



Optional Practical Training- STEM Extension

Revised 01/2017

F-1 students in post-completion Optional Practical Training who earned a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) field as listed on the I-20 and the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program list and who meet the eligibility requirements are able to apply for a 24 month extension of the post-completion OPT. The STEM Designated Degree Program list as of May 10, 2016 can be found at: <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2014/stem-list.pdf>

Eligibility

- Be in a period of approved post-completion OPT status
- Have a STEM qualifying degree or have completed all graduate coursework other than thesis/dissertation
- Have an offer of paid employment for at least 20 hours per week with an employer who is registered in the E-Verify program
- Employer must agree to reporting requirements
- Must not be a previous recipient of more than one STEM Extension OPT and previous extension must have been for a lower degree level

Filing Deadline

STEM OPT petitions may be submitted **up to 90 days prior** to the end date on the current OPT card and **must be received by the USCIS Service Center prior to the current card end date.**

Employment Dates

Authorization begins the day after the first period of OPT and ends 24 months later. A student who submits the petition on time to USCIS may continue to work for 180 days beyond the expiration of the current OPT while the STEM extension is pending. The work must be for the e-verify employer associated with the I-983 training plan.

Unemployment Limit

Post-completion OPT holders are limited to 90 days of unemployment beginning with the start date of the OPT card. Students with a STEM extension are granted an additional 60 days allowance for time spent unemployed. Unemployment is considered to be every day (including weekends and time spent out of the country) that the student does not have a qualifying work arrangement for OPT as described in the types of work appropriate for OPT section of this handout.



Student Reporting Responsibilities while on STEM OPT

Students with STEM OPT have multiple reporting responsibilities. See the chart and the below information. Information should be sent to ipdept@olemiss.edu

1. Changes to the following must be reported within 10 days of the occurrence:
 - Any change in name
 - Residential address
 - Name and address of their employer
 - Any change to the name and address of the employer (also requires new I-983)
 - Any interruption of such employment
2. Every 6 months (counted from the start of the STEM OPT), the student must report the name and address of their employer. This must happen even if there hasn't been any change to the data from the last report.
3. Self-evaluation signed by the employer on form I-983 must be submitted annually.

Employer Reporting Responsibilities

Employers must agree to within 5 business days of the occurrence, notify the Designated School Official using ipdept@olemiss.edu if the employee is terminated or departs from employment prior to the end date on the STEM extension EAD. Employers must also sign the student's self-evaluation and agree to Department of Homeland Security site visits.

Travel during STEM Optional Practical Training

Re-entry to the U.S. requires that F-1 students present the following documents:

- SEVIS Form I-20 endorsed for travel by F-1 advisor within the last six months;
- OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card
- Valid F-1 visa; and
- Confirmation of employment from employer

Departure from the U.S. after Optional Practical Training

An F-1 student in OPT is allowed 60 days grace period after the authorization of employment ceases to change status, acquire an I-20 for a new academic program, or depart the United States.

ACTION	WHEN	STUDENT	EMPLOYER	DSO
Recommend STEM OPT for eligible students	No more than 60 days before student applies to USCIS for authorization			✓
Apply for STEM OPT	Before regular OPT ends	✓		
Complete and certify the Form I-983, "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students"	Before recommendation of extension for student	✓	✓	
Determine completeness and proper execution by student and employer of student's Form I-983, including confirmation that the form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains how training is directly related to the qualifying STEM degree Identifies goals for student, including knowledge, skills, techniques, and explains how the goals will be achieved Describes the evaluation process for student Describes methods of oversight and supervision generally applicable to students 	Before recommendation of extension for student			✓
Certify student's degree, as shown in SEVIS or on official transcripts, is of a proper educational level and has a degree code included on the current STEM list	Before recommendation of extension for student			✓
Update student's SEVIS record with DSO recommendation	No more than 60 days before student applies to USCIS for employment authorization			✓
Keep and store the Form I-983 and self-evaluations in the student's record	Within 30 days of submission			✓
Validate information in student's SEVIS record, and report information to DSO within 10 days of the reporting date	Every 6 months	✓		
Complete and sign student's self-evaluation	Annually	✓	✓	
Report to student's DSO any material changes to or deviations from an existing Form I-983	As soon as possible	✓	✓	
Notify DSO and submit new Form I-983 upon change of employer or start of a new practical training opportunity	Within 10 days	✓		
Report a change of student's legal name, residential or mailing address, employer name or address, and/or loss of employment to DSO	Within 10 days	✓		
Update student's record to reflect a change of name or address, or an interruption of employment	Immediately after student reports a change			✓
Report the termination of student's practical training to DSO	Within 5 business days		✓	
Report student's departure (i.e., having the knowledge of student leaving the training opportunity or when student fails to report for the training for five consecutive business days)	Within 5 business days of knowing		✓	
Report noncompliance to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security	As soon as possible	✓	✓	✓

Cancellation of Optional Practical Training

If one decides to cancel OPT, it is sometimes possible to do so. Once the EAD has been processed by USCIS, OPT may **not** be cancelled if the start date on the EAD Card has already passed. To cancel OPT please contact the OIP advisor who assisted in filing your application.

Additional Information

STEM OPT information from the Department of Homeland Security can be found at:

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub>



STEM extension OPT Student Application Form

Family Name: _____ First Name: _____

UM ID Number: _____ Degree Level: _____

Major _____ Date of Degree Completion _____

Current EAD start date: _____ End date: _____

Will your STEM extension employer be different than your current employer? _____

Signature _____ Date _____

When correspondence arrives concerning my OPT please contact me at:

Phone _____

Permanent Email _____

Required Documents to Accompany Application:

- Completed STEM Student Application Form and STEM OPT Agreement form
- Completed Form I-765 **use black ink** (attached or found at www.uscis.gov under Forms) In question 16, use code (c)(3)(C) for a STEM extension and complete question 17
- Completed G-1145 form
- Completed form I-983
- Employer Recommendation Form
- Copy of diploma and transcripts
- Copy of current EAD card
- Photocopies of passport, visa, and I-94 arrival page or card
- Two passport-style photos
- Check or money order for \$410 made payable to **Department of Homeland Security**

The International Student Advisor will review the materials and produce an I-20 with the OPT recommendation. You will be sent an email requesting that you come to sign the new I-20. If you are not in Oxford, the above documents can be scanned and sent via email for review. The original I-20 can be mailed to you and the petition can be sent by you or all documents can be sent to OIP for mailing.



STEM OPT Agreement

I understand that I am responsible for the following should USCIS approve my post-completion OPT petition:

- Reporting to the Office of International Programs within 10 days of a change in:
 - My residential address
 - Name and address of my employer
 - Change to my employment status
- Reporting to the Office of International Programs, the name and address of my employer every 6 months even if there is no change to this information
- Pursuing work opportunities with the e-verify employer on the I-983 on file with OIP that are directly related to the program listed on my I-20
- Being aware of and not exceeding the unemployment limits (150 days)
- Keeping my passport valid six months into the future
- Submitting the required annual self-evaluation on form I-983 to OIP
- Requesting a signature on I-20 from OIP for out of country travel
- Complying with U.S. tax laws
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I understand that:

- on-campus student employment positions are not appropriate while in post-completion OPT status
- the issuance of a new I-20 for transfer to a new school or a new program of study will invalidate the OPT authorization when the SEVIS record for the new I-20 is changed to active status
- I have 60 days beyond the expiration of my OPT to either depart the U.S., transfer to a new school, have an I-20 issued for a new program or apply for a change to another immigration classification

Signature: _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____



Employer STEM OPT Recommendation Form

The student named below wishes to apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for work authorization in the STEM Optional Practical Training category to continue or begin employment with your company.

To be eligible for this type of work authorization, the employer must be registered in the E-verify program and agree to the employer reporting obligations.

Employer Reporting Responsibilities

Employers must agree to within 5 business days of the occurrence, notify the Designated School Official using ipdept@olemiss.edu if the employee is terminated or departs from employment prior to the end date on the STEM extension employment authorization document. Employers must sign the annual self-evaluation the employee must do on form I-983.

Employee Name: _____

Employee's job title: _____

I support the STEM OPT extension request and agree to meet the employer reporting responsibilities for the above named person.

Employer signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Address: _____

E-Verify number: _____

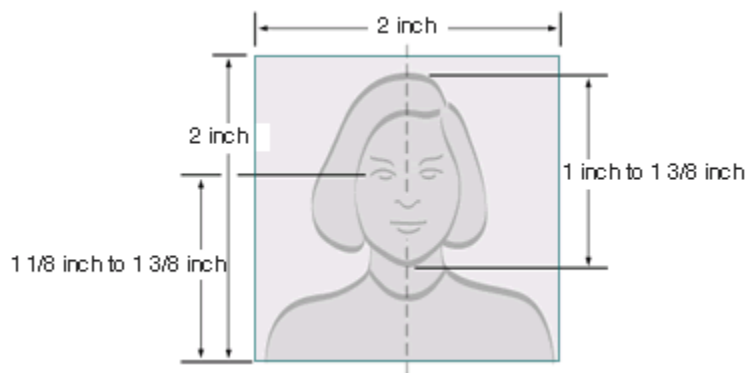
Date: _____



Photo Composition Template

- Picture needs to have been taken in last 30 days
- Make sure the photo presents the full head from the top of the hair to the bottom of the chin
- Center the head with the frame
- The person in the photo should have a neutral expression and be facing the camera

Paper Photo Head Size Template



- Photo must be 2 inches by 2 inches
- The height of the head (top of hair to bottom of chin) should measure 1 inch to 1 3/8 inches (25 mm - 35 mm)
- Make sure the eye height is between 1 1/8 inches to 1 3/8 inches (28 mm – 35 mm) from the bottom of the photo