BEFORE YOU APPLY

What is the STEM OPT Extension?

Students who completed a degree in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) field are eligible for an additional 24 months of OPT.

How do I know if I am eligible?

A student with a STEM-qualifying bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree from an accredited, SEVIS-certified U.S. educational institution, who is in a valid period of standard post-completion OPT, has an offer of paid employment for at least 20 hours per week from an employer enrolled in E-Verify.

When should I apply for OPT?

Your OPT application must be received by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) no earlier than 90 days before the end date of your current OPT and no later than the end date on your OPT EAD card.

Ways to Apply – Paper *or* Online Application

USCIS is allowing students to apply for OPT/STEM Extension online. You would create an account on their secure, encrypted website and you'll receive a receipt immediately with your case number versus waiting several weeks for it to arrive in the mail. Paper applications are still being accepted.

APPLICATION PROCESS

for the ***ONLINE*** option

1. Ensure that you have zero holds or monies owed to your Titan student account.
2. *OPT Agreement* completed and signed (page 6 on this packet).
3. Collect the following documents:
   - ☐ Valid passport (at least six months into the future)
   - ☐ Completed *I-983/STEM OPT Training Plan* https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983.pdf
   - ☐ Most recent I-94 http://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home
   - ☐ One (1) 2x2 passport style pictures on a white background taken within the last 3 months.
   - ☐ All previous I-20's with CPT and/or OPT authorization
   - ☐ Photocopies of any previous employment authorization documents (EAD cards)
   - ☐ Copy of Detroit Mercy diploma or official transcripts showing your conferred degree Scan and email documents to have ISO review the documents in #3.
4. ISO will issue your STEM Extension OPT recommendation I-20, needed for you to submit with your application
5. Create an account on https://myaccount.uscis.gov/users/sign_up
6. Complete the online application.
7. Double-check application to make sure all fields are complete.
   - ☐ Upload the documents in #3 (must be JPG, JPEG or PNG).
8. Pay **$470.00** application fee on https://www.pay.gov/public/home **IMPORTANT NOTE:** No changes may be made to your application after you pay the fee.
9. E-mail ISO a copy of your receipt number (you will receive one immediately after submitting your completed online application).

AFTER YOU APPLY

USCIS PROCESSING TIME

If applying with a paper application, please allow a <u>minimum of 90 days</u> to receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) after USCIS receives your application. You should receive a receipt notice in the mail within 3-4 weeks after submitting the petition. You can check your case status with your receipt number at www.uscis.gov.

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

All employment must at least 20 hours/week and be with employers that are E-Verified. All employment outside of this parameters must cease in order to remain in compliance.

TRAVEL

Once you've received your card and you decide to travel internationally, you must carry with you the following when you re-enter the U.S.: valid passport, valid F-1 visa, endorsed I-20 (with a travel signature no more than six months old), OPT card and an employment verification letter from your employer. Although you may have these items, you are not guaranteed re-entry.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

STUDENT REPORTING via SEVP Portal

You will be required to report the following:

- Six-month validation report: confirm employer, job title and residential address to ISO.
- Any changes of the following, within 10 days of the change:
    - o Legal name, mailing and physical address(es)
    - o When you stop working for an employer
    - o When you start working for a new qualifying employer
- Required self-evaluations
    - o No later than 10 days following the conclusion of the reporting period
- Modified Form I-983, when there has been a material change to the training plan previously submitted. Due date: as soon as possible.

Warning: Please keep a complete history of your employment on the portal. Only add a new employer when you have new employment and DO NOT delete any previous employment information.

Additionally, you should contact our office if you:

- Depart the U.S. and do not plan to return as F-1
- Change name and/or immigration status i.e. H1B, Permanent Residency

EMPLOYER REPORTING TO ISO

- When a student is terminated or leaves employment, within 5 business days of the termination or departure.
- Shared obligation to submit a modified Form I-983 when there has been a material change to the training plan previously submitted.

OPT Agreement

I agree and will comply with the following:

1. To update my physical address and employment information on the SEVP portal.
2. To report any changes in name and/or visa status i.e. H1B, Permanent Residency, etc.
3. To report if I depart from the U.S. and do not plan to return as F-1.
4. To work only at a job(s) that relate directly to my field of study.
5. To obtain a signature from my International Student Advisor on my I-20 before traveling outside the country, knowing that the signature is only valid for six months.
6. To not pursue another program or degree full-time while on STEM OPT.
7. To report employment changes to DSO so that your SEVIS record can be updated.
8. That within 60 days after my OPT ends I must leave the country, complete the transfer process to another school, start a new program or change to a different immigration status.
9. That "time worked" only counts as working/volunteering in my field of study for 20 hours/week or more during STEM OPT.

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Print Name   Signature   Date

OFFICE USE ONLY

☐   Upload student's I-983 to SEVIS record