion OPT reporting responsibilities, please visit here.

If you are on regular 1-year OPT, you can disregard emails about STEM reporting.