



24 Months STEM Extension OPT Info

General Information

You are eligible to apply for a 24-month extension, beyond the initial 12 months of OPT, if you meet all of the following conditions:

- You are currently approved for post-completion OPT.
- You completed a bachelor's or master's degree in a science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) field. Visit the U.S. Department of Homeland Security website for the STEM Designated Degree Program List, <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension>. You must have one of these CIP coded listed as your major on your post-completion OPT recommended I-20.
- You have a job or job offer from an **E-Verify employer**, <http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify> OR <http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify/about-program/e-verify-employers-search-tool>
- If you are working for Staffing or Temporary Agencies, make sure your actual work site employer is part of the E-Verify program.
- Your job must be a paid job for at least 20 hours per week.
- You must have a “bona fide employer-employee” relationship, and that you may not be self-employed.

When to Apply?

- Apply **BEFORE** your current EAD expires. USCIS recommends you to apply up to 90 days before its expiration.
- OPT STEM Extension Application must reach USCIS within 60 days of the issuance of OPT STEM Extension Recommended I-20 and before the expiration of the current EAD.

Benefits while STEM OPT I-765 is pending

If a student's regular post-completion OPT expires after a STEM OPT I-765 is properly and timely filed, the student's employment authorization is considered automatically extended for up to 180 days while the STEM EAD application is pending.

How to Apply?

Step 1: Work with your STEM OPT Extension employer and complete I-938 Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. To access overview, instruction and fillable PDF form, please visit this page: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview> Email a completed form to your International Student Advisor. The Form I-983 does not need to be submitted to USCIS unless USCIS requests a copy.

IMPORTANT: If you are working for Staffing or Temporary Agencies, they cannot complete and sign the Form I-983. Only the E-verify employer that provides the actual training can do so. To learn more, review: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2016/07/questions-from-designated-school-officials-can-stem-opt-students-use-staffing-or-temporary-agencies-0>



Step 2: Read Instruction for I-765, Application for Employment Authorization:

<http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765instr.pdf>

Step 3: It's important for your SEVIS record to be up-to-date with correct US mailing address and Employer info. ISS Advisors can update your employment information for you if you complete this online form: <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/41845> . To update your US mailing address, please first make updates in MyUW AND fill out this online form: <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/42799>

Step 4: Complete I-765 Form: <http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf> (read tips for completing for completing Form I-765 below) If you'd like your International Student Advisor to review completed form, please email a copy to them.

Step 5: Request STEM Extension OPT I-20 to International Student Advisor by filling out this online form: <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/41846>

Step 6: The ISS advisor will issue a new I-20 with a recommendation for the extension and will mail it back to you. Mail to USCIS the following:

- ✓ Original Form G-1145: <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>
- ✓ Original Form I-765 (don't forget to sign)
- ✓ \$410 check or money order payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security".
- ✓ Two passport-style photos (read photo specification section below, lightly print your name and I-94# on back with a pencil)
- ✓ Original employment confirmation or offer letter on company letterhead with following content:
 - Proof of the duration of the position
 - The job title
 - Contact information for the student's supervisor or manager
 - Description of the work
 - If it's not clear from the job description that the work is related to the student's degree, the student should obtain a signed letter from his or her hiring official supervisor, or manager stating how the student's degree is relate to the work performed
- ✓ Copy of STEM degree (an unofficial transcript showing level and program of study)
 - To learn more visit: <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/38037>

Tip: Black and white copies are fine. Do not use staples.

- ✓ Photocopy of I-94 (retrieve at: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>)
- ✓ Photocopy of valid passport photo page and passport expiration date
- ✓ Photocopy of all previous EAD cards (front and back)
- ✓ Photocopy of all previous I-20s (If you have lost any of them, just send copies of what you have)
- ✓ Photocopy of all previous Visas
- ✓ Photocopy of new I-20 with STEM Extension Recommended by International Student Advisor (make sure to sign the first page in blue ink before copying!)



Step 7: Make a copy of all of your application materials for your file at home. If you make a scanned PDF copy, you can email it to us and we will be happy to file it in your student e-file, which will be saved indefinitely on the UWT server.

Step 8: Be sure to mail your application to the USCIS Service Center, serving the area of your mailing address you indicated on your I-765. To find the address, review this page: <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses#Lockbox%20Addresses>

Photo specifications:

- Two US Passport Style Photos
- Lightly print your name and your I-94 number using sharpie on the back of each photo.
- Do not wear glasses in the photo and make your ears visible.
- ***Photographs must have been taken within the last 30 days and not previously used.***
- Review the U.S. Department of State Guidelines:
<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photos.html>

Tips for completing Form I-765:

- State that an items I not applicable with “N/A.” If the answer is none, write, “None”.
- I am applying for....check “Renewal of my permission to accept employment”.
- Item 3:
 - Your Receipt Notice and EAD will be mailed to the address you provide here.
 - If you are changing your address, you may set up mail forwarding with U.S. Postal Services. Note that **all USCIS related mails will NOT to be forwarded and be returned to the sender.** Contact USCIS and file an address update BEFORE changing address.
- Item 15:
 - Check "yes" as you have previously received an EAD card from USCIS.
 - Review Notice of Action letter you received from USCIS when you applied for post-completion OPT. Name of USCIS office you submitted the application to and the date the office received your application will be printed there. If you do not have the NOA, you will need to estimate a date USCIS received your post completion OPT application. If you have filed previously using a Washington State address, your case was processed at Potomac Service Center.
- Items 16, 17, 18, 19:
 - Use the information from your I-94. In some cases, you may have made recent short trips to Canada or Mexico, which are not reflected by your current I-94. This is standard and it will be fine to use the information from your I-94 anyway. If you have changed to F-1 status within the U.S., include a copy of your Approval Notice. We recommend you to use full name of the airport or border you used to enter the US.
- Item 20:
 - Use this code:
 - 24-month extension for STEM degree recipients: (c) (3) (C)— the first “c” is a lower case and the second “C” is an upper case.



- Item 21:
 - On “Degree” section, list your major as it appears on your unofficial transcript.
 - You must fill out “Employer’s Name as listed in E-Verify” and “Employer’s E-Verify Company ID# or a Valid E-Verify Client Company ID#” sections.
- Applicant’s Signature:
 - Sign the form in BLACK ink.
- No not fill out the “Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Applicant” section.

IMPORTANT: Special reporting requirements during STEM OPT extensions

There are enhanced reporting requirements for students approved for a 24-month STEM OPT extension. STEM OPT recipients must make a "validation report" to your International Student Advisor every six months starting from the date the 24 month extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status ends, the student changes educational levels at the same school, the student transfers to another school, or the 24-month OPT extension ends, whichever is first. Your advisor is not going to remind you to report. To keep your SEVIS record active, please submit your information through this online form: <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/41845> (if employment info changes)
OR <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/42887> (if there is no employment info changes)

Still have questions?

Contact your International Student Advisors!

Annemarie Martin, amartin2@uw.edu, 253-692-4723 (Milgard School of Business Students)
Amber Hallberg, arhallbe@uw.edu, 253-692-4498 (Non-Business students with last name initials A-L)
Akane Yamaguchi, ayamagu@uw.edu, 253-692-4695 (Non-Business students with last name initials M-Z)