F-1 students on Post-Completion OPT are eligible for a 24-month OPT extension if they have completed a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree in certain Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) fields or who have completed a previous degree in a STEM field from a U.S. institution within the past 10 years and have completed a new degree at the UT Health Science Center San Antonio. Please check the STEM Designated Degree Program List to determine if the CIP code for your major (listed on page 1 of your I-20 under Program of Study) is on the list. If your major is not on this list, you may not be eligible for the STEM OPT Extension.

STEM OPT EXTENSION ELIGIBILITY:

The F-1 student must:

1. Be on a period of standard Post-Completion OPT.

2. Hold a degree in a field of study (indicated on the I-20) which qualifies as STEM eligible according to the official STEM Designated Degree Program List (see above link.)

3. Have a job offer that meets these requirements:
   • Employer must be enrolled in E-Verify. Not all employers are registered with E-Verify and OIS does not have a list of E-Verify employers.
   • Job must be a paid job, for at least 20 hours per week.

4. Demonstrate that the job is directly related to the degree that qualifies for the STEM OPT extension.

5. Prepare and sign the Form I-983 Training Plan and present the completed plan to OIS. For more details regarding the I-983 Form, please visit I-983 Overview, I-983 Instructions, I-983-Information for Students, and I-983-Information for Employers.

6. Apply before your current Post-Completion period of OPT expires. You may apply up to 90 days before current OPT expires. USCIS must receive your STEM extension application before your current OPT period expires, and it must be sent within 60 days of the date the I-20 was issued and signed by your OIS Advisor. It takes 90 days for USCIS to issue your EAD, but you may continue to work for up to 180 days while your STEM extension application is pending with USCIS.

In the final rule for the 24-month STEM Extension, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) indicates that “employment through ‘temp’ agencies, consulting firms that provide labor hire and other relationships that do not constitute a bona fide employer-employee relationship” do not qualify for the 24-month STEM OPT extension. The STEM regulations do not allow for self-employment.

ELIGIBILITY FOR A SECOND PERIOD OF STEM OPT AFTER HIGHER DEGREE

If you enroll in a new academic program in the U.S. in the future and earn another qualifying STEM degree at a higher educational level, you may be eligible for a second and final period of 24-month STEM OPT (i.e., two 24-month STEM OPT extensions may be permitted).
ELIGIBILITY BASED ON A PREVIOUSLY OBTAINED STEM DEGREE

If you are currently in a degree field (or on Post-Completion OPT using that degree) that is not identified as STEM eligible but have previously earned a STEM eligible degree from an accredited U.S. higher education institution, you may be eligible to apply for a STEM OPT Extension under certain conditions. For more details, please contact our office.

DOCUMENTS THAT STUDENT NEEDS TO SUBMIT TO OIS. (TO REQUEST I-20 FORM WITH OPT RECOMMENDATION)

☐ OIS Form: Completed 24 Month STEM Extension OPT Request Form
☐ Form I-765: completed and signed by the student. Please indicate the code (c)(3)(C) at item 20.
☐ Form I-983: completed and signed by the student and employer. Page 5 of the I-983 does not need to be completed at this time: Page 5 must be completed and sent to OIS at the 12-month anniversary of the STEM OPT start date and again on the 24-month anniversary of the STEM OPT start date.
☐ Photos: Two passport-style photographs that meet USCIS specifications. You must write your I-94 in pencil on the back of your photos.
☐ Immigration documents: Please submit copies of the following documents:
  o Copy of the newest passport biographical page;
  o Copy of F-1 visa stamp or *I-797C notice of action. (*Only for students who did change of status in the U.S.)
  o Copy of the most recent I-94 Form. If you have an electronic I-94 record, please print it out and provide it to us.
  o Copy of all I-20 forms that have been issued to you, including previous schools attended.
  o Copy of your current unexpired EAD card. (front and back)
  o Copy of any previous EADs you may have ever been issued by USCIS.
☐ Application Fee: Check or money order in the amount of $410 made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
☐ A copy of your degree: Submit transcripts or copy of diploma that indicate the educational level and field of study.
☐ Form G-1145: To receive E-notification of Application/Petition Acceptance.

DOCUMENTS THAT STUDENT NEEDS TO SUBMIT TO USCIS. (FOR OPT STEM EXTENSION EAD)

☐ Form I-765: completed and signed by the student. Please indicate the code (c)(3)(C) at item 20.
☐ Photos: Two passport-style photographs that meet USCIS specifications. You must write your I-94 in pencil on the back of your photos.
☐ Immigration documents: Please submit copies of the following documents:
  o Copy of the newest passport biographical page;
  o Copy of F-1 visa stamp or *I-797C notice of action. (*Only for students who did change of status in the U.S.)
  o Copy of the most recent I-94 Form. If you have an electronic I-94 record, please print it out and provide it to us.
  o Copy of all I-20 forms that have been issued to you, including previous schools attended.
  o Copy of your current unexpired EAD card. (front and back)
  o Copy of any previous EADs you may have ever been issued by USCIS.
☐ Application Fee: Check or money order in the amount of $410 made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
☐ A copy of your degree: Submit transcripts or copy of diploma that indicate the educational level and field of study.
Updated I-20 Form: Copy of I-20 Form issued with the DSO’s 24-month STEM OPT recommendation, properly signed by both the DSO (OIS International Services Representative) and the student.

Form G-1145: To receive E-notification of Application/Petition Acceptance.

Homeland Security.

Employment Authorization Documents (EAD): Submit any previous work authorization cards you may have ever been issued by USCIS.

*I-797C only for students who did change of status in the United States.

**OPT STEM EXTENSION MAILING INSTRUCTIONS**

Students must submit the complete STEM Extension OPT application packet to the correct USCIS Lockbox Facility for processing and adjudication. OIS will not submit the STEM Extension OPT application packet to USCIS for you. Where to mail the application to depends on the mailing address you indicate in Item 3 of the Form I-765. If your address on the I-765 is in the state of Texas, mail the application to one of the addresses below. Please review the USCIS mailing instructions to find the correct lockbox location.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USCIS Phoenix and Dallas Lockbox facilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>If you live in:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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 Northern Mariana Islands.</td>
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<td>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, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia</td>
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