OPT STEM Extension Application Instructions & Information

Next Steps

1. Login to your USCIS account online
2. File a form using the I-765 Application for Employment Authorization
3. Apply for category (c)(3)(C) for 24-Month Extension for STEM Students

Application Deadline

Your complete OPT STEM Extension application must be submitted to USCIS no sooner than 90 days before your current OPT end date and no later than your current OPT end date. If USCIS receives your application after this date, your application will be denied with no option for appeal.

Once USCIS receives your OPT STEM Extension application, your current OPT will be extended for 180 days while you are waiting for your new STEM OPT EAD card.

Form I-983: Training Plan for STEM OPT Students

You must complete the Form I-983 Training Plan for STEM OPT Students with your employer before you can be recommended for the OPT STEM Extension and issued a new STEM OPT I-20. Return the completed and signed Form I-983 to the Center for International Programs. You can access the Form I-983 online.

Employer Information & E-Verify Number

You must be employed in the STEM field with an employer that is enrolled in the E-Verify program. You will need to list your employer's name and E-Verify Company Identification Number on the Form I-765 application in order to apply for the OPT STEM Extension. Be sure to ask your employer for their E-Verify information while you are completing the Form I-983 Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. For more information about E-Verify, please visit their website.

OPT STEM Extension Application Checklist

☐ Completed Form I-765

☐ Digital copy of new STEM OPT I-20

☐ Digital copy of front and back of current OPT EAD card

☐ Official transcripts from Saint Mary's College showing completion of STEM degree
   o Request official transcripts from the Registrar's Office at the Moraga campus

☐ Digital copy of biographical page of passport

☐ Digital copy of I-94

☐ Digital U.S. passport-sized photo

☐ Credit or debit card for the $410 USD application fee

Helpful Links

o USCIS: https://www.uscis.gov/
o I-983 Training Plan: https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983.pdf
o I-983 Training Plan Instructions: https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983Instructions.pdf
o E-Verify: https://www.e-verify.gov/
o I-94: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home

Reminders

o Review your application and responses thoroughly before submitting
o Keep a digital copy of your complete application for your records
o Be sure to sign all of your I-20s – no electronic signatures
o From the time you start an application, you have one month to complete and submit it
o Check the status of your application by logging into your USCIS account
o Send a copy of your STEM OPT EAD card and I-797 approval notice to the Center for International Programs

Traveling Internationally Before the OPT STEM Extension

If your current EAD card has expired and you have not received your new STEM OPT EAD card, you cannot travel internationally. You may travel internationally once your OPT STEM Extension application has been approved and you have received your STEM OPT EAD card.

The SEVP Portal

Once approved for the OPT STEM Extension, you will receive an email notification with a link to access the Student & Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) Portal where you can update your address and phone number as well as view your employment information. It is your responsibility to create an account as well as monitor and update any changes to your contact information. If you already have an active SEVP Portal account, your login information will stay the same.

Employment Reporting & Updating Your Information

It is your responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations that apply to you as an F-1 visa holder, which includes your time on the OPT STEM Extension. You must report the following changes to any of the following information to Saint Mary's College or the SEVP Portal within 10 days of the change:
o Legal name changes
o Change in permanent or local address, phone number and email address
o Change in employment, unemployment and employer changes
    o Note that new employment requires the completion of the Form I-983 Training Plan for STEM OPT Students and the approval of the Center for International Programs
o Change in immigration status
o Early departure from the United States
    o If you decide to not use the full OPT STEM Extension or to leave the U.S. before the end of your STEM OPT with no intention of returning as an F-1 student

Mandatory Check–In Requirements

You must report to the Center for International Programs every 6 months while on the OPT STEM Extension to verify that all of your personal and employment information is accurate. You must also complete and sign the Evaluation on Student Progress section of the Form I-983 Training Plan for STEM OPT Students each year and submit it to the Center for International Programs. You will receive notifications from the SEVP Portal when these check-ins are due.

Unemployment

You may not accrue an aggregate of more than 150 days of unemployment during your total time spent on OPT, including time spent on regular OPT and the OPT STEM Extension.

Contact Information

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USCIS
1-800-375-5283
www.uscis.gov
Click "Check Case Status" to track the status of your application or login to your USCIS online account