

STEM OPT I-20 Request

STEM OPT extensions are available to students who have completed certain degrees. If your degree and your employment meet eligibility requirements you may apply for the STEM Extension. The application can be received by USCIS up to 90 days prior to the end date of your current OPT and MUST BE received before the end date of your current OPT. Follow the steps outlined below to complete your application.

Step 1: Verify your major's CIP Code (found on your I-20 under Major I) is on the STEM Designated Degree Program List at the following link: <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf>

Step 2: Check with your employer to ensure they are using the E-Verify system and obtain their E-Verify Number

Step 3: Request a new I-20 for STEM OPT Extension. Submit the following documents to ISSS either in paper or digital form (**allow up to 7 business days for ISSS processing**):

- Completed, typed and signed Form I-983 (completed by you and your employer)
- Completed, typed and signed Form I-765
- Completed, typed Form G-1145
- Latest I-94 record
- Photocopy of passport
- Photocopy of visa
- Photocopy of diploma
- Photocopy of current EAD card (both sides)
- Photocopy of current OPT I-20

Step 4: Receive the new I-20 with STEM OPT endorsement from ISSS; keep the original copy and make a photocopy for application mailing purposes. We recommend you make a phone appointment with an Immigration Coordinator to review the documents to be mailed.

Step 5: Write a personal check to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for \$410.00 and obtain two new U.S. passport-style photos to mail with your application documents.

Step 6: Mail your application materials to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox (Do not mail the I-983; send the copy of your new I-20 with all other materials mentioned above). Address information is found at the following link: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-information/uscis-phoenix-and-dallas-lockbox-facilities>

Note: If you meet STEM eligibility, you can work for 180 days post-OPT while your STEM application is pending

For assistance in completing the I-983 and understanding your responsibilities while on STEM OPT:
<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub>

USCIS webpage for OPT Extension for STEM Students:

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/stem-opt>

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STEM Reporting Information

You are required to fulfill all the requirements below while you are on STEM OPT to maintain your status. Please keep in touch with your DSO and email OPT@uwm.edu whenever you have questions.

REQUIREMENTS:

The list below is not all-encompassing; see page 3 or the following link for a full list of requirements: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/assets/sevpstemoptreportingrequirementsfinal.pdf>

Every six months:

Check in with ISSS to confirm your employment and current address

Self-Evaluations:

Submission of the Evaluations of Progress from the I-983 at the following benchmarks:
Upon completion of your first year of STEM OPT: Evaluation of Student Progress
Upon completion with any employer: Final Evaluation on Student Progress
Upon completion of your STEM OPT date: Final Evaluation on Student Progress

Changing Employers:

Your new employer must be enrolled in E-Verify before you begin your employment
Report your new employment and submit a Form I-983 for your new employment to ISSS within 10 days of starting the new practical training opportunity

Changes to your Training Plan:

Report to ISSS any relevant changes to or deviations from your formal training plan

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

Email Address Updates:

It is important to keep in communication with ISSS via email while you are on STEM OPT
If you discontinue use of your UWM email address or it is no longer valid, request to change your registered email address to your personal email account by sending an email to OPT@uwm.edu or contacting an Immigration Coordinator

SEVIS Portal:

Using SEVP portal is optional; if you choose to use the SEVP portal, you are still required to complete the same report via UWM's OPT reporting link:
<https://uwm.edu/cie/students-scholars/students/employment/opt-reporting/>
SEVP Portal assistance can be found at: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help>

STEM OPT HUB:

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub>

ISSS OPT Reporting Link:

<https://uwm.edu/cie/students-scholars/students/employment/opt-reporting/>

STEM Reporting Information

STEM OPT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

(Chart was taken from: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/assets/sevpstemoptreportingrequirementsfinal.pdf>)

ACTION	WHEN	STUDENT	EMPLOYER	DSO
Recommend STEM OPT for eligible students	No more than 60 days before student applies to USCIS for authorization			✓
Apply for STEM OPT	Before regular OPT ends	✓		
Complete and certify the Form I-983, "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students"	Before recommendation of extension for student	✓	✓	
Determine completeness and proper execution by student and employer of student's Form I-983, including confirmation that the form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains how training is directly related to the qualifying STEM degree Identifies goals for student, including knowledge, skills, techniques and explains how the goals will be achieved Describes the evaluation process for student Describes methods of oversight and supervision generally applicable to students 	Before recommendation of extension for student			✓
Certify student's degree, as shown in SEVIS or on official transcripts, is of a proper educational level and has a degree code included on the current STEM list	Before recommendation of extension for student			✓
Update student's SEVIS record with DSO recommendation	No more than 60 days before student applies to USCIS for employment authorization			✓
Keep and store the Form I-983 and self-evaluations in the student's record	Within 30 days of submission			✓
Provide validation report confirming name, address and employment information to DSO within 10 business days of the report due date	Every 6 months	✓		
Complete and sign student's self-evaluation	Annually, or when requested	✓	✓	
Report to student's DSO any material changes to or deviations from an existing Form I-983	As soon as possible	✓	✓	
Notify DSO and submit new Form I-983 upon change of employer or start of a new practical training opportunity	Within 10 days	✓		
Report a change of student's legal name, residential or mailing address, employer name or address, and/or loss of employment to DSO	Within 10 days	✓		
Update student's record to reflect a change of name or address, or an interruption of employment * If student uses the SEVP Portal to update their information, the DSO is not required to update the student's record.	Immediately after student reports a change			✓
Report the termination of student's practical training to DSO	Within 5 business days		✓	
Report student's departure (i.e., having the knowledge of student leaving the training opportunity or when student fails to report for the training for five consecutive business days)	Within 5 business days of knowing		✓	
Report noncompliance to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security	As soon as possible	✓	✓	✓