

# STEM Optional Practical Training (STEM OPT) Extension Guidelines

**F-1 students with degrees in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) are eligible to apply for an extension of their post-completion OPT (post-OPT). Please review the guidelines and complete the [STEM OPT Onboarding](#) module prior to submitting your request.**

**Incomplete requests and requests submitted prior to completing the required course will not be processed.**

## STEM OPT Student Criteria

- F-1 student must hold a bachelor's degree or a higher degree in an [eligible STEM field](#) from DHS's [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#).
- You can apply for the 24-month extension **no sooner than 90 days prior** to their current OPT end date and **no later than the day their current EAD card expires**.
- United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) must receive the new I-20 with DSO recommendation for STEM OPT and the [I-765 Application for Employment Authorization](#) **before the current 12-month OPT expires**.
  - As long as USCIS receives it by your current EAD end date, you will be allowed to remain in the United States (US) and continue employment for 180 days **or** until a decision is made on their application.

**NOTE:** You **may not apply** for STEM OPT **during the 60-day grace period** following an initial (usually 12-month) period of post- OPT (i.e., after their initial Post-Completion OPT has ended)

## STEM OPT Employer Criteria

- Employers must be enrolled in USCIS' [E-Verify](#) to guarantee they will provide formal training, learning objectives, and confirm that you will complete a minimum of 20 hours of work per week.
- The employer selected for STEM OPT does not have to be the same employer used for post-OPT, but you are eligible to use the same employer, as long as employment is applicable to your STEM degree.
- You **cannot use self-employment** for STEM OPT; you **must be a bona fide employee** of the employer signing the Form I-983 and **may not** provide the employer attestation on your own behalf.
- You must work with the employer to complete the [Form I-983](#), and verify how the employment is directly related to your STEM degree. Please see [About Form I-983](#).

## SEVIS STEM OPT Reporting Requirements

The Student Exchange and Visitors Information System (SEVIS) allows F-1 students participating in OPT to report personal and employer information. Keep in mind this information **must still be reported to ISS** in accordance with [reporting requirements](#). For more information on how the SEVP Portal works click [here](#).