

F-1 Student Travel Q&A

Can I reenter if my request for OPT is pending?

F-1 students may leave and reenter the United States while an approval for OPT is pending.

Can I reenter if I left while on OPT?

If your OPT has been approved and you depart before you get a job, your OPT ends and you cannot reenter unless you have a written job offer.

If you have a job, you may travel and reenter to resume work at the same job or you have a written offer for another job.

Can I reenter during the 60 day grace period after finishing my program or after finishing OPT?

No.

What if my F-1 student visa has expired?

You can stay in the United States on an expired F-1 visa as long as you maintain your student status. However, if you are returning home or traveling to a country where automatic revalidation does not apply, you must have a valid visa to return to the United States.

Ensure that you have all the documentation you need for your visa application and allow sufficient time for processing a new visa. The documentation you may need for a new visa includes, but is not limited to the following:

- A SEVIS Form I-20 endorsed for travel and signed by the PDSO and your original Form I-20.
- Original evidence showing proof of necessary funds to cover tuition and living expenses.
- Evidence showing your intention to return to your home country upon program completion, including evidence of compelling social and economic ties to your home country.
- If you have applied for or had optional practical training (OPT) approved, bring a copy of your Form I-20 endorsed for OPT and your Employment Authorization Document (EAD), if one has been issued.

The Department of State recommends that you apply for a visa in your home country. For more information about visa applications visit the Department of State website at www.UnitedStatesVisa.gov.

You can apply in a third country for a visa, but you will not be able to return to the United States until your visa has been issued. In some cases, this could take several weeks if a background check is required. If your visa is denied, you will not be able to return to the United States. Be sure to check the Department of State website for specific information pertaining to each consulate.

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