24-month Extension of OPT for UMN STEM Degrees

24-Month STEM OPT Workshop

- In this workshop you will:
  - Learn the rules and requirements of requesting 24-Month STEM OPT authorization documentation
  - Learn the process for submitting your application to USCIS
  - Learn what you will be required to do once your 24-Month STEM OPT has been approved
Overview

- F-1 students who receive science, technology, engineering, and mathematics degrees.
- 1) Request a recommendation from ISSS, and
  2) apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The process takes 3-4 months.
- Students may be eligible for up to two lifetime STEM OPT Extensions

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
Eligibility Requirements

- Must currently be in a valid period of post-completion OPT
  - Not eligible to apply after your 12-month post-completion OPT EAD expiration date
- Have not accumulated 90 days of unemployment
- Report your employment information in the SEVP Portal

Eligibility Requirements

- Must have obtained a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree from an educational institution that is accredited at the time of the application

z.umn.edu/accreditationsearch
Eligibility Requirements

- Must have obtained a degree in a STEM field as defined by Department of Homeland Security
- The qualifying STEM degree needs to be on DHS’s STEM Designated Degree Program List at the time you submit your STEM OPT application to USCIS, not at the time you received your degree.

z.umn.edu/stemlist

Eligibility Requirements

- May apply based on a previously earned STEM degree within the past 10 years (bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree) from a currently accredited U.S. educational institution
Eligibility Requirements

▪ Must have a job or job offer that is directly related to the student’s STEM degree

Example:
▪ F-1 student has B.S. in Civil Engineering, and M.A. in Urban/Regional Planning.
▪ Student is currently on OPT for the M.A., and is in a job that relates to both the Civil Engineering and Urban/Regional Planning degrees.
▪ Student could apply for the STEM extension based on the STEM B.S. degree and continue to work at the same job.
Eligibility Requirements
- Employment -

- Job must be paid
- Working hours must be a minimum of 20 hours per week
- If you have multiple employers, each job must be at least 20 hours per week.

Eligibility Requirements
- Employment/Employer -

- Employer must sign the Form I-983
- The employer who signs the Form I-983 must be the same as the employer who pays you and provides the practical training experience
- You may work for a start-up company, however, you may not sign the Training Plan yourself.
Eligibility Requirements
- Employment/Employer -

▪ Your employer must attest that they have sufficient resources and personnel available to provide appropriate training for you.
▪ Your employer must also attest that they are not replacing a full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent U.S. worker and that this employment opportunity will help you in reaching your training goals.

Eligibility Requirements
- Employer -

▪ Employer is enrolled in E-Verify
▪ Employer must have an employer identification number (EIN)
Second STEM OPT

- Students may be eligible for up to two separate STEM OPT extensions over the course of their academic career upon completion of two qualifying STEM degrees at different educational levels
  - Only eligible to apply for STEM OPT during post-completion OPT

Examples of Second STEM OPT

Example #1:
Most recent degree: MBA (non-STEM)
Previous degree: BS in Computer Science (STEM)

Example #2:
Most recent degree: MS in Electrical Engineering (STEM)
Previous degree: BS in Electrical Engineering (STEM)
APPLICATION TIMELINE

Your application must be received by USCIS prior to the end of your post-completion OPT EAD expiration date. You may not apply for 24-month STEM OPT extension after your post-completion OPT expires.
ISSS Processing Time

- It takes 7 business days to receive a new I-20 from ISSS once your application is complete
- It may take additional time if your I-983 is incomplete or has errors

APPLICATION PROCEDURES
STEM Degree

▪ Most recent STEM degree? Continue to the next slide.
▪ Previous STEM degree? Skip to the slide on page 15
▪ *Reminder:* eligible STEM degrees must have been earned at an accredited U.S. college or university (not abroad)

Based on most recent STEM degree
STEP 1: Request an OPT Recommendation from ISSS

1. Download 24-Month STEM OPT Extension Application Packet at z.umn.edu/stemopt
2. Complete the following documents:
   - Student Request
   - Form I-765
   - Form I-983 pages 1-4
3. Submit the documents to ISSS
   - issss@umn.edu or 612-626-7100 for appointment

Student Request

- Type of request:
  - Check box “A) most recent STEM degree”
- Complete #1-9
Student Request

- Check the appropriate boxes to answer these questions

- Update your financial information for the next 24 months
- Is your employment your source of funding? If yes, write “OPT salary” and the amount of your annual salary.
Student Request

- Current EAD dates
  - STEM OPT begins immediately after current OPT ends
- Employer’s name and address
- Your job title

Student Request

- Choose how you would like to receive your new I-20
- Read, sign and date
Finished
“Based on most recent STEM degree”

Next: Form I-765. Skip to the slide on page 21

Based on a previous STEM degree
STEP 1: Request an OPT Recommendation from ISSS

1. Download the 24-Month STEM OPT Extension Application Packet
2. Complete the following documents:
   - Student Request Form
   - Supplement: Based on a Previous Degree
   - Form I-765
   - Form I-983 pages 1-4
3. Submit the documents to ISSS
   - issss@umn.edu or 612-626-7100 for appointment

Student Request

- Type of request:
  - Check box “B) a previous STEM degree”
- Complete #1-9
Student Request

- Check the appropriate boxes to answer these questions

- Update your financial information for the next 24 months
- Is your employment your source of funding? If yes, write “OPT salary” and the amount of your annual salary
Student Request

- Current EAD dates
  - STEM OPT begins immediately after current OPT ends
- Employer’s name and address
- Your job title

Student Request

- Choose how you would like to receive your new I-20
- Read, sign and date
Supplement: Based on a Previous Degree

- Previous STEM degree must be received within the last 10 years from a currently accredited U.S. educational institution
- Immigration status at the time previous degree was awarded
Supplement

- Major
- Degree CIP code
  - the qualifying degree must be on the STEM Designated Degree Program List at the time of application
  - Can’t find it? Contact the school that you attended.

Supplement

- Degree Award Date
- Degree Level
- Awarding school name, address, and SEVIS code
Supplement

- Proof of previous STEM Degree
  - CIP code
  - STEM qualifying major
- Include these documents with your ISSS application

I-765

- Download the I-765 and instructions from z.umn.edu/stemopt
- The instructions are included in the “24-Month STEM OPT Extension Student Request” Application Packet.
- Fill out the I-765
Your Mailing Address

- Your name must be physically placed on the mailbox
- If you put someone else’s name in “In Care Of Name” on page 2 of the I-765, that person’s name must be placed on the mailbox

Form I-983: Training Plan

- Fill out the I-983
- Detailed instructions and step-by-step tutorial are available on Study in the States “STEM OPT Hub” website
  - Instructions: z.umn.edu/i983instructions
  - Tutorial: z.umn.edu/i983tutorial
Form I-983: Frequently Asked Questions

▪ Where do I find the E-Verify number and/or EIN?  *Ask your employer.*

▪ Where do I find the school SEVIS code?  
  *See page 1 of your I-20.*

▪ What should I put down for DSO contact information?  
  *Write the name of the ISSS adviser you are working with.*

---

Form I-983: Frequently Asked Questions

▪ Do I need to submit I-983 for every employer if I have multiple employers?  
  *Yes, every time you change or add employers, you need to submit a new Form I-983 to ISSS.*

[https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students-and-the-form-i-983](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students-and-the-form-i-983)
Form I-983: Frequently Asked Questions

- My employer says I need a new EAD to continue working. What do I do?

  Immigration regulations allow you to continue working for up to 180 days without receiving a new EAD as long as your application was timely filed (the receipt notice is proof of this). However, employer policy may differ from the regulations. You may tell your employer that ISSS advisors can explain the regulation if necessary.

Submit forms to ISSS

- After completing the forms described above, submit them to ISSS
  - ISSS takes 7 business days to issue your I-20
- While you are waiting for your STEM OPT I-20, begin working on Step 2
STEP 2: Assemble the Application Materials

You must include the following documents in your application packet when you mail your application to USCIS. You can prepare these documents while you are waiting to receive a new I-20 from ISSS.

1. Pay STEM OPT Fee
   - $410
   - Form G-1450 OR
   - Check or money order, payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”

http://www.livestrong.com/article/52128-write-personal-check-yourself/
2. Two Color Photos

- Two U.S. passport style photos (detailed instructions about the requirement is at uscis.gov/i-765)
- Photos must be taken within 30 days
- Print full name and most recent I-94 number in pencil on the back of each photo

3. Original Form I-765

- Keep a copy for your records
4. Photocopy of I-20 with STEM OPT Recommendation

- Pick up (or receive) your STEM OPT I-20 from ISSS
- Sign and date page 1
- Make a copy of page 1 and 2
- Also make one copy of every I-20 you have

5. Photocopy of Your EAD

- Make a copy of your EAD for your initial 12-month post-completion OPT
- If you have other EADs, make a copy of each one

https://leewc.com/blog/ead-opt-what-to-expect/
6. Print Out of I-94

▪ Print out of your most recent electronic I-94 at [cbp.gov/i94](http://cbp.gov/i94)

▪ If you have a paper I-94, photocopy the front and back side. Do not mail the original paper I-94.

7. Photocopies of Your Identification Documents

▪ Include 1 copy of as many as possible:
  – Identity page of your passport
  – F-1 visa stamp in your passport
  – Driver’s license or state ID
  – Student ID (U Card)
8. Photocopy of Your Diploma and Final Transcript

*Exception for applicants based on most recent degree:

Graduate students who have completed degree requirements except thesis and dissertation should include transcript and a letter from their adviser clarifying that the only remaining requirement for completion of the degree is the thesis/dissertation.

Form G-1145

- Form G-1145 is optional, but highly recommended to include in your application
- When USCIS receives your application you will receive a notification via email and/or text message
Assemble the Materials

- Staple the application materials in the following order:
  1. Check or money order or Form G-1450
  2. Two color photos
  3. Original Form I-765
  4. Photocopy of I-20s page 1 and 2
  5. Photocopy of your EAD(s)
  6. Print out of the most recent I-94
  7. Photocopy of identification documents
  8. Photocopy of diploma and final transcript
- Paperclip G-1145 on top of stapled application materials

STEP 3:
Mail the Application to USCIS

See the “24-Month STEM OPT Extension” packet instructions for details about where to send your application
Your application must be received by USCIS no later than 60 days after the STEM OPT recommendation was made AND before the expiration date of your current EAD.

The STEM OPT I-20 recommendation date is at the bottom of your I-20 page 1 as “date issued”.

**DATE ISSUED**
STEP 3:  
- Use Certified or Express Mail from USPS  
- You may use a private carrier such as FedEx, UPS, etc.

STEP 4:  
Wait for EAD to be Mailed from USCIS
Notifications from USCIS

- If you include G-1145 in your application packet, you will receive an email and/or text message from the USCIS lockbox
- In 3-4 weeks, you will receive by mail an I-797 Receipt Notice from a USCIS Service Center

Waiting for EAD

- In 3-4 months, you will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from a USCIS Service Center
- You may continue to work for up to 180 days without receiving a new EAD if your application is timely filed
REQUIREMENTS WHILE ON STEM OPT

SEVP Portal: What is it?

- Online **SEVIS** access point for F-1 students on STEM OPT
- Students currently on STEM OPT can update their own SEVIS record
- The SEVP Portal launched in March 2018
- One of the STEM OPT requirements
STEP 5

STEM OPT: Create SEVP Portal Account

Since you are currently on OPT, you should have received an email to create an SEVP Portal account from:

do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov

Trouble? Contact ISSS

STEP 5

STEM OPT: SEVP Portal Requirements

During STEM OPT, you are required to report within 10 days changes to your:

- **Home address** (where you live)
- **Mailing address** (if different from home)
- **Telephone**, and
- **Employment information**

Report these changes in the SEVP Portal.
STEP 5

STEM OPT: SEVP Portal Requirements

*Employment information to report:
  – Edit employer name (company/business name)
    • Only to correct errors
    • Must match employer on Form I-983
  – Edit employer address
  – Employment end date  ➤ Final evaluation

STEP 5

STEM OPT: SEVP Portal Requirements

During STEM OPT, you are required to report within 10 days changes to your:
  – Home address (where you live)
  – Mailing address (if different from home)
  – Telephone, and
  – Employment information*

ISSS will not report these changes for you.
STEM OPT: SEVP Portal Requirements

Question: “What happens if I do not report employment, address, or telephone updates to the SEVP Portal?”

*Failure to report employment information or changes to your address or telephone within 10 days of the update or change may result in loss of your STEM OPT status or other immigration benefits.*

STEP 5

STEM OPT: Other Reporting Requirements

- STEM OPT regulations also require you to report to ISSS every 6 months
- ISSS submits your report directly to SEVIS

z.umn.edu/stemoptreq
STEM OPT: Other Reporting Requirements

What do you report to ISSS?

▪ Validation reports every 6 months
  – Name, address, employment information
▪ Form I-983
  – Self-evaluations at 12 and 24 months
  – Changes to employer or job
▪ Report within 15 days before/after

Where do you report to ISSS?

24-month STEM OPT Reporting Form:

z.umn.edu/stemoptreq
STEM OPT: Other Reporting Requirements

Set reminders and submit to ISSS:

- Validation reports (every 6 months)
- Self-evaluations (at 12 and 24 months)
- Job changes (as soon as the change occurs)

z.umn.edu/stemoptreq

DO NOT FORGET!

ISSS WILL NOT REMIND YOU

- Validation reports (every 6 months)
- Self-evaluations (at 12 and 24 months)
- Job changes (as soon as the change occurs)

z.umn.edu/stemoptreq
STEM OPT: Other Portal Requirements

Question: “What happens if I do not report my 6-month validation, Annual Self-Evaluations, or Job Changes to ISSS?”

*Failure to report this information may result in loss of your STEM OPT status or other immigration benefits.*

STEP 5

STEM OPT: Update MyU

In order to keep in touch with UMN and to receive tax information if you worked (or are working) at the U:

- Also update your **Home address**, **Mailing address**, and **Telephone** in MyU:

  myu.umn.edu
STEM OPT: Additional Requirements

- Send the following to ISSS:
  - EAD card copy
  - Passport copy, if you change your name

- While on STEM OPT, you are allowed an additional 60 days of unemployment

STEP 5

STEM OPT Requirement: EAD Card

When you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card, submit a copy of it to ISSS

z.umn.edu/stemoptreq
STEP 5

F-1 Requirement

▪ Name change in your passport:

  – You must send a copy of your passport ID page to ISSS within 10 days of your name change: isss@umn.edu
  – Only ISSS can change your name in SEVIS.

STEP 5

Unemployment Limit

▪ Students on STEM OPT are allowed an additional 60 days of unemployment beyond the 90 day limit on the initial post-completion OPT.

  \[90 + 60 = 150 \text{ days total}\]
Travel during STEM OPT

- Required documents (in addition to passport, I-20, F-1 visa)
  - EAD card for STEM OPT
  - Job letter
  
  If any of the above items is missing, then you are assuming risk.

- I-20 travel signature is valid for 6 months

- [z.umn.edu/stemreq](z.umn.edu/stemreq)

---

Ending STEM OPT

- When you complete your STEM OPT
  - Submit your I-983 Final Evaluation to [z.umn.edu/stemreq](z.umn.edu/stemreq)
  - Also contact ISSS ([isss@umn.edu](mailto:isss@umn.edu)) to tell us your plans.
    - You may submit a Departure Form to ISSS
    - ISSS advisers will update your SEVIS and UMN records
Employer Noncompliance

▪ If you believe that your employer is not complying with the terms and conditions of the regulations and Form I-983 instructions, you may report violations to the Department of Homeland Security.

https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students-stem-opt-reporting-requirements

Employer’s Responsibility

▪ Review and sign student’s annual self-evaluation on Form I-983
▪ Report material changes to ISSS
  – EIN
  – Reduction in student compensation
  – Decrease in hours
  – Changes to the employer’s commitment
▪ Report loss of employment to ISSS
Conclusion of Workshop

This ends the STEM OPT workshop.

If you have additional questions, please contact ISSS:

isss@umn.edu
612-626-7100