

24-Month Extension of Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH

Summary:

The 12-month limit on OPT can be extended by 24 months, for certain STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) degree holders.

Visit the ISS 24-month STEM OPT extension website to determine if your field and CIP Code are included in the list.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Currently authorized for post-completion OPT, working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to your field of study, and have not accumulated 90 days of unemployment.
- Completed a Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral degree in a field on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) STEM Designated Degree Program list.
- At the time of application you must be employed.
- You must have a job-offer or be employed by an employer registered with the "E-Verify" federal verification system.
- The job must be paid and be for at least 20 hours per week.
- Have not received a 24-month OPT extension for the STEM degree you are basing your extension application upon.
- The STEM extension can only be granted twice per person in a lifetime.
- The STEM Extension can only be granted once per degree level and the second extension must be at a higher degree level than the first STEM Extension.
- The STEM extension must be from an SEVP-certified institution that is accredited.
- Multiple employers—students can have multiple employers, but each employer must employ the student for no less than 20 hours per week.
- Self-employment is not possible, and employment through agencies/consulting firms is difficult—the employer signing the I-983 must be the same that employs you and supervises you.

When to Apply:

Apply to USCIS up to 90 days before your current EAD expires. Keep in mind, ISS needs at least 5 working days to process your I-20 recommending the STEM extension after all completed materials are submitted. We recommend submitting your request to ISS 105 days before your current EAD expires.

Step 1: Request OPT Recommendation from ISS

ISS must process a recommendation for your OPT request. 5 working days are required to process a recommendation for OPT. Please submit the following items to an ISS adviser. ISS cannot accept your application for processing unless all these items are completed and submitted:

- Student Request Form
- Form I-765 (Use most recent version from ISS website)
- Valid Passport/ Form I-94
- Form I-983

*Suggestions for completing form I-765 can be downloaded from the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov (go to "FORMS") or found on page 6 of this application packet.

- If the extension is based on a previous degree, please notify ISS because you must submit additional documents

Step 2: Assemble the Application Materials

OPT applications must be received by USCIS before your current EAD card expires.

Staple or clip the application materials together in the following order:

1. Check or money order, payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for the OPT application fee (\$410) -or- Form G-1450 Authorization for Credit Card Transaction
2. Two passport style color photos taken within 30 days of your application. Do not use a previously used photo. The instructions with Form I-765 provide detailed photo requirement information. Print full name and most recent Form I-94 number lightly on the back of each photo. Place the photos in a clear plastic bag or an envelope and clip it to the application.
3. Original Form I-765, all pages, even if they are blank (keep a copy for your records).
4. Photocopy of I-20 page 1 with your signature and page 2 with OPT recommendation. OPT applications must be received by USCIS:
 - a. Before your current OPT EAD expires.
 - b. Less than 60 days after the student's OPT I-20 was issued.
5. Print out of most recent electronic I-94 (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>). If you have a paper I-94 stapled in your passport, photocopy both sides of the form I-94 (Copy the back side even if it is blank). Do not mail the original paper form I-94 in your passport.

6. Photocopies of as many as possible of the following that contain your name and photo: Identity page of your passport, entry visa stamp with a photo, driver's license or state ID, student ID, and any previously issued EAD (front and back).
7. Include photocopies of pages 1 and 2 of previous CPT, OPT, or different SEVIS # I-20s. Do not mail original I-20s.
8. Photocopy of your diploma and/or final transcript.

*G-1145 E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance form (optional). This form can be downloaded from the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov (go to "FORMS"). The purpose of the form is to request that you receive an e-mail or text message notification when your application is received by USCIS.

Keep a copy of the above documents and application for your records. Paperclip G-1145 on top of the application materials. Mail the application by express or registered mail to obtain a signed receipt. Keep the receipt for your records.

Step 3: Mail the OPT Application to the USCIS Lockbox

You are Responsible for Mailing your OPT application to USCIS

Mail all of the materials for your application to USCIS. The address the materials are sent to depends on how the materials are sent (using USPS or Express mailing services).

Please be sure to check the address on the USCIS Website on the day you mail your application as these addresses and information are subject to change.

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses>

USCIS Chicago Lockbox

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

Attn: I-765 C03
P.O. Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680-5374

For FedEx, UPS, and DHL:

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03 (Box 805373)
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Wait for EAD to be Mailed from USCIS

- It usually takes approximately 2 to 5 months for USCIS to process your request and mail your EAD to the address listed on Form I-765.
- Several weeks after you apply, you should receive a receipt notice (Form I-797) in the mail from USCIS. Keep this for your records.
- Students who file a timely application can continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.
- The EAD will reflect the dates of your employment authorization.
- Contact ISS if you receive a Request for Evidence (RFE).

Travel Outside the U.S. During Your 24-month Approved OPT Extension

Travel with these items: Passport with valid visa stamp, unexpired EAD card, letter of employment, I-20 form with valid travel signature.

(Travel signatures are only valid for 6 months)

NOTE: *Per SEVP guidance*, overseas travel is not recommended when your 24-month OPT extension application is pending and your EAD has expired.

Step 4: Important Reporting Requirements While on Your 24-month OPT Extension

ISS is required to have a copy of your EAD. Upon receipt of your EAD, please email a copy (front and back) to issumd@d.umn.edu and include your student ID number.

SEVIS requires verification that you are actively employed along with the name and address of your current employer at 6 months and again at 12 and 18 months after the start date of your 24-month extension whether or not there has been a change to this information. You are required to update ISS with your employer info every 6 months, even if it does not change.

Failure to verify your OPT employment info or to submit I-983 evaluations within 10 days of the due date (see page 3 for more information) will result in failure to maintain your F-1 status.

NOTE: You are responsible for keeping track of these dates! ISS will not send you a reminder.

I-983 Reporting Requirements

- An updated form I-983 must be submitted to ISS within 10 days of starting new employment or if there are material changes to the I-983 plan: e.g. change of employer or EIN, reduction in compensation, significant decrease in hours per week worked or any decrease below the 20 hours per week required under the STEM rule, etc.
- You must tell ISS within 5 business days of employment termination or departure
- Students must complete 2 self-evaluations during their STEM extension, one before the end of the first 12 months of STEM OPT - "Evaluation of student progress". The second concluding evaluation at the end of their 24 months - "Final evaluation of student progress". This must be signed by the student and their immediate supervisor, and then a copy of the document must be submitted to ISS.
- Within 10 days of changing employers, you must submit a new I-983 with the new employer information. You must also submit a Final Evaluation from your previous employer.
- Also note that the Department of Homeland Security may conduct employer on-site reviews at the worksite.

Additional Reporting Requirements:

- You are required to update your mailing address and phone number in MyU within 10 days of any changes.
- You are required to report changes to the name and address of your employer or any interruption in your employment to ISS within 10 days of any change.
- Accumulated unemployment during the entire OPT authorization period may not exceed 150 days. Employment must be 20 hours per week or more. Volunteer work or unpaid internships in your field do not count as employment on STEM OPT. Keep written documents of all employment. If you have accumulated more than 150 days of unemployment, you will no longer be in F-1 status. Please notify ISS several weeks before you reach 150 days of unemployment.
- Notify ISS if you change your visa status or permanently depart the U.S. before your OPT period ends.

- Official admission to a new degree program and transfer to a new school during OPT will void any remaining time on your EAD. This time cannot be re-captured at a later date.
- As a person on an F-1 visa at UMD, you are required to have the University health insurance at all times. If you have an employer-sponsored group health plan, you may request a waiver. Talk to your ISS advisor about how to continue your insurance.
- **Failure to report changes of information, submit I-983 evaluations, and complete 6 month OPT reporting within the specified time periods may result in the loss of your F-1 legal status and/or the denial of future immigration benefits.**

Disclaimer

- ISS is able to provide you with general guidance. However, any advice provided to you by our office, as well as the information in this packet, should not be construed as legal advice. Additionally, due to the fluid nature of government interpretation, USCIS may change its interpretation of these immigration laws/regulations and eligibility requirements for benefits, at any time. We will do our best to provide you with the most current guidance. Each case is fact-specific and it is advised that you contact an experience immigration attorney if you have questions regarding your situation.

24-Month Extension of Post-Completion OPT Student Request

Student Request

Student should complete this portion.

Student's Name: Family First Middle

UMD Student ID #: SEVIS ID #:

Email: Phone:

Academic Major (I-20): Degree Level (I-20) e.g. BA, BS, MA, MS, PhD:

Visa Expiration Date: Month/Day/Year
Passport Expiration Date: Month/Day/Year

Have you sent a copy of your current EAD to ISS? Yes No

Have you reported your employment information to ISS? Yes No

Have you updated your current mailing address in MyU? Yes No

Have you ever been granted employment authorization for a STEM extension of OPT? Yes No

If Yes, at what degree level? _____

Living Expenses:

Living expenses: \$ (minimum of 9,578)

Expenses of dependents: \$

1 dependent \$8,292 2 dependent \$11,652
3 dependent \$14,352 4 dependent \$17,100

Total Expenses: \$

Sources of Funding:

Personal funds/savings: \$

Funds from another source: \$

Specify source:

Total Funding: \$

On which degree are you applying for the 24-month extension

Current EAD dates from: Month/Day/Year to: Month/Day/Year

24-month extension dates from: Month/Day/Year to: Month/Day/Year

Employer (Company) Name:

Employer Address: City State Zip

STATEMENT: *I have read the attached cover pages regarding optional practical training and fully understand the implications of the authorization. The information I have provided is true and correct.*

Signature Month/Day/Year

ISS will complete this section:

- Previous OPT
- Previous STEM extension
- Completed degree
- Address checked
- Travel discussed
- Passport expiration
- Completed I-983
- Employment is paid
- Employment is not through temp agency, consulting firm, or self employment

Date submitted to ISS Month/Day/Year

Date Completed I-983 Received _____

Date Completed I-765 Received _____

90 Days Prior _____

Adviser's initials _____

Form I-765 Instructions
Application for Employment Authorization
(F-1 STEM Optional Practical Training)

These directions are meant to help you with best practices in completing the Form I-765 for a STEM OPT Application. We suggest typing the form. However, your signature must be completed by hand in black ink. Include all pages of the I-765, even if they do not apply to your case. Write “N/A” or “none” for all sections that do not apply to you. **Please note this is not legal advice!** We cannot guarantee that USCIS will agree with all of the following information, it is our best guess based on current info and previous applications.

Part 1

Put an “X” in the box next to the benefit for which you are applying (e.g. Initial permission to accept employment).

Part 2

1. **Name:** Type last, first, and middle names. This should match your legal documents and there should not be any hyphens (-). If you do not have a middle name, write “(none)”.
- 2-4. **Other Names Used:** If you have not used other names, write “(N/A)”.
5. **Address in the U.S.:** This is the address where your USCIS mail and EAD card will be sent and should be valid for 5 months after submission of your application. USCIS mail cannot be forwarded to a new address by the postal service. If correspondence will be “in care of” a trustworthy friend or family member in the U.S., write the person’s name in number 5a (i.e., C/O John Doe) and the person’s address in number 5b-5f.
6. Check one
7. **U.S. Physical Address:** If you said “no” to Item #6, enter the address where you are currently living
8. **A-Number:** Enter your Alien registration number (9 digit USCIS# on your EAD). Do not include hyphens.
9. **USCIS Online Account Number:** Enter if you have one. Otherwise, leave blank.
10. **Gender:** Check one
11. **Marital Status:** Check one
12. **I-765 Question:** Check “yes”
- 13a. **Social Security Number:** Check one
- 13b. **Social Security Number:** Write your SSN if you have one.
14. **Social Security Number:** If you already have a social security number, check “no”. If you need a SSN, check “yes” or apply for your SSN at a local Social Security office.
15. **Social Security Number:** If you answered “yes” in #14, check “yes”.
16. Answer only if you checked “yes” in #14.
17. Answer only if you checked “yes” in #14.
- 18a-b. **Country of Citizenship/Nationality:** List any country you are currently a citizen or national of. If you have only one write “(N/A)” in 18b.
19. **Place of Birth:** List the city/town/village, state/province, and country where you were born.
20. **Date of Birth:** (mm/dd/yyyy)
- 21a. **I-94 Number:**
Use the 11-digit number on your most recent Form I-94 (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>)
- 21b. **Passport Number**
- 21c. **Travel Document Number (if any):** Do NOT write your passport number.
- 21d. **Country that issued your passport or travel document**
- 21e. **Expiration date of your passport or travel document**
22. **Date of Last Entry into the U.S.:** See most recent stamp in passport or I-94
23. **Place of Last Entry into the U.S.:** U.S. city applicant went through U.S. port of entry. See most recent stamp in passport or I-94
24. **Immigration Status at Last Entry:** See most recent stamp in passport or Form I-94. (F-1 Student, B-2 Visitor, etc.)
25. **Current Immigration Status:** See most recent stamp in passport or Form I-94. (F-1 Student, etc.)
26. **SEVIS Number:** (top of your I-20, usually starts with N00 ...)
27. **Eligibility Category:** The eligibility category for ...
Post-Completion STEM Optional Practical Training is: (c) (3) (C)
28. Fill in Degree and Major, E-Verify Employer’s Name, and E-Verify Company ID Number
- 29-31b. Write N/A or None where relevant

Part 3

- 1a-2. **Applicant’s Statement:** Check box 1a.
3. **Telephone Number**
4. **Mobile Phone Number:** (If any)

5. Email Address

6. Leave Blank

7a-7b. Read Statement and Applicant’s Declaration and Certification, then Sign and Date. Signature must be less than 30 days old when USCIS receives your Application. Write exactly between the lines. Try not to cross the lines above or below when you write your signature. Use black ink to sign.

Part 4

Write N/A or None

Part 5

Write N/A or None

Part 6

Complete this section only if:

You have been approved for CPT in the past.

You have been approved for OPT in the past (all STEM OPT applicants have).

You have used a different SEVIS ID in the past. (i.e. you took a break from school and returned on a new I-20) your SEVIS ID is on the top of your I-20 and starts with N00.

There are no USCIS instructions on how to complete this section with this information, we suggest starting with the following:

1a-c Legal name

2 A number (if any)

For each of the items listed above (CPT, OPT, different SEVIS ID#) complete one section in Part 6.

- **CPT** pg 3 Part 2 Number 27 (there is no section on the I-765 that corresponds to the information, so this is a guess)
 - CPT Authorizations
 - CPT start and end dates, part time or full-time, degree level (e.g. Bachelor’s, Master’s, Doctoral), SEVIS Number
- **OPT** pg 3 Part 2 Number 27
 - OPT Authorizations
 - OPT start and end dates, part-time or full-time, degree level (e.g. Bachelor’s, Master’s, Doctoral), SEVIS Number
- **Multiple SEVIS IDs** pg 3 Part 2 Number 26
 - Previous SEVIS IDs
 - SEVIS ID# N00..., program start date – program end date, degree level (e.g. Bachelor’s, Master’s, Doctoral)

Mail all of the materials for your application to USCIS. The address the materials are sent to depends on how the materials are sent (using USPS or an Express mail service like FedEx). (See “Step 2” on this STEM OPT application form)