

Optional Practical Training (OPT) STEM Extension

17 MONTH EXTENSION OF OPT FOR F-1 STUDENTS WITH A STEM DEGREE

Who is eligible for the STEM extension?

F-1 students who completed a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in a Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) field and are currently engaged in post-completion OPT may apply for the STEM extension if they have a job or job offer from an E-Verify employer. The job must be directly related to the student's major area of study. This benefit is limited to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) degree holders in the fields specified in the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) available online at [STEM Designated Degree Programs](#).

When does the student need to file for the extension?

The student must ensure the form I.765, additional supporting evidence, and the fee payment reaches the proper USCIS Service Center before his or her current OPT expires. USCIS recommends that students file within 90 and 120 days of the expiration date of the current OPT. If you reside outside of Louisville and are unable to meet with an advisor, we can help process all documentation through mail. Please allow an additional 2 weeks for this process.

Application Procedures

(1) Complete the form I-765 (mark the code (c)(3)(c) for STEM Extension – (Need completed original I-765 and one copy). Make sure you only put your LAST/SURNAME in caps and sign the document in BLUE ink.

NOTE: [I-765](#) can be obtained by visiting, <http://www.uscis.gov>.

Please do not submit I-765 payment or any part of your OPT via the internet. The OPT application should be processed with an International Advisor at the International Center. Please use the International Center's mailing address if you anticipate moving within the next three months. International Center, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292 on your I-765 form as immigration will not forward your mail.. Texas is the Service Center for Kentucky addresses. **Please remind the advisors if you reside in a state other than Kentucky because it will be necessary to file at a different Service Center.**

- (2) Complete "Request for Employment Authorization" form
- (3) Complete "OPT, Personal & Employer Information" form.
- (4) Complete the Reporting Requirement form.
- (5) Complete the Employment Agreement Form

(6) Obtain 2 Passport Style Photos – DO NOT CUT THE PHOTOS . Both photos must be identical. All photos must meet the specifications for full frontal/passport photos and must be no more than 30 days old when an application to filed. Print your name and I-94 number on the back of the each picture with either ink or pencil.

For more information on photo standards visit the Department for State Website at <http://travelstate.gov/passport/pptphotos/index.html> or contact the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.

(7) Make 2 copies of your passport photo/bio page and any renewals, visa page, I-94 card, previous EAD card, official/unofficial transcript and copy of the degree awarded to you.

(8) Form I-765 Required **Processing Fee**: A check/money order made payable to “Department of Homeland Security.” If paying fee via check, the check **must** have an address on the upper left hand corner – **do not** mark through the address even if incorrect.

NOTE: No academic advisor approval required to file for the STEM Extension.

Once you have completed everything, please call 852-6604 to schedule an appointment for processing of your application. Appointments are held every Wednesday at 2:00 pm. If you live out of state, the STEM process can be done but please add two additional weeks of processing time.

Be sure to make all necessary copies of the materials indicated above before coming to the workshop.

The International Student Advisor will review your application, enter the OPT request into SEVIS, and print a new I-20 with this endorsement. You will be given a new I-20 and the International Center will keep a copy of the entire application on file. The International Center will send your application to immigration via regular mail for their review. If you choose to send the application certified, the originals will be returned to you.

Please submit a copy of your new EAD card to the International Center once you receive it.