


# Optional Practical Training 24 month STEM extension PPT

ISSS Office

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- \* Although the new 24 month rule is effective May 10, 2016, the International Student and Scholar Services Office will not be able to produce 24 month extension I-20s until after May 13, 2016 due to SEVIS functionality.
  - \* Due to high volume of requests we ask that you wait 5 business days for a response from ISSS when requesting work authorization.

# Who is eligible for STEM?

- \* **Degree**

- \* To qualify for the STEM OPT extension, an F-1 student must currently be working in a period of [post-completion OPT](#) and must hold a bachelor's degree or higher degree in an [eligible STEM field](#) from an SEVP-certified school that is [accredited](#) (from an accrediting agency recognized by [the U.S. Department of Education](#)) at the time the student submits their STEM OPT extension application to USCIS.
- \* Under certain circumstances, an F-1 student may use a prior STEM degree from a currently accredited SEVP-certified school to fulfill this eligibility requirement. To use a prior degree to qualify for the STEM OPT extension, the F-1 student must:
  - \* Have received their most recent degree (which does not need to be STEM-related) from a currently accredited Student and [Exchange Visitor](#) Program (SEVP)-certified school.
  - \* Have received their prior, qualifying STEM degree\* (at the bachelor's level or higher) within 10 years of applying for the STEM OPT extension with USCIS.
  - \* The qualifying STEM degree needs to be on DHS's [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#) at the time the student submits their application for the STEM OPT extension, rather than at the time that the student received the degree.
- \* For more information about which programs of study qualify for the STEM OPT extension, visit our [eligible classification of instructional programs codes](#) resource page.

Two 24 month STEM extensions may be granted per lifetime

# Allowable Employment

# Transition Period

- \* Beginning May 10, 2016, USCIS will issue Requests for Evidence (RFEs) to students whose applications are still pending on that date. The RFEs will allow students to effectively amend their application to demonstrate eligibility for a 24-month extension without incurring an additional fee or having to refile their EAD application.

# 7 month extension

- \* **Any 17-month STEM OPT EAD that USCIS issued on or before May 9, 2016, will remain valid until the EAD expires, is terminated or revoked.**
- \* As a transitional measure, from May 10, 2016, through August 8, 2016, certain students with such EADs will have a limited window in which to apply for an additional seven months of OPT, effectively enabling them to benefit from a 24-month period of STEM OPT. To qualify for the additional seven-month extension, the student must satisfy the following requirements.
- \* These requirements are necessary to ensure that those who receive the additional seven-month extension are covered by this rule's improved compliance, reporting and oversight measures.

## 150 Calendar Days Remaining on EAD

- \* To qualify for the seven-month extension, such students must have at least 150 calendar days remaining before the end of the student's 17-month OPT period at the time the [Form I-765, "Application for Employment Authorization,"](#) is filed, and they must otherwise meet [all requirements of the 24-month STEM OPT extension.](#)

## Timely Filing of the Seven-Month Extension

- \* The STEM OPT student must properly file a Form I-765 with USCIS, along with applicable fees and supporting documentation, on or before August 8, 2016, (i.e., 90 days after May 10, 2016) and within 60 days of the date the DSO enters the recommendation for the 24-month STEM OPT extension into the student's [SEVIS](#) record.

## Fulfill 24-Month STEM OPT Extension Requirements

- \* The student must meet all the requirements for the 24-month STEM OPT extension as described on [the student eligibility page.](#)

# What to do if you get an RFE

- \* 1. If USCIS issues you a Request for Evidence (RFE) asking you for an I-20 with 24 month OPT STEM extension email a scan of the RFE to [iss@uah.edu](mailto:iss@uah.edu)
- \* Submit a 24 month STEM extension form from our website with the RFE AND the Form I-983  
<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students-and-the-form-i-983>
- \* You are responsible for filing your RFE and new I-20 from ISSS to USCIS following all directions – this is your petition.

# Who is eligible for 7 month extension

- \* You must file between May 1- and August 18, 2016
- \* You have at least 150 days of approved OPT SETM left when USCIS receives your complete application for 7 month STEM extension
- \* Your filing deadline is the end date of your current STEM EAD minus 150 days
- \* Use this [PLANNING TOOL](#) to calculate your deadlines. Enter current EAD end date – your eligibility and filing deadlines and dates will pop up.



# Application Process

- \* 1. Request OPT STEM I-20 from ISSS
  - \* -Submit a STEM cover sheet, I-765, I-983
  - \* ISSS will notify you ready for pickup or arrange you to pay for shipping via eship global (Fedex/UPS)
- \* 2. Mail a complete application to USCIS – processing takes up to 90 days, once you have a receipt notice you can work up to 180 days while extension pending
- \* 3. Get the STEM Extension EAD card
- \* 4. Maintain your status and report changes to ISSS

# TIMING is everything

- \* USCIS must receive your application before the end date on your OPT.
- \* ISSS recommends that you submit your STEM I-20 request 2 weeks OR MORE before your current EAD expires.
- \* You should apply asap – 90 days before your OPT EAD end date.

# Employer requirement I-983

- \* To learn about the I-983 visit here:
- \* Official form  
<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/I-983.pdf>
- \* Instructions  
<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/i983Instructions.pdf>

- \* Before applying to USCIS for a STEM OPT extension, a STEM OPT student must download, complete, sign and submit the [Form I-983](#) to their DSO. The STEM OPT student and their prospective employer must work together to complete this form. STEM OPT students and their employers are subject to the terms of the 24-month STEM OPT extension regulations and [Form I-983 instructions](#), effective as of the start date requested for STEM OPT, as indicated on the form.
- \* Students are responsible for facilitating the completion of this form, submitting it with their STEM OPT application and returning it to their DSO, who will keep it in the student's record. DHS maintains the discretion to request and review all documentation for eligibility concerns.
- \* The STEM OPT student must complete Section 1 of the Form I-983 and work with their prospective employer to complete Sections 2-6. For more information about these sections, please visit the [Employers and the Form I-983 resource page](#). STEM OPT students are also responsible for completing annual self-evaluations, described below.



- \* **Overview of Form I-983 Section 1**

- \* The STEM OPT student is responsible for completing Section 1 of the Form I-983. Section 1 requires information about both STEM OPT students and the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified schools they attend.
- \* In Section 1, STEM OPT students must include their full name (surname/primary name/given name) exactly as it appears on their [Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status,"](#) and as it appears in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). The student must also provide their current SEVIS ID number, even if the student earned the qualifying degree on a previously issued SEVIS ID number.
- \* In addition to providing information about both their SEVP-certified school and qualifying STEM degree on the Form I-983, STEM OPT students must also document the time period for which they are applying to be authorized to work on STEM OPT, regardless if the authorized dates match the actual training dates.
- \* It is important to note, the STEM OPT extension may not end more than 24 months after the scheduled termination of the student's EAD for the current post-completion OPT. For students on regular OPT and applying for their STEM OPT extension, this start date should be the day after your current 12-month OPT ends. For more information about applying for STEM OPT, please visit the [USCIS website](#).
- \* For students [currently on the 17-month STEM OPT extension](#) and requesting conversion to the terms and conditions of the new 24-month STEM OPT extension, the student and employer will be subject to the terms and conditions of the Form I-983 as of the date of receipt at USCIS. Thus, the requested period should identify a start date on or around the date that the student files their seven-month STEM OPT extension with USCIS.

# Reporting requirements

- \* Use the ISSS SEVIS update FORM here, complete and email to [iss@uah.edu](mailto:iss@uah.edu) within 10 days of any changes
- \* Complete the form every 6 months
- \* Report material changes to I-983 to ISSS within 10 days.
- \* Annual Evaluation of Student Progress due at 12 and 24 months.

# Reporting is KEY to success

- \* Remember: these things must be reported to ISSS no more than 10 days from change for you to maintain active F1 status on OPT/STEM:
- \* Name, residential address, phone and email address, employer name, employer address, start/end date of employment, date of departure from U.S. if you leave before STEM ends and you are not coming back, change of status to another visa category (ie H1B)
- \* All updates should be done in writing. Include your A# and change to [iss@uah.edu](mailto:iss@uah.edu)

# Help! I have a new employer on STEM

- \* New SEVIS update form
- \* New I-983 to ISSS
- \* New I-20's will be issued by ISSS and sent to you



# Auto terminate function in SEVIS

- \* If SEVIS doesn't have an update every 6 months your F1 student status may automatically end. Once you have an approved STEM extension card remember to email [iss@uah.edu](mailto:iss@uah.edu) about any changes or send a new SEVIS update form and check the bottom that you are complying with your validation report.
- \* 3 validations in total over a 24 month period.

# Evaluation on Student Progress

- \* The student is responsible for conducting the annual self-evaluation on their own progress, and the employer must review this evaluation and sign it to attest to its accuracy.
- \* Thus, the student evaluations are a shared responsibility of both the STEM OPT student and employer to ensure that the student's practical training goals are being met satisfactorily. The student must return the signed self-evaluation back to their DSO, who will keep it in the student's record.
- \* The student submits the first assessment within 12 months of the STEM OPT start date and a second, final assessment that recaps the training and knowledge acquired during the complete training period. The evaluation must have an applicable date range associated with it, so the timeline for which the evaluation is relevant is clear.
- \* After the student completes the evaluation, the employer's Official with Signatory Authority must sign, print and enter the date of the signature to show concurrence with the assessment information that the student entered.

# Unemployment

- \* DHS allows STEM OPT students an additional 60 days of unemployment during the 24-month STEM OPT extension period.
- \* This is in addition to the 90-day maximum period of unemployment that students are allowed during the initial period of post-completion OPT. Students who obtain a 24-month STEM OPT extension are therefore allowed a maximum of 150 days of unemployment.
- \* If a student completes one period of OPT (including a STEM OPT extension), and then pursues a second period of OPT on the basis of having earned a second degree at a higher educational level, the student will be able to benefit from the rule's authorized 90-day and 150-day periods of unemployment (as appropriate) at both educational levels.
- \* In other words, a student receives unemployment eligibility each time they participate in a period of post-completion practical training (including STEM OPT).

# Frequently Asked Questions

- \* <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/External%20STEM%20OPT%20Webinar%20FAQ%20Document%20FINAL%20v%202.pdf>

