STEM Extension OPT Fact Sheet

**Definition**

- STEM Extension OPT is off-campus work authorization in a student’s field of study for 24-months after completion of the 12-month Post-Completion OPT authorization.
- Students must have earned a qualifying STEM degree, as listed on the STEM Designated Degree Program List: [https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension)

**Eligibility Requirements**

- Must currently be utilizing the 12-month Post-Completion OPT authorization.
- Must have earned a qualifying STEM degree.
- Must have a job offer from an employer within the E-Verify system.
- Must complete the Form I-983 Training Plan with employer, prior to applying for the extension.

**How to Apply for OPT**

- Meet with your International Student Advisor to review the following documents:
  - Completed USCIS Form I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT Students
  - Completed USCIS Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
  - Completed USCIS, Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
  - Two U.S. passport-style photos with your I-94 number and full name printed lightly in pencil on the back
  - Personal check or U.S. money order for $380 payable to the Department of Homeland Security
  - Photocopy of Passport Biography Page (Can be made in OIP)
  - Photocopy of F-1 Visa (Can be made in OIP)
  - Photocopy of I-94 card (front and back) or print your electronic I-94 at: [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html)
  - Photocopy of all I-20s since entry into the U.S. as an F-1 student. This includes all I-20s issued from other schools.
  - Photocopy of Change of Status I-797A Notice of Action (Approval Notice) if you changed status to F-1 (If applicable)
  - Photocopy of previous EAD cards (front and back)
  - Official transcript or copy of diploma showing acquired qualifying STEM degree
  - Job offer letter/Contract

- International Student Advisor will issue a new I-20 with a STEM Extension recommendation.
- Obtain a photocopy of all documents to be sent as part of your STEM Extension application.
- Mail all application materials with a copy of the newly signed I-20 to USCIS.

**When to Apply & Processing Times**

- You should apply for the STEM OPT Extension 90 days before your current EAD card end date.
- You must apply before your current EAD card expires.
- USCIS processing of your application can take up to 90 days.
- USCIS will mail your application receipt in 2-3 weeks.
- If your EAD card does not arrive within 90 days, contact the Office of International Programs.
- Between the period of your Post-Completion OPT EAD card expiration and receiving your STEM OPT Extension approval/EAD card, you may legally work for 180 days while your application is pending.