

24-MONTH OPT EXTENSION FOR F-1 STEM STUDENTS

In March 2016, The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) amended F-1 nonimmigrant student regulations on OPT for certain students with STEM degrees. The new regulation, which provides for a 24-month extension of the OPT period for certain STEM majors, goes into effect on May 10, 2016. A student may participate twice in the STEM OPT Extension over the course of their degrees. They are eligible if they have:

- ✓ Maintained valid F-1 status and completed a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree in a *designated* Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) field
- ✓ Applied for and currently be engaged in post-completion OPT
- ✓ Received a job offer from an employer who is currently enrolled in the federal government's E-Verify system
- ✓ Received a job offer which is directly related to your field of study

Eligible Fields of Study

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 in an [eligible STEM field](#) from an SEVP-certified school that is accredited at the time the student submits their STEM OPT extension application to USCIS. Under certain circumstances, an F-1 student may now use a prior STEM degree from a currently accredited SEVP-certified school to fulfill this OPT STEM Extension eligibility requirement. If this is your situation, make an appointment with an International Student Advisor.

E-Verify

You may only apply for a STEM extension if you are currently employed by or if you receive a job offer from an employer that is currently enrolled in E-Verify. To determine if your employer is registered for E-Verify, contact your employer's Human Resources department. For more information about E-Verify, please refer to <http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify>.

When to Apply

If you meet the above requirements for the STEM extension, please make an appointment with an international student advisor to discuss the application process. **You may file an OPT STEM extension application up to 90 days before the expiration of your current OPT authorization.** A USCIS Service Center must receive your complete extension application before your current OPT authorization expires.

If your application is filed in a timely manner, your employment authorization will be *automatically extended* for up to 180 days while your application is pending. If your application is approved, your extension period will begin the day after the expiration of your original OPT period. You should not travel outside the United States while your OPT extension request is pending, so make travel plans accordingly.

Employment Requirements

Students who are granted an OPT STEM extension **may not accrue an aggregate of more than 150 days of unemployment** during the total period of OPT, which includes the initial post-completion period and the subsequent 24-month extension period. While you are authorized for a STEM extension, **you must work at least 20 hours per week** in a paid or unpaid position for an employer that is registered for E-Verify. Your employment must be directly related to your field of study. Your employer must complete a training plan for you as defined in the Form I-983 as outlined in <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub>.

Reporting Requirements

International Student Advisors at OSU are required to maintain your SEVIS record throughout your entire period of OPT, including the STEM OPT extension. While you are on OPT or a STEM OPT extension, you must continue to provide our office your new residential address within 10 days of moving and every six months, information about changes to your Form I-983 Training Plan, and an annual self-assessment report. You must also report certain additional information to our office within 10 days. This information is outlined in the next section. Failure to report this information may constitute a violation of your status and lead to termination of your SEVIS record.

Information to Report

Below is the information you are required to report to our office as part of maintaining your F1 immigration status. You may fax or mail the information and documents below to our office using the fax number or mailing address in our letterhead. You may also email your updated information and scanned copies of documents to an advisor at ois.student@oregonstate.edu. You may report address and employment updates online at our website: <http://international.oregonstate.edu/isas/current-students/reporting>

Information to Report to OIS	Information to Send	Documents to Send to OIS	Timelines
Form I-983	Initial Training plan and employer Sections 2-6	Form I-983 completed by student and employer, reviewed by DSO	At the time of OPT STEM application and if there is any material or substantial change with your employer
Form I-983	Annual Self-Assessment	Evaluation of Student Progress portion of the Form I-983	Within 12 months of the listed STEM OPT start date and a second, final assessment at the end
Receipt of Employment Authorization Document (EAD)	None	Copy of EAD	Upon receipt from USCIS
Change of address	New residential address	None	Within 10 days of a move
Validation Report	See list below	None	Every 6 months
Change of immigration status	New immigration status	USCIS approval notice and/or I-94 card showing new status	Within 10 days of the change
Start of employment	Employer name and address Employment start date	None	Within 10 days of the change
Change of employment	Previous employer name and address New employer name and address New employment start date	None	Within 10 days of the change
Loss of employment	Employer name Employment end date	None	Within 10 days of the change
Permanent departure from U.S. prior to end of OPT authorization period	Departure date	Departure Form (available on OIS website)	Within 10 days of the departure

Validation Reports

After being authorized for a STEM extension, you are required to send a “validation report” to OIS every six months until the end of your F-1 status or your STEM extension period, whichever is sooner. The first validation report will be due six months from the start of your STEM extension period. The report must include:

- Your full legal name (as listed on your passport)
- Your SEVIS ID number
- Your current residential address (P.O. boxes are not acceptable)
- Name and address of your current employer
- The date you began working for your current employer

APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR OPT STEM EXTENSION

Step 1: Schedule an appointment with an International Student Advisor to discuss your eligibility for the STEM extension.

If you live outside the Corvallis area, you may schedule a telephone appointment by contacting our receptionist at 541-737-6310.

Step 2: Request a recommendation for optional practical training from OIS.

Prepare the following documents and either bring them to the OIS office or email scanned copies to ois.student@oregonstate.edu:

- Completed OPT STEM Extension request form (included on the last page of this packet)
- NEW:** Form I-983 completed by you and your employer. The form and instructions are at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview>.

If you meet the eligibility requirements, OIS will recommend you for the OPT extension in the Student Exchange Visitor and Information System (SEVIS) and issue a new I-20. *OIS will only recommend you for the OPT extension. Actual approval must come from USCIS, which takes approximately 2-4 months.* When your I-20 is ready, go to 130 University Plaza to pick up your new I-20 containing your OPT STEM Extension recommendation. If you would like us to mail your I-20 to you, request shipping by following the instructions at <http://oregonstate.edu/international/atosu/shipping>. OIS will provide you with an original I-20 and a photocopy. You will need to sign both the original and the photocopy. Keep all your former I-20s for your records and the original I-20 containing your OPT endorsement for your use. **OIS recommends that you mail your application to USCIS within one week of receiving the OPT STEM Extension endorsement.**

Step 3: Prepare the following documents:

- Form I-765: This form is available on the USCIS website at <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>. Type the form online, and then print and sign it. This helps with accuracy when the Lockbox scans your application.
 - o For item #16, use the codes (c) (3) (C) for the 24-month extension for STEM students.
 - o For item #17, you will need to list the name of your degree as it is shown on your Form I-20, your employer's name as listed in E-Verify, and the E-Verify Company or Client ID Number.
 - o Enter "N/A" for any questions or fields that do not apply to you. Enter all dates in the format MM/DD/YYYY. Be sure to sign the form before submitting it.
 - o **Use caution when filling out the address portion of this form.** The USCIS lockbox you will send your application to is determined by the state of the address you use in item #3. If you do not plan to remain at your current address for the next 3-4 months, list an alternative address. **The post office will not forward government documents.**
- Copy of your diploma showing the level and program of study or official or unofficial transcripts verifying your STEM degree
- Two (2) color passport-style photos. Guidelines for the photos are included in this OPT packet. Lightly print your name and I-94 number on the back of each photo and put them in a small, clear bag.
- \$410 check or money order made payable to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Photocopy of SEVIS Form I-20 containing the STEM extension recommendation from OIS (all pages). OIS will provide you with an original and a photocopy of your new I-20. You will need to sign both the original and the photocopy. Send the photocopy of the new I-20 with your OPT application and keep the original.
- Photocopy of all previously issued I-20's (all pages)
- Photocopy of Form I-94 Arrival/Departure record (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>)
- Photocopy of the visa page from your passport (note: if the visa in your passport does not match the status you currently hold, include a copy of the USCIS approval notice from your change of status).
- Photocopy of the identification page from your passport (include copies of your passport validity dates and any renewal dates.) You must have a valid passport to be eligible for OPT
- Photocopy of previously issued Employment Authorization Document(s)
- Form G-1145 at <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf>, which you include before the first page of your I-765 application for email and/or text notification

Step 4: Mail all of the necessary documents to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox.

Refer to the I-765 instructions to determine the mailing address for your application: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-information/uscis-phoenix-and-dallas-lockbox-facilities>. Keep copies of all documents sent and track your application by using certified mail and return receipt through the US Post Office Allow 2-4 months processing time. To check the status of your application, visit the USCIS Case Status Service at <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do>.

Step 5: Comply with all reporting requirements as listed in the "Reporting Requirements" section above.

PHOTOGRAPH SPECIFICATIONS

You are required to submit 2 passport-style photos with the I-765 form (application for employment authorization). Specifications for these photos are listed in the I-765 form. The photos should be in color with a white background and taken no earlier than 30 days before submission to USCIS. Lightly print your name and your admission number (found on your I-94 Arrival/Departure Form) on the back of each photo with a pencil.

7 Steps to Successful Photos (http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/composition/composition_874.html)

- ☑ Frame subject with [full face, front view, eyes open](#)
- ☑ Make sure photo presents [full head](#) from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1-3/8 inches (25 mm to 35 mm)
- ☑ [Center head](#) within frame (see Figure 2 below)
- ☑ Make sure [eye height](#) is between 1-1/8 inches to 1-3/8 inches (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
- ☑ Photograph subject against a plain white or off-white [background](#)
- ☑ [Position subject](#) and [lighting](#) so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- ☑ Encourage subject to have a [natural expression](#)

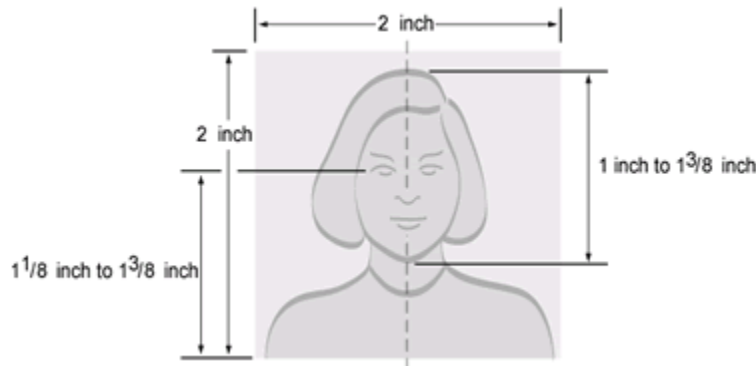


Figure 2. Head Position & Placement

Well-Composed Photos




OPT STEM EXTENSION REQUEST FORM

After you have spoken with an international student advisor to determine your eligibility for the OPT STEM extension, please complete the following information and submit this form to the Office of International Services.

PART I: Personal Information

Last name (family) _____ First name (given) _____

Student ID _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Current U.S. Address: Go to <https://ipconnect.oregonstate.edu> Click on  Select biographical information, then Local U.S. Address E-Form. * You are required to report your address to SEVIS to maintain your immigration status.

Future address (if known) _____
Street City State Zip Code

Effective date of future address (if applicable) ____/____/____ (month/day/year)

PART II: Degree Information

Please provide the following information for the degree on which your current OPT is based:

Degree level (circle) Bachelor's Master's PhD Major _____

Date of degree completion / (month/year) Final term of registration at OSU

_____ If you worked on more than one degree at OSU, indicate level, major and completion date: _____

Under certain circumstances, an F-1 student may now use a prior STEM degree from a currently accredited SEVP-certified school to fulfill this OPT STEM Extension eligibility requirement. If this is your situation, make an appointment with an International Student Advisor.

PART III: Current Employment Information

Please provide the following information regarding your current employment:

Name of employer _____

Address of employer _____

Street City State Zip Code

Start date of employment ____/____/____ (month/day/year)

End date of employment (if applicable) ____/____/____ (month/day/year)

Start date of current employment authorization document (EAD) ____/____/____ (month/day/year)

End date of current employment authorization document (EAD) ____/____/____ (month/day/year)

PART IV: STEM Employment Information

Please provide the following information regarding your STEM employment:

Name of employer _____

Address of employer _____

Street City State Zip Code

Start date of employment ____/____/____ (month/day/year) Employer ID Number (EIN): _____

Employer's E-Verify Company or Client ID Number _____

AFFIDAVIT OF UNDERSTANDING

The Office of International Services will not process incomplete applications. Students who have not completed a degree program in an approved STEM field, whose employer is not registered for E-Verify, and who have not submitted a completed Form I- 983 are not eligible for a STEM OPT extension recommendation.

To be completed by the student

I verify that I have read and understand the information contained in this STEM extension packet and I confirm each of the following (*check each item to indicate your understanding*):

- I have completed the degree listed on my current I-20 and have verified that my field of study is included in the list of STEM majors at <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf>.
- My employer and I have completed the Form I-983 Training Plan (<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview>) and submitted it with this application.
- I am currently engaged in post-completion OPT, I am within 90 days of the expiration of my employment authorization document (EAD), and I have not been unemployed for more than 90 days during my OPT.
- I have a job offer for a paid or unpaid position (at least 20 hours per week) from an employer who is currently enrolled in the E-Verify system.
- I have a job offer which is directly related to my field of study as listed on my current I-20 or a previous STEM degree, Bachelor's degree or higher, that I have received at a US SEVP-Certified institution within the past 10 years.
- I understand the following reporting requirements for which I am responsible while I am on the OPT STEM extension:
 - I agree to submit a validation report as outlined in this STEM extension packet to OIS every six months, beginning from the start date of the STEM extension and ending when my F-1 status ends or the STEM extension ends, whichever is sooner.
 - Submit two annual self-evaluations using Form I-983, and signed by my employer, to my DSO regarding my training experience (one in first 12 months, and one at the end)
 - Report any material changes to the Form I-983 to my DSO (which includes changes in the employer's EIN, change in hours, compensation, or duties, change to learning objectives, etc.)
- I agree to report any change or loss of employment or permanent departure from the United States and any changes in my name, residential or mailing address, phone number, employer and employer's address, supervisor's name and contact information, and immigration status to OIS within 10 days of the change.
- I authorize OIS employees to report my private e-mail address, phone number, and job title; my supervisor's name, job title, telephone number and e-mail address; I-94 information, and how my employment related to my degree in SEVIS in order to issue a STEM extension I-20.

Student	Printed	Name _____
Student Signature _____		
Date /_ /_ (month/day/year)		

Office of International Services use only

OPT Recommendation: Approved Denied OIS initials _____ Date entered into SEVIS _____