24 Month STEM OPT Application Information

Effective May 10, 2016, F-1 students who received U.S. bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees in the certain STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) fields are eligible for 24-month extension of post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment authorization for a total eligibility of up to 36 months.

Additional information about the updated 24 Month STEM OPT Extension can be found on the Study in the States STEM OPT Hub here: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub

Eligibility:

- Students are eligible for up to two authorized of STEM OPT Extensions during their lifetime.
- The student must have received a degree from the eligible STEM major list (must have proof of degree completion, such as a diploma and I-20 with STEM Major listed, to apply).
- This degree can be from USF (see list of USF STEM Majors below) or from a previous degree earned at a SEVP certified school in an eligible STEM major.
- The employment being performed while on the STEM OPT Extension must be related to the STEM degree on which the STEM OPT Application is based.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>CIP Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIOL</td>
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<td>DML</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTTL</td>
<td>Digital Tech Teach Learning</td>
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<td>Environment Studies</td>
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<td>Energy Systems Management</td>
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<td>Physics</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>Undeclared Science</td>
<td>40.0101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• The student must be authorized for post-completion OPT and working in a job related to his or her field of study, and have not exceeded the limit of 90 days unemployment.

• The student must have already reported their current Post-Completion OPT employment to ISSS through our website: https://myusf.usfca.edu/isss/students/international-alumni/report-opt

• At the time of application for the STEM OPT extension, the student must have confirmed employment with an employer who is registered with and participating in the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) E-Verify employment verification program. Click here http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify for more information. Students on a STEM OPT extension must always be employed by an E-Verify employer during their period of STEM OPT authorization.

• Students must work together with their employer to complete Form I-983, and this document must be submitted to ISSS. The student and employer must update and resubmit this form to ISSS if there are any substantive changes in I-983 Training Plan information.

When to apply:

• Applications must be received by the USCIS prior to the student’s current post-completion OPT end date.

• Applications must be received by USCIS within 60 days of signing the STEM OPT I-20.

• Students can apply as early as 120 days before their current post-completion OPT EAD end date.

• While the 24-month extension application is pending, the student’s initial post-completion OPT employment authorization is automatically extended for 180 days, or until the date the application is adjudicated, whichever comes earlier.

• ISSS processing time is FIVE business days after the office has received a complete STEM OPT Application. Incomplete applications cannot be processed.

Required documents to submit to ISSS:

• All documents must be submitted as one package to ISSS.
  o Bring them in person to the ISSS office on University Center 5th floor
  o Email them as a single PDF document to isss@usfca.edu.

• Incomplete applications cannot be processed.
  
  o Be sure to check the box “I am applying for _ Renewal of my permission to accept employment”.
  o Item #10: Enter the USCIS# found on the front of your EAD card
  o Item #16: Use eligibility code (c)(3)(C).
  o Item #17: Enter your degree, employer’s name (as listed in E-Verify) and their E-Verify Company Identification number (or their Client Company Identification Number).

• Photocopy of diploma on which STEM OPT application is based.

• Photocopy of passport biographic page(s), including passport expiration information

• Photocopy of current valid I-20

• Photocopy of I-94 Record [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/)

• Photocopy of current EAD card, front and back

  
  o Must be completed and signed by the employer.
  o Any ISSS Advisor can be listed on I-983.
  o Additional questions should be directed to the employer.

• Signed **OPT Extension Agreement** (see last page of this packet)
USCIS Mailing Checklist

You must submit your STEM OPT application to USCIS. Please assemble the following items into a single packet.

☐ Form I-20: Photocopy of new Form I-20 with OPT STEM endorsement (date of Form I-20 issuance must be within 30 days of submitting your USCIS application). Be sure you have also signed your I-20.

☐ Photocopy of your diploma reflecting the conferred degree as well as your major field of study.

☐ IF you are applying based on a previous STEM degree, a copy of your I-20 that shows that degree.

☐ Completed and Signed Form I-765

☐ Fee for processing Form I-765. NOTE: Check the most recent fee schedule on the USCIS website http://www.uscis.gov/i-765 Make the check or money order payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”

☐ Photocopy, front and back, of your I-94 card or print out your arrival record from here https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/

☐ Photocopy of the biographic page(s) from your passport

☐ Photocopy, front and back, of your last EAD card

☐ Two identical full-frontal color passport photographs taken in the last 6 months
  - Picture size measuring 2" by 2". The head of the image should measure between 1" and 1 3/8" and eye height is between 1 1/8" to 1 3/8" from bottom of photo
  - Write your name and SEVIS number on the back of photos
  - Do NOT use old photos and do NOT take these photos on your own or with your phone.

Optional Documents:

☐ Letter from student or employer explaining how the employment relates to the degree.

☐ Form G-1145 http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf (This form is optional, include original as the top page of your application)
Mailing instructions:

You mail all documents by “certified mail with a return receipt.” Please read the instructions below carefully to ensure you mail your STEM OPT application to the correct address.

If you live in (based on the address listed on Form I-765) these states you must mail your application to the following location:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For regular U.S. Postal Service deliveries:</th>
<th>For private courier (non-USPS) deliveries:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>United States Citizenship and Immigration Services</strong>&lt;br&gt;PO Box 21281&lt;br&gt;Phoenix, AZ 85036</td>
<td><strong>United States Citizenship and Immigration Services</strong>&lt;br&gt;Attn: AOS&lt;br&gt;1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S.&lt;br&gt;Suite 100, Phoenix, AZ 85034</td>
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<td><strong>United States Citizenship and Immigration Services</strong>&lt;br&gt;PO Box 660867&lt;br&gt;Dallas, TX 75266</td>
<td><strong>United States Citizenship and Immigration Services</strong>&lt;br&gt;Attn: AOS&lt;br&gt;2501 S. State Highway. 121 Business&lt;br&gt;Suite 400&lt;br&gt;Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 Applicants for 24 Month STEM OPT Extension must complete and sign the statement below:

24 Month STEM OPT Extension Agreement

By signing below, I understand that it is my responsibility to maintain health insurance coverage while on my STEM OPT Extension. I understand that if I receive authorization from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for STEM 24-month extension, I am responsible for maintaining my legal F-1 visa status in the United States by meeting the following requirements:

- Working as a paid employee for an E-Verify employer at least 20 hours per week.
- Working in a position related to the STEM major approved by DHS for the 24-month extension.
- Collaborating with employer to update Form I-983 Training Plan if there are any substantive changes, and submitting the updated form to ISSS within 10 business days.
- Submitting an Annual Self-Evaluation about the progress of the training experience detailed on form I-983.
- Submitting a Final Self-Evaluation on the completion of the training experienced as detailed on Form I-983.
- Sending a validation report to the DSO every six months, beginning when the 24-month extension starts and ending either when F-1 immigration status expires or when extension period ends (whichever comes first). Validation report must include: student's full legal name, SEVIS identification number, current mailing & residential address, name & address of current employer, start date of work for current employer.
- Not exceeding the 150-day limit on unemployment during any period of post-completion OPT authorization (regular post-completion OPT and 24-month extension).
- Reporting a change of my residential address to the ISSS office within 10 days of moving.
- Reporting the name and address of my employer(s) to the ISSS office within 10 days of my change of employment so ISSS can update my OPT information in the SEVIS system.
- Completing and submitting an updated Form I-983 training plan to ISSS within 10 days of any change of employment.
- Reporting the loss of employment to ISSS within 10 days.
- Contacting the ISSS office if I need to transfer to another institution, change my visa status, or complete my stay as an F-1 student in the United States.
- Keeping my passport valid for six (6) months at all times.
- Having my documents checked by the ISSS office before leaving the United States for any travel outside of the country.
- Submitting required tax forms and paying any taxes due.
My signature below confirms that I understand and agree that if I fail to meet any of the requirements indicated above then I may jeopardize my legal status in the United States.

Last name: ________________  First Name: ________________  USF ID#: ________________

Signature: __________________________________________  Date: ________________

This form must be submitted with all required items to request an I-20 recommending an OPT STEM Extension. Completed requests will be processed within FIVE business days. Incomplete request forms will not be accepted.