

STEM OPT Extension

1. Students must determine if they are in a STEM OPT qualifying program based on the CIP code listed next to their major on the Form I-20. Please visit the [Eligible CIP Codes for the STEM OPT Extension page](#) for a complete list and explanation of the STEM OPT extension qualifying degrees.
2. It is possible to apply based on a previously obtained STEM OPT qualifying degree. STEM OPT must not have been previously used for that program. The degree must have been obtained in the U.S. within 10 years. Speak to a Designated School Official at the ISSS to determine eligibility.
3. STEM OPT Extension can be filed up to **90 days before** the current post-completion OPT employment authorization expires and must be filed with USCIS prior to the post-completion OPT expiration date. Filing must also be within 60 days of the date the DSO enters the OPT recommendation into SEVIS.
4. The extension period is continuous for the two-year period following the post-completion OPT end date. STEM OPT Extension dates will be approved by USCIS and printed on the STEM OPT EAD card.
5. **Students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment** during the post-completion OPT period. If your total number of days of unemployment is more than 90 days since the initial post-completion OPT authorization, then you have exceeded the period of unemployment and may be denied for OPT Extension or other future benefits with USCIS. USCIS may request additional information, such as proof of employment or employment history during the application process.
6. Student may not accrue a total of more than **150 days** of unemployment time during the 36-month period of post-completion OPT and the STEM OPT Extension combined.
7. No unpaid or volunteer positions are allowed on STEM OPT Extension.
8. All employers worked for must be actively enrolled in the [E-verify program](#) for the duration of STEM OPT Extension. Student must verify employers enrollment status prior to beginning each employment opportunity.
9. While on STEM OPT, each job should be directly related to your field of study for the STEM OPT qualifying degree and commensurate with your level of education.

STEM OPT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- If approved for STEM OPT Extension, student must send a scanned copy of their EAD card to issinfo@siu.edu.
- Students with approved STEM OPT Extension are required to update the ISSS of their name, address, telephone number, email address, employer's name and address, dates of employment, part-time or full-time status (20 hours or more per week is considered to be full-time), and any periods of unemployment while on STEM OPT within **10 days** of moving/changing. To do so, please complete and submit [Form CIE-160](#), OPT Reporting/Data Validation Form available from our website and [Form I-983 Training Plan](#), if there are material changes to this form.
- In addition, students must **submit a Data Validation Report to ISSS every 6 months**, starting from the date the extension begins. To do so, please complete and submit [Form CIE-160](#) to issinfo@siu.edu. You will receive alerts via the SEVP portal as a reminder.
- The [Form I-983 Training Plan](#) must clearly articulate the STEM OPT student's learning objectives and affirm the employer's commitment to helping the student achieve those objectives. To fulfill this requirement, a student and their employer must complete and sign Form I-983. ISSS will determine if the Form I-983 is completed, signed and addresses all program requirements. ISSS will not recommend a student for a STEM OPT extension without this completed form and signed attestations.
- Students with approved STEM OPT Extension must submit [Form I-983](#) evaluation reports every 12 months while on STEM OPT. Final evaluations are required when terminating an employment position, even when outside of the required 12-month reporting period.
- All students are required to update the ISSS if there is a change in their immigration status (Ex. Change of Status to H-1B) and/or if they leave the U.S. and forfeit the remainder of STEM.

Note: For more information about the STEM OPT extension training requirement, visit the [Form I-983](#) resource pages for [students](#), [school officials](#) and [employers](#). Please also visit [STEM OPT HUB](#) webpage and [STEM OPT Frequently Asked Questions](#).

STEP 1: Submit the following documents to the ISSS by email to issinfo@siu.edu, to receive the STEM OPT Recommendation I-20. Allow 7 working days for processing. This I-20 is required prior to filing for STEM OPT with USCIS.

- Form CIE-155, Request for STEM OPT Extension.
- [Form I-983 Training Plan](#).
- STEM OPT Management Fee Receipt. \$200 fee payment required. Pay online [here](#).

STEP 2: Submit your application online or mail documents, (in the order shown), to USCIS within 60 days of the STEM OPT I-20 issue date. Applications must be filed prior to the end of the initial post-completion OPT period. (Most students opt to file online.) You must have an OPT I-20 prior to submitting the I-765 petition.

- To file online, you need to [create a USCIS account](#) if you have not done so before.
- [Complete Form I-765](#) - *The eligibility code required for students engaging in STEM optional practical training (OPT) extension is (c) (3) (C).*
- Photos – Digital photos are accepted when filing online. Taken within the past 6 months. Two (2) 2x2” printed passport style photos when filing by paper/mail-in (Full name and I-94 number must be printed on the back of hard copy photos).
- [Pay the filing fee of \\$470.00 USD \(online filing\), payable by credit or debit card; or \\$520.00 USD \(paper/mail-in filing\), payable to: U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#) (do not write on the back portion of the check). Staple to the front, left-hand side of Form I-765.
- [Scan \(Print-out for paper/mail-in filing\) of most recent Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Number.](#)
- Scan/copy of any previous EAD cards (Front and Back). (Most students will only have a previous EAD for the post-completion OPT)
- Scan/copy of original [STEM OPT Form I-20](#) (all 3 pages). Be sure to sign and date on page 1 prior to submitting this document.
- Scan/copy of your diploma (for the STEM OPT eligible program of study) that indicates degree conferred and major field of study. If your diploma is not available, an official or unofficial transcript copy can be submitted instead.
- Scan/copy of Passport’s identification and expiration page.
- Be sure to check the most updated [filing address](#) and mail your application via a trackable mailing service if you are filing by paper/mail.
- If filing by mail, also include a [Form G-1145](#), if you want to be notified electronically by USCIS for updates. This is not necessary when filing online.

Students who timely file an application for the 24-month STEM OPT Extension will be able to [continue employment while the extension application is pending](#), until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days after the expiration of the initial post-completion OPT, whichever comes first.

Part I. Student Information

1. Family Name:	2. Given Name:	3. Middle Name:
4. Street address where you currently reside:		
5. City:	6. State:	7. Zip Code:
8. Dawgtag #:	9. SEVIS ID #: N00	10. Email:
11. Phone #:	12. STEM Degree and Major:	
13. School/Department:	14. Degree Award Date:	

Part II. Employment Information (past & present)

List ALL positions held during post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) below (if applicable).

1. Job title:	From:	To:
Name of employer:	Full/Part Time:	
Address of employer:		
Supervisor's name and contact #:		
How is the employment related to your field of study:		

2. Job title:	From:	To:
Name of employer:	Full/Part Time:	
Address of employer:		
Supervisor's name and contact #:		
How is the employment related to your field of study:		

3. Job title:	From:	To:
Name of employer:	Full/Part Time:	
Address of employer:		
Supervisor's name and contact #:		
How is the employment related to your field of study:		

Provide total number of days of unemployment you have accrued since your OPT EAD start date:	Your current employer's EIN (Recommended):
Your current employer's name as listed in E-Verify:	Your current employer's E-Verify identification number:

Part III. Student Signature

By signing this form below, I certify that I have read the CIE-155 and understand the information provided. I also understand the requirements I am subject to by applying for and participating in the STEM OPT Extension program. I certify that all information provided is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further confirm that I will notify ISSS immediately if there are any changes to the information given above.

15. Student's Signature:	16. Date:
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Note: ISSS will email the STEM OPT recommendation Form I-20 to the student, if the application meets the requirements.