

24-MONTH STEM OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EXTENSION

DEFINITION OF THE STEM OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EXTENSION

F-1 status students on an initial 12-month period of post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT), who have graduated in certain fields of study, may be eligible to apply for an additional 24-month period of STEM OPT employment authorization.

To be eligible, you must have received your academic degree in a designated STEM field, from an accredited U.S. institution and have a current or prospective OPT employer who is registered in the U.S. federal government's E-Verify program.



We recommend you begin to review the application process and begin collecting the required documentation for the STEM OPT application about four months before your current period of OPT ends.

NOTES: **You can apply for the STEM OPT extension up to 90 days before your current period of OPT expires.**

You must apply for the STEM OPT extension before your initial period of OPT expires.

If your OPT STEM extension application has not been approved by the expiration date of your current period of OPT, you are legally allowed to continue working for up to 180 days past the expiration date of your EAD [8CFR213.2(f)(11)(i)(C) and 8CFR274a.12(b)(6)(iv)].

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR OPT STEM EXTENSION

You can start learning about the application process by reviewing this handout as well as the STEM OPT extension information at the Study in the States STEM OPT Hub: [Study in the States STEM OPT HUB](#). The STEM OPT HUB has useful information for both F-1 status students and their employers.

We recommend you follow these steps during the application process:

STEP 1: Determine your eligibility for the STEM OPT extension.

In general, if you are on an initial 12-month period of post-completion Optional Practical Training, received a degree in the U.S. in a STEM field and are working for an E-Verify employer, you should be eligible for the STEM OPT extension. For more information on eligibility, please see the links below.

[Instructions for F-1 status students to help determine STEM OPT extension eligibility.](#)

[DHS-Approved STEM Designated Degree Program List](#)

[DHS Information on the E-Verify program](#)

STEP 2: Complete the I-983, TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS with your employer.

[Overview of the Form I-983](#)

[Overview of the Form I-983 for students](#)

[Overview of the Form I-983 for employers](#)

[Instructions for completing the Form I-983](#)

You must submit the completed I-983 Training Plan to the Office of International Students before our office can recommend you for the STEM OPT extension. Our “SEVIS School Code” is NYC214F00812006. The “Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code” can be found in the “**PROGRAM OF STUDY**” section of the Form I-20 under “**MAJOR 1**” or “**MAJOR 2.**”

STEP 3: Complete the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization.

The application is fundamentally the same as when you made your initial OPT application except the code in item #16 is (c)(3)(C) and you must complete item #17. Item #17 requires you to enter the CIP code of your STEM degree, your employer’s E-Verify name and your employer’s E-Verify number.

[Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization](#)

[Instructions for the Form I-765](#)

[Checklist for Form I-765 \(c\)\(3\)\(C\)](#)

[Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance](#)

STEP 4: Obtain an Employment Verification Letter.

You will need to obtain an employment verification letter, written on the organization’s letterhead which provides:

- The company’s address and the site of your employment, if different from address
- Job description, salary, start date and hours per week
- Your employer’s E-Verify name and number
- Your supervisor’s name and title
- Your supervisor’s email address and phone number

STEP 5: Obtain the DSO’s STEM OPT Extension Recommendation and an Updated Form I-20.

Our office’s main role in the STEM OPT extension application process is to certify that the Form I-983 Training Plan is complete and signed, to make a recommendation for the STEM OPT extension in the SEVIS system and to issue an updated Form I-20 with the STEM OPT extension request.

You may obtain our recommendation and an updated Form I-20 by an appointment in person or remotely via email and/or a telephone appointment.

Documents Required by the Office of International Students (Either in Person or Emailed)

- Form I-983, Training Plan
- Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
- Employment Verification Letter
- Your Graduate Center Diploma
- All previous Employment Authorization Cards (Form-766)
- Application fee of \$410.00

Make check or money order payable to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**. On the Memo line in the lower left corner, write your USCIS(A)#, I-94 number and SEVIS number.

Two color photographs which meet [US Department of State passport style specifications](#)

On the back of each photo print lightly your name, USCIS(A)#, I-94 number, and SEVIS number.

NOTES: **We will review all your application materials.**
 We will update your SEVIS record with the STEM OPT extension recommendation.
 We will issue a new Form I-20 with the STEM OPT extension request.

STEP 6: Organize and Mail Your Application

OPT STEM EXTENSION APPLICATION COMPLETION CHECKLIST

Submit the following items to the USCIS for your OPT STEM Extension application:

- ___ 1. Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization: Eligibility Category (c) (3) (C)
- ___ 2. The required fee, \$410.00.
- ___ 3. Two color photographs.
- ___ 4. A copy of your updated Form I-20
- ___ 5. Form I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT Students
(Do not send the I-983, Training Plan to USCIS; we keep it in our office.)
- ___ 6. A copy of your most recent I-94
- ___ 7. Copies of all previous I-20 forms
- ___ 8. A copy of all previous EADs (I-766)
- ___ 9. A copy of your passport identification page
- ___ 10. A copy of your Graduate Center Diploma
- ___ 11. Your Employment Verification Letter

NOTES: Paperclip all documents (except check and photos) at the top of the application.

Photos and check should be paper-clipped to the left, front of the I-765.

MAILING YOUR APPLICATION

Send your application to either the Dallas Lockbox or the Phoenix Lockbox depending on where you live.

If you use the U.S. Postal Service, you can send the application to the PO Box address of the lockbox.

If you use a courier service (FedEx, UPS, DHL, etc.), you must use the street address of the lockbox.

[FOLLOW THIS LINK TO THE ADDRESSES OF THE LOCKBOXES](#)

NOTES: Your application cannot be received by the USCIS more than 90 days prior to the expiration of your initial period Optional Practical Training.

Your application must be received by the USCIS prior to the expiration of your current period of Optional Practical Training.

Your application must be received by the USCIS within 60 days of the date that our office makes the STEM OPT extension recommendation and issues the updated Form I-20.

If you move and change your address before receiving your STEM OPT approval, your EAD may not be delivered. Inform our office of your new address and we will update your SEVIS record.