
**OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)
24-MONTH STEM EXTENSION APPLICATION INFORMATION**

ELIGIBILITY: [Check this website for eligibility requirements.](#)

- You have been approved for the initial 12-months of post completion OPT.
- You have had fewer than 90-days of unemployment while on OPT.
- Your primary major/field **as indicated on your I-20 form** is a STEM field on this [list](#).
- Your employer is enrolled in the E-verify program.
- You have a job or a job offer of at least 20-hours per week that is paid.
- Both the STEM OPT student and their STEM employer must prepare and sign a required Training Plan on [Form I-983](#). Instructions for the Form I-983 Training Plan instructions can be found [here](#).

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Students who file a timely application for the 24-month OPT extension (i.e. must be received by USCIS within 60-days of the new STEM OPT I-20 form issuance, and prior to the expiration of the current 12-month OPT) will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until USCIS adjudicates the I-765 application, or for 180-days, whichever comes first.

A *previous* STEM degree obtained from a U.S. institution can now be the basis of a STEM OPT extension if current employment is in a STEM field. Example: Undergraduate STEM degree. Student then obtains a new non-STEM Master's degree. That student is initially only eligible for 12-months of OPT, but if working in a demonstrable STEM field, the student can subsequently apply for a 24-month STEM OPT extension based on previous undergraduate STEM degree.

For students or faculty who wish to inquire further about whether a particular UMass academic degree program may be considered to become STEM OPT eligible, please see the following Office of Institutional Research link: <http://www.umass.edu/oir/ir-resources/cip-code-stem-opt>. NOTE: The IPO does not control the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code designations at UMass

APPLICATION TIME FRAME

USCIS recommends that you file for the STEM OPT extension as early as 90-days PRIOR TO YOUR CURRENT OPT END DATE. All applications must be received by USCIS before the ending date of your current EAD work card.

Likewise, USCIS must receive your STEM OPT application no later than 60-days from the issuance of your most recent STEM OPT I-20 form (see date issued in the "School Attestation" section of your newest I-20 form.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- The IPO assesses a fee of \$125 for all STEM OPT applications. To begin the application process, please see the following Quickpay link. You will need to submit a copy of your \$125 receipt for the OPT extension I-20 processing fee to the IPO, along with documents #2-10 below
(https://quikpayasp.com/umass/commerce_manager/payer.do?orderType=IP)

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- 1) Before you proceed, refer to the [Planning Tool](#) and the [IPO Planning Tool User Guide](#).
- 2) Complete **Form I-765**: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765.pdf> – Fill out the form and then print, date & sign where indicated:
 - For question #20 on the I-765 form, enter (c) (3) (C).
 - For question #17 on the I-765 form, enter the name of the degree as shown on your I-20. Enter your employer’s name as listed in E-verify and also your employer’s specific E-verify identification number (your employer needs to provide you with this information)
- 3) Complete **Form I-983** (<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/i983Instructions.pdf>) signed and completed by **both** you and your employer.
- 4) Complete the STEM OPT Planning Tool (see #1 above) and provide all requested STEM employment information and personal contact information, etc.
- 5) Obtain evidence of your degree in a STEM field. This can be either an unofficial or official transcript (which must include your program of study), or a copy of your diploma which will state the degree level.
- 6) Submit the following by email attachment to Ken Reade in the IPO (kjreade@umass.edu):
 - a) **STEM OPT Planning Tool** (Excel format) – (please refer to Planning Tool Users Guide), b) **I-983 form**, c) **Copy of your diploma**, d) **I-765 form**, e) **STEM OPT information form** and f) **Quickpay \$125 IPO receipt**

It will take the IPO approximately 7-10 business days to process your STEM OPT materials once they are properly submitted by e-mail. You will then be contacted by the IPO confirming STEM OPT endorsement and express mail instructions for your new STEM OPT I-20 form.

Once notified by the IPO and your updated STEM OPT I-20 has been received, you will then need to mail the following documents to a USCIS Service Center based on your current residential location in the United States: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses#Lockbox%20Addresses>:

- A personal check or money order for \$410 made payable to *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*;
- A properly completed, signed and dated I-765 form (see #2 above);
- Copies of **ALL** previously issued I-20 forms (**including** your newest STEM OPT I-20!);
- Copy of your photo information page from your valid passport;
- Copy of your F-1 visa stamp page in your passport (even if it is expired);
- Copy of your current 12-month EAD
- Print out of your current I-94 record (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>)
- Evidence of your degree in a STEM field (see #5 above)

If your employer changes while your OPT extension is pending, you must contact the IPO immediately.

The IPO also kindly requests that you submit a copy of your new STEM OPT EAD work document once it is received.

IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU READ AND REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING REGARDING STEM OPT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- **It is the individual student’s responsibility to report STEM OPT participation every 6-months to the IPO**, even if there are no changes to your employment information or local address.
- An updated “Self-Evaluation” on form I-983 is required at the end of any employment and/or at the 12 and 24-month dates from the start date of your STEM OPT extension.

- **If your employer has changed, your employer's Employer Identification Number (EIN) changes as a result of corporate restructuring, your salary is reduced or if there is a significant decrease in the amount hours worked per week YOU MUST update form I-983 and send it to the IPO immediately.**
- **The IPO needs a valid and frequently read e-mail address from you to remain in communication throughout your 24-month STEM OPT duration.**
- The Department of Homeland Security has indicated that **failure to provide any of the reporting requirements mentioned above can result in the automatic termination of your SEVIS immigration record and corresponding F-1 immigration status.** The IPO will not take responsibility for a student's failure to update information accordingly and to adhere to these considerable STEM OPT reporting requirements.
- **Travel during OPT Extension:** International travel for personal or professional reasons while employed on OPT extension should be routine with the following: valid passport, valid F-1 visa (in your passport), valid I-20 form with travel signature obtained within the past 6-months, and evidence of appropriate OPT employment (such as a letter from your employer and/or pay statement/stub) and your EAD work document

Additional STEM OPT resources:

Mailing address changes while STEM OPT application is pending with USCIS (US government site):

<https://www.uscis.gov/addresschange>

Employers & the Form I-983 (US government site):

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/employers-and-the-form-i-983>

Instructions to the Form I-983 (US government site):

<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/i983Instructions.pdf>

Study in the States information and video tutorial (US government site):

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

If you need to change your address while your application is pending refer to this [USCIS website](#).