Optional Practical Training Extension

During the initial period of 12 months of Optional Practical Training (OPT), certain government-designated STEM degree-holders (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) may be eligible for an additional 17 months of OPT, for a total of 29 months.

The degree programs that qualify for a STEM extension are listed at [here](#). Note that the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code is printed next to “Primary Major” under the student name on page 3 of the I-20.

**Requirements for 17-month STEM extensions:**
- Student must be currently participating in a 12-month period of OPT and working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to the student's major area of study.
- Student must have successfully completed a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in a field on the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List.
- Student must have a job or job offer from an employer registered with the E-Verify employment verification system. ([E-Verify information](http://www.uscis.gov/E-Verify))
- Student has not previously received a 17-month OPT extension
- ISO must recommend the 17-month OPT extension in SEVIS, after verifying a student's eligibility, certifying that the student's degree is on the STEM Designated Degree Program List, and ensuring that the student is aware of his or her responsibilities for maintaining status while on OPT.
- Student must apply for the 17-month extension on Form I-765 with fee. Students who timely file an application for the 17-month 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, whichever comes first.
- Employer must agree to report the termination or departure of the student to the ISO by email to [jmmartisek@saumag.edu](mailto:jmmartisek@saumag.edu). An employer must consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left employment, or if the student has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the employer's consent.

**Reporting Requirements of STEM Extension**

Report to ISO within 10 days of any change of:
- Legal name
- Residential or mailing address
- Employer name
- Employer address, and/or
- Interruption or loss of employment

Make a validation report to ISO **every six months** while on 17 month OPT extension when:
- the student's F-1 status ends
- the student changes educational levels at the same school
- the student transfers to another school, OR
- the 17 month OPT extension ends, whichever occurs first

The validation reporting is a confirmation that the student's name and address, employer name and address, and/or loss of employment are current and accurate.

**Travel Issues while on STEM Extension**

Required documents to re-enter the U.S. while on STEM extension:
- STEM extension OPT I-20 with page 3 endorsed for travel; travel endorsement cannot be more than 6 months old
- Valid F-1 visa stamp
- Valid passport
- STEM Extension EAD card
- Job offer letter or statement of employment from company

*Remember it is risky to travel abroad while on OPT*
How to Apply for your OTP Extension:

Step 1
Submit the following to Jason Martisek (by email, mail, or in person):
• Name and address of current employer
• Name and contact information of your supervisor
• Your email address
• Your updated local address
• Completed I-765 form
Please allow a few days for processing. He will issue a new I-20 with a recommendation for the OPT extension and will mail it back to you at the updated local address provided.

I-765 Instructions:
Put the information in the numbered blanks on the form. It MUST be typed.

I am applying for: check "Renewal of my permission to accept employment"

1. Family Name in all CAPITAL LETTERS, followed by your first and middle name in regular print
   (Example: MARTISEK, Jason)
2-3. Your mailing address (make sure it’s an address that will not change soon)
4-10. Personal information
11. Have you ever received an EAD card before? If yes, provide info for all previous EAD cards:
    a. Which USCIS Office: Texas Service Center
    b. Dates: OPT start date on EAD card
    c. Results: Granted
12. On current I-94, look at the date you arrived in the US
13. On current I-94, where (city) did you enter the US
14-15. Fill in “Student”
16. Eligibility category is (c)(3)(C) {small c, number 3, capital C}
17. List your degree and major as it appears on page 3 of your I-20, and your employer's name and number as listed in the government's E-verify program

"Your Certification" Section
Put your phone number and date

Step 2
Once you receive your new I-20 sign it on page 1. Next you need to prepare your application package.

Checklist for the application package to USCIS

☐ I-765 Application

☐ Required I-765 fee of $380, payable to “US Department of Homeland Security” by bank check, money order or personal check. Write "USCIS I-765" in the memo line of the check or money order. Please note that a money order is more difficult to track than a check, but faster to process than a check.

☐ Photocopy of I-94 card, front and back. If your last entry was after May 1, 2013, you must go to the electronic I-94 website to print out your most recent I-94 Admission Record. You will need to send a copy with your STEM OPT application.

☐ Photocopy of your current EAD card (both sides) and any previous EAD cards (if applicable)

☐ Photocopy of your most recent diploma that shows the degree name and the date awarded.
☐ Official or unofficial transcript as evidence that your program of study was in a government designated STEM field

☐ Two passport type photos taken within 30 days of filing the application that meet the requirements on the Department of State website. Write your name and I-94 number on the back of each photo

☐ Photocopy of page 1 and 3 of new I-20 recommending the STEM extension (sign it first).

☐ Photocopy of page 1 and 3 of previous OPT I-20s.

☐ Photocopy of the identification page(s) of your passport, including photo and expiration date.

☐ Statement from employer: on employer letterhead explaining how current job/position relates to your STEM major: Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics

MAKE A COPY OF ALL THESE DOCUMENTS. KEEP THESE COPIES WITH YOUR USCIS RECORDS; YOU MAY NEED THEM AGAIN.

SEND A SCANNED COPY OF THESE TO OUR OFFICE.

Step 3
Mail your application to the appropriate USCIS lockbox.

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Mail by certified U.S. mail. Application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date that appears on page 1 at item 10 (reflected on the signature line of your I-20).
2. Mail application to the USCIS Lockbox for the state you currently live in:

If you currently live in:

Mail your application to:
For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries: USCIS
P.O. Box 21281 Phoenix, AZ 85036

For Express Mail and Courier Deliveries:
USCIS, Attn: AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034

If you currently live in:
Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia

Mail your application to:
For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries: USCIS
P.O. Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266

For Express Mail and Courier Deliveries:
USCIS, Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business, Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067