

# 24-MONTH STEM OPT EXTENSION FOR STUDENTS ON F-1 VISAS

## SUMMARY

The 12-month period of OPT can be extended by 24 months for certain Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) degree holders.

See the STEM Designated Degree Program List to determine if your field and CIP Code are included in the list. <[z.umn.edu/stemlist](http://z.umn.edu/stemlist)>

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Currently authorized for post-completion OPT and have not accumulated 90 days of unemployment.
- Must have a job-offer or be employed by an employer registered with the "E-Verify" federal employment verification system at the time of application.
- Must have obtained a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree from an educational institution that is accredited at the time of application <Department of Education's Classification of Instructional Programs taxonomy: [ope.ed.gov/accreditation/search.aspx](http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/search.aspx)>
- Must have obtained a degree in a STEM field that is defined by Department of Homeland Security <STEM Designated Degree List [z.umn.edu/stemdegreelist2016](http://z.umn.edu/stemdegreelist2016)>
- Must have a job or job offer that must be directly related to student's STEM degree
- Students currently on a 12-month OPT who are not currently in a STEM field but have received a degree in a STEM field previously, may be eligible to apply. A job must be related to a STEM degree. See more information in the SUPPLEMENT form.

## WHEN TO APPLY

Submit your request to ISSS up to 100 days before your current EAD expires. USCIS accepts your 24-month STEM OPT application up to 90 days prior to your current EAD expiration date and no later than your current EAD expiration date.

## COMPLETE THE APPLICATION PROCESS

### Step 1: Request an OPT recommendation from ISSS

ISSS must process a recommendation for your OPT request. Seven (7) working days are required to process a recommendation I-20 for OPT. Submit the following items to an ISSS adviser during general walk-in hours, a scheduled appointment, or via email. ISSS cannot accept your application for processing unless all these items are completed.

- 24-month STEM OPT Extension based on most recent STEM degree:**
  1. Student Request Form
  2. Form I-765 <[uscis.gov/i-765](http://uscis.gov/i-765)>
  3. Form I-983: Training Plan for STEM OPT Students pages 1-4 <[z.umn.edu/i983](http://z.umn.edu/i983)>
  4. Certificate of Completion of Online Workshop
- 24-month STEM OPT Extension based on a previous STEM degree:**
  1. Student Request Form
  2. Form I-765 <[uscis.gov/i-765](http://uscis.gov/i-765)>
  3. Form I-983: Training Plan for STEM OPT Students pages 1-4 <[z.umn.edu/i983](http://z.umn.edu/i983)>
  4. SUPPLEMENT form (application based on a previous degree)
  5. Certificate of Completion of Online Workshop

### Step 2: Assemble the application materials

Staple the application materials together in the following order. You should also keep a copy of this entire application for your records.

1. A check or money order, payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for the OPT application fee. For current fees, see [www.uscis.gov/i-765](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765).
2. Two color photos. The instructions with Form I-765 provide detailed photo requirement information. Print full name and most recent Form I-94 number in pencil on the back of each photo. Place the photos in a clear plastic bag or an envelope and staple it to the application. Do not put staple holes in the photos. You can get a photo at the Learning Abroad Center (230 Heller Hall, 612-626-9000).
3. *Original* Form I-765.
4. A *photocopy* of the I-20 page 1 with your signature and page 2 with OPT recommendation.
5. A *photocopy* of your most recent EAD card.
6. A *photocopy/print-out* of the most recent electronic I-94 at available at [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94). If you have a paper Form I-94, photocopy of both sides of Form I-94 (copy the back side even if it is blank). Do not mail the original paper Form I-94.
7. *Photocopies* of as many as possible of the following that contain your name and photo: the identity page of your passport, entry visa stamp with a photo, driver's license or state ID, student ID, and any previously issued EAD.
8. A *photocopy* of your diploma and final transcript. (\*Exception: Graduate students who have completed degree requirements except thesis and dissertation should include a transcript and letter from their adviser clarifying that the only remaining requirement for completion of the degree is the thesis/dissertation.)

9. **Optional, But Recommended:** Submit a G-1145 E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance form. This form can be downloaded at [uscis.gov/g-1145mm](http://uscis.gov/g-1145mm), and it must be attached to the *top of the application with a paper clip* (not stapled).

**Step 3: Mail the OPT application to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox**

Your OPT application must be received by USCIS **no later than 60 days** after the OPT recommendation is entered into your SEVIS record (see “date issued” on OPT I-20). Applications received after this date will be denied. It is the student’s responsibility to mail the OPT application to USCIS. Mail the application materials from Step 2 by USPS Certified or Express mail to obtain a signed receipt. Keep the receipt for your records.

**Use the Phoenix Lockbox address if the address you indicated on FORM I-765 is in** Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, **Minnesota**, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.

For USPS Certified/  
Express Mail:  
USCIS  
PO Box 21281  
Phoenix, AZ 85036

For Overnight/Courier  
Deliveries (Non-USPS):  
USCIS, Attn: AOS  
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S  
Suite 100  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

**Use the Dallas Lockbox address if the address you indicated on FORM I-765 is 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, U.S. Virgin Islands, Vermont, Virginia, or West Virginia.

For USPS Certified/  
Express Mail:  
USCIS  
PO Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

For Overnight/Courier  
Deliveries (Non-USPS):  
USCIS, Attn: AOS  
2501 S. State Hwy. 121,  
Business  
Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067

**You are responsible for mailing your OPT application to USCIS.**

**Step 4: Wait for EAD to be mailed from USCIS**

- It takes approximately 2-3 months for USCIS to process your request and mail your EAD to the address on Form I-765. You can see current processing times for I-765 (OPT) applications at [egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do](http://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do).
- Several weeks after you apply, you should receive a receipt notice (Form I-797) in the mail from USCIS.
- Students who file a timely application can continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.
- The EAD will reflect the dates of your employment authorization.

*Note:*

If you receive a Request For Evidence (RFE) from USCIS, contact ISSS as soon as possible.

**Step 5: Read Requirements while on OPT information**

For requirements while you are on 24-month STEM OPT Extension including reporting and travel information, go to [iss.umn.edu/fstudent/stemopt-requirements.html](http://iss.umn.edu/fstudent/stemopt-requirements.html).

# 24-MONTH STEM OPT EXTENSION STUDENT REQUEST

## STUDENT REQUEST

*Student should complete the section below.*

Type of request: 24-month STEM OPT Extension based on:  A) most recent STEM degree  B) a previous STEM degree (attach Supplement)

1. Student's Name     
Family name First name Middle

2. U of M ID#   
 3. SEVIS ID #

4. Email  5. Phone

6. Major on I-20  7. Degree Level on I-20 (e.g., BA, BS, MA, MS, PhD)

8. Visa expiration date   
Month Day Year  
 9. Passport expiration date   
Month Day Year

10. Have you sent a copy of your current EAD to ISSS?  Yes  No

11. Have you reported your 12-month OPT employment information to ISSS?  Yes  No

12. Have you updated your current mailing address in MyU Portal under Personal Information?  Yes  No

13. Have you ever been granted employment authorization for STEM OPT Extension?  Yes  No

If Yes, at what degree level?

14. Update your financial information for the next 12 months

EXPENSES	SOURCES OF FUNDING
Living expenses: <input type="text"/> \$ (Minimum of \$15,552)	Personal funds/savings: <input type="text"/> \$
Expenses of dependents: <input type="text"/> \$ 1 dependent \$8,292 2 dependents \$11,652 3 dependents \$14,352 4 dependents \$17,100	Funds from another source: <input type="text"/> \$ Specify source: <input type="text"/>
<b>Total Expenses</b> <input type="text"/> \$	<b>Total Funding</b> <input type="text"/> \$

15. Current EAD dates: from   
Month Day Year to   
Month Day Year

16. Employer name:

17. Employer mailing address:   
    
City State Zip code

18. Job Title:

19. How would you like to receive the new I-20?  
 Pick up at ISSS  Express Mail (student will pay for the shipping - you will receive an e-mail with instruction later)  
 U.S. Mail (Residential address - do not use your employer's address):

STATEMENT: I have read the attached cover pages regarding optional practical training and fully understand the implications of the authorization. The information I have provided is true and correct.

Student's Signature Month Day Year

Ready by:

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**ISSS will complete this section:**

Type A and B

- Previous OPT EAD received
- Current OPT employment information up-to-date in SEVIS
- Previous STEM OPT Extension  Yes  No
- Completed Form I-765
- Completed Form I-983
- Confirm that employment is paid
- Confirm that employer is not a Temp Employment Agency
- Travel discussed
- Passport expiration date discussed
- Discussed RFE (if applicable)
- Current OPT employer information is up-to-date
- Completed 24-month STEM OPT online workshop

Type B:

If based on a previous degree:

- Supporting materials attached

Date submitted to ISSS       International student adviser initials   
Month Day Year

Adviser Comments

## SUPPLEMENT: BASED ON A PREVIOUS DEGREE

To apply for the 24-month STEM OPT Extension based on a previous degree, complete the following:

1. Received STEM degree within the last 10 years from a currently accredited U.S. educational institution:  Yes  No  
(Confirm your previous school is currently accredited at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx>)
2. Immigration status at the time previous degree was awarded:
3. Major:
4. Degree CIP Code:   
(The qualifying STEM degree needs to be on the STEM Designated Degree List [z.umn.edu/stemdegreelist2016](http://z.umn.edu/stemdegreelist2016) at the time students submit the application)
5. Degree Award Date:         
Month Day Year
6. Degree Level (e.g. BA, BS, MA, MS, PhD)
7. Awarding School Name:
8. Awarding School Address:   
    
City State Zip code
9. Awarding School SEVIS Code:   
(From previous degree I-20 or obtained from the international student office from previous school)

### Proof of Documentation

Provide at least one document from each column:

CIP Code	STEM Qualifying Major
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of the most recent I-20 from previous school showing major and STEM CIP code	<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of diploma (if major is listed)
<input type="checkbox"/> Printout of the Student Information page from previous SEVIS record showing the STEM CIP code of major	<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of final transcript (official or unofficial)
<i>Other official proof provided by my University:</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Letter on letterhead, signed by school official, with the STEM major and corresponding CIP code included	
<input type="checkbox"/> Printout of the Student Information page from previous SEVIS record showing the STEM CIP code of major	