

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 from an employer enrolled in [E-Verify](#). Not all employers are registered with E-Verify and OIS does not have a list of E-Verify employers.
4. Demonstrate that the job is directly related to a STEM field.
5. Prepare and sign the Form I-983 Training Plan. There are instructions and information regarding this form at the following sites:
  - I-983 Instructions: <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/i983Instructions.pdf>
  - I-983 Overview: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview>
  - I-983-Info for Students: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students-and-the-form-i-983>
  - I-983-Info for Employers: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/employers-stem-opt-reporting-requirements>
6. Apply before your current Post-Completion period of OPT expires. You may apply up to 120 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 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:

- You must have received both degrees from currently accredited and SEVP-certified institutions
- Your previously degree cannot have been conferred more than 10 years ago at the time of application
- Your previous degree is assigned a STEM eligible code found on the STEM Designated Degree Program List at the time of application
- You have not already received a STEM OPT Extension based on this previous degree
- Your practical training opportunity is directly related to the previously obtained STEM degree
- Your employer meets the criteria for STEM OPT employment

**24 Month STEM Extension OPT Request Form**

Student Information

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Current OPT EAD Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ SEVIS ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Please list any upcoming international travel plans: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**OPT STEM Extension Attestation/Statement of Understanding**

Please initial to the left of each statement to verify your understanding, and sign at the bottom.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that while on STEM OPT I am still considered to be an F -1 student and as a result, it is my responsibility to notify the OIS of any changes in the information listed below:

- Change of residential address
- Change in employer's address and ANY change to employment status such as number of hours worked per week, position title, unemployment, etc. using the OPT STEM Extension Reporting form AND submitting a new I-983 form.
- Change of phone number and/or e-mail address
- Change of immigration status (i.e., H-1B, J-1 Permanent Resident, etc.). A copy of the approval notice must be submitted to USCIS.
- Transfer of F-1 record to another school. A copy of the new I-20 form must be submitted to OIS.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that I must mail my OPT STEM Extension application to the USCIS Service Center (address provided in my packet) based on my state of residence and that I am fully responsible for timely mailing my application:

- No earlier than 120 days before my current Post-Completion OPT period ends; AND
- Before my current Post-Completion OPT period ends: AND
- Within 60 days of issuance of my I-20 form with STEM Extension OPT recommendation

\_\_\_\_ I understand that I must submit a copy of my EAD to OIS as soon as it is received.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that I must report my STEM OPT employment every 6 months **regardless of whether there are any changes to my employment status.**

\_\_\_\_ I understand that OIS must endorse my I-20 form for travel prior to my departure and that travel signatures are valid for only 6 months while on OPT.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that while on the 24-month STEM OPT Extension, I cannot accrue more than a total of 150 days of unemployment throughout my entire 36 months on OPT.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that once the STEM OPT Extension is granted, I cannot cancel it and use it later.

I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by these requirements and that failure to do so may violate my F-1 status and threaten my ability to remain legally in the U.S.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's signature Student's printed name Date

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 depends on the mailing address you indicate in Item 3 of the Form I-765. Use the USCIS address below that corresponds with the state of your mailing address (as indicated on Item 3 of the form I-765).

Please note that separate addresses are used for delivery by express mail and courier services such as UPS, FedEx, and DHL. All deliveries by U.S. Mail, including Priority, Express or other accelerated mail services provided by the U.S. Postal Service, must be addressed to the U.S. Postal Service address.

OIS advises all students to always check the USCIS website for the most up-to-date filing addresses and other filing updates for the Form I-765: <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses>.

USCIS Phoenix and Dallas Lockbox facilities	
If you live in:	Mail your application to:
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.	<p><b>USCIS Phoenix Lockbox</b>            For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries:            USCIS            PO Box 21281            Phoenix, AZ 85036</p> <p>For Express mail and courier deliveries:            USCIS            Attn: AOS            1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S            Suite 100            Phoenix, AZ 85034</p>
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	<p><b>USCIS Dallas Lockbox</b>            For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries:            USCIS            PO Box 660867            Dallas, TX 75266</p> <p>For Express mail and courier deliveries:            USCIS            Attn: AOS            2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business            Suite 400            Lewisville, TX 75067</p>

USCIS processing time for STEM Extension OPT applications is 90 days.

Please submit to OIS the following documents as part of your STEM Extension OPT application packet to request I-20 form with OPT recommendation from OIS:

- 24 Month Extension OPT Request Form & OPT STEM Extension Attestation/Statement of Understanding
- Form I-765 completed and signed by the student
- Form I-983 completed and signed by the student and employer. Pages 6 and 7 of the I-983 do not need to be completed at this time: Page 6 must be completed and sent to OIS at the 12-month anniversary of the STEM OPT start date and page 7 must be completed and sent to OIS on the 24-month anniversary of the STEM OPT start date.
- Form G-1145, E-notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
- 2 passport-style photographs that meet USCIS specifications  
(<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/photos.html>)
- Copies of: passport biographical page with expiration date, F-1 visa stamp, and most recent I-94 record (can be downloaded and printed at <https://cbp.dhs.gov/>) or if last arrival to the U.S. prior to April 2013, copies of the front and back of I-94 card
- Copies of all I-20 forms that have been issued to you, including previous schools attended and OPT I-20s
- Copy of OPT EAD and any previous EADs you may have ever been issued by USCIS
- Check or money order in the amount of \$410 made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security

**Documents that Student Needs to Submit to USCIS for OPT STEM Extension EAD**

- Form I-765 completed and signed by the student
- Form G-1145, E-notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
- 2 passport-style photographs that meet USCIS specifications  
(<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/photos.html>)
- Copies of: passport biographical page with expiration date, F-1 visa stamp, and most recent I-94 record (can be downloaded and printed at <https://cbp.dhs.gov/>) or if last arrival to the U.S. prior to April 2013, copies of the front and back of I-94 card
- Copies of all I-20 forms that have been issued to you, including previous schools attended and OPT I-20s
- Copy of OPT EAD and any previous EADs you may have ever been issued by USCIS
- Check or money order in the amount of \$410 made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security