24 Month STEM Optional Practical Training (OPT) Tutorial
Please note that this tutorial is for instructional purposes only.

An OPT STEM application to USCIS is your own personal application. You alone are responsible for timely filing with full documentation, understanding F-1 rules regarding OPT STEM Extension, and properly maintaining F-1 status.

Please review the entire tutorial and ask your International Student adviser if you have questions.
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Frequently Asked Questions
Eligibility Requirements

- Must have a degree in an eligible STEM field from a Student and Exchange Visitor Program certified school that is accredited at the time the student submit the STEM OPT extension application to USCIS. See [this list of STEM Majors](#) (You can check the CIP code listed on your I-20)

- Must be an F-1 student, currently enrolled in a period of Post-Completion OPT

- Have a sponsoring employer, related to your field of study, that is enrolled in the E-Verify employment eligibility verification program. Employer must be able to complete the form I-983 and abide by all employer obligations, including Department of Homeland Security Site Visits.

- A student may participate only twice in STEM OPT extension. To participate twice in the STEM OPT extension, a student must earn a second qualifying degree at a higher education level

- In some cases, a student may be eligible to use a prior STEM degree to qualify for a second STEM OPT extension

- You are applying no more than 90 days before your 12 month OPT expires and no later than the expiration date of your 12 month OPT
Types of Allowable Employment

- Volunteer/Unpaid positions and self employment are NOT allowed by the 24-Month STEM OPT Extension.
- STEM-eligible employers must have e-Verify & EIN numbers and the student must have a "bona fide employer-employee relationship". To establish a bona fide relationship, the employer may not be the student’s “employer” in name only.

According to USCIS updates August 2018:

- Under no circumstances would another F-1 student on OPT or a STEM OPT Extension be qualified to train another F-1 student on a STEM OPT Extension.
- The employer that signs the Form I-983 must be the same entity that provides the practical training experience to the student.
- The employer has sufficient resources and personnel available to provide appropriate training in connection with the STEM opportunity at the location(s) specified in the Form I-983.
- The “personnel” who provide/supervise the training experience may be either employees of the employer, or contractors who the employer has directly retained to provide services to the employer; they may not be employees or contractors of the employer’s clients or customers.
- DHS will review on a case-by-case basis whether the student will be a bona fide employee of the employer signing the Training Plan, and verify that the employer that signs the Training Plan is the same entity that employs the student and provides the practical training experience.
Staffing and temporary agencies may employ students under the STEM OPT program, but only if they will be the entity that provides the practical training experience to the student and they have and maintain a bona fide employer-employee relationship with the student.

STEM OPT participants may engage in a training experience that takes place at a site other than the employer's principal place of business as long as all of the training obligations are met, including that the employer has and maintains a bona fide employer-employee relationship with the student.

A STEM OPT employer may not assign, or otherwise delegate, its training responsibilities to a non-employer third party (e.g., a client/customer of the employer, employees of the client/customer, or contractors of the client/customer).

According to prior guidance from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, if a student uses a temporary or staffing agency to place them in a training opportunity, the agency cannot complete and sign the Form I-983, "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students." Only the E-verified employer that provides the actual training relevant to the student's qualifying STEM degree is authorized to sign and complete the Form I-983.
Unemployment During STEM OPT

- As long as you have submitted a timely filed STEM application to USCIS, you can continue working for up to 180 days after the expiration of your original OPT EAD while you wait for the STEM EAP approval.
- During 12-month OPT you have a maximum of 90 days of unemployment over the 12 month period. During the STEM period you are allowed an additional 60 days of unemployment.
- Starting from the first date of your STEM OPT period, the total allowed unemployment days extends to a maximum of 150 days of unemployment during the entire OPT/STEM period, beginning from the start of your original OPT EAD card.
- This is NOT just 150 days at the beginning of OPT or STEM. You are only allowed 150 total days over the entire 3 years.
- If you exceed 90 days of unemployment during your original 12-month OPT you are not eligible to apply for the STEM OPT Extension.


You used 60 days of unemployment during your 12 month OPT period from Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2020. Your STEM period begins on Jan. 1, 2021. You continue your work after Jan. 1, 2021 with Company A. On March 1, 2021 you end your job with Company A. You later apply for a new STEM I-20 authorization for a job with Company B that begins on April 30. You have used another 60 days of unemployment, for a total of 120. You now have only 30 more days of unemployment remaining for the rest of your STEM period until December 31, 2022.
Warning! Increased OPT/STEM OPT Scrutiny by DHS

- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has recently applied increased scrutiny to the OPT and STEM OPT programs, resulting in recent arrests for students who reported fraudulent employment with non-existent employers or false employment information.
- Falsifying your OPT employment records or reporting employment that is not legitimate may result in serious repercussions.
- SEVIS may also automatically terminate F-1 records for students who have more than 90 days of unemployment.
- During the STEM period, DHS has the right to conduct a site which is part of the agreements included on the I-983
The Application Process
When to Apply

- You may apply as early as 90 days before your OPT EAD end date.
- USCIS must receive your application before the expiration date of your OPT* or within 60 days of the STEM OPT request being made in SEVIS, whichever is sooner. Check your OPT EAD card for the expiration.
- USCIS processing ranges from 3-5 months, with an observed average of 90-120 days. See current USCIS processing times for Form“I-765” by clicking here.
- If you are applying for an OPT STEM Extension at the same time you are filing for an H1B employment visa you MUST review both the H-1B & STEM Extension information at the end of this tutorial and the Cap-Gap webpage.

IMPORTANT! * Your OPT employment authorization will be automatically extended for 180 days after your OPT EAD end date while your OPT STEM application is pending.
We recommend that you begin the application process 90 days before the expiration date of your 12 month OPT period.

1. Complete the I-983 with your employer

2. Submit the complete I-983 to OISSS for processing. OISSS will review it to ensure that the questions are answered according to the USCIS guidelines.

3. Receive the STEM OPT I-20’s from OISSS. You may pick them up from the office or arrange for them to be mailed back to you.

4. Prepare and mail your application materials to USCIS.

5. Processing time for the STEM OPT application is approximately 3-5 months. You may check your case status at uscis.gov, using your receipt number on the I-797A, Notice of Action. You may also review the USCIS processing times by clicking here.

6. Maintain your status while on STEM OPT by reporting changes to your address or contact information within 10 days to the SEVP Portal. 24 Month STEM Extension students must also submit a validation report every six months and training evaluations each 12 months. Your I20 travel endorsement is valid for only 6 months while on OPT STEM. Failure to provide timely updates may result in termination of the F-1 record.

Can I do anything about the long USCIS processing time?
There is nothing you can do about the USCIS processing time, other than to apply as early as possible!
Application Timeline

Several months ahead
- Prepare the I-983 with the sponsoring employer

3 months before OPT end date
- Submit I-983 to OISSS as early as 90 days before your OPT ends

Approximately 3 - 5 business days later
- Following review, STEM OPT I-20 processed by OISSS.

12 month OPT end date
- Last possible day for USCIS to receive the STEM OPT application

3 – 5 months later
- EAD card received; send a copy to OISSS for I-20 issuance

You may continue to work on OPT for up to 180 days after your OPT expiration date while STEM OPT is pending with USCIS
OPT Extension Acknowledgment Form

Complete, Sign and Date OPT Extension Acknowledgment Form
Step 1: Complete I-983 Form

The formal training plan must clearly articulate the STEM OPT learning objectives and affirm the employer’s commitment to helping you achieve those objectives. To fulfill this requirement, you and your employer must complete and sign the I-983 Form, and submit pages 1-4 to OISSS.
Signatures on the I-983 During COVID

- During COVID-19 shelter in place restrictions, OISSS can accept your and your employer’s e-signatures on the I-983.
- Acceptable e-signatures include Adobe Docu-signatures, Apple Pen signatures and handwritten signatures that have been scanned and pasted into the signature field.
- OISSS CANNOT accept an I-983 where a person’s name has simply been typed into the signature line.

This exception applies only to the I-983. It does not apply to the I-765. The I-765 must be printed and then signed and dated by hand in black ink. USCIS does not accept any sort of e-signature on this document and has rejected application that include e-signatures.
Section 1: Student Information

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Optional Practical Training (OPT)

You will include the information for the DSO recommending your STEM OPT. This may be:

Maribel Morua
212-650-8106
Mmorua@ccny.cuny.edu

OR

Angelique Cordero
212-650-8106
Acordero@ccny.cuny.edu

Use the CCNY School code found here, even if your STEM degree is from a different school.

DSO Name, phone number and email address

NYC214F00812005

Found on page 1 of your I-20

One day after current EAD card ends

24 Months from STEM OPT Start date
Section 1: Student Information Cont’d

CIP Code is a 6 digit code (XX.XXXX) found on page 1 of your I-20. Located under “Major 1”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code:</th>
<th>Example: Computer Science, 11.0701</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level/Type of Qualifying Degree:</td>
<td>Indicate Bachelors, Masters or PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Awarded (mm-dd-yyyy):</td>
<td>Graduation Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on Prior Degree?</td>
<td>Yes [X] No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Authorization Number:</td>
<td>USCIS # as listed on your 12 month OPT EAD card</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What are CIP Codes?** Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes are published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) & are used by SEVIS to designate a student’s major. Your CIP code determines whether your major has been designated as a STEM degree.
Step 1: Complete I-983 Form

For a detailed tutorial on completing the rest of the I-983, visit: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview

Pages 3-4 contain the details of the required Training Plan to be determined by you and your employer. To avoid rejection of your application, think carefully about each question and answer fully and completely. Imagine this is an essay exam to be graded - have you and your employer addressed all parts of each question, clearly and specifically? See the following slides for more details.

Other points for consideration:
• We do not accept electronic signatures on the I-983. Please obtain handwritten signatures.
• Please ensure all responses are visible and legible. Handwritten I-983 forms are accepted and the DSO must be able to read it in order to approve the training plan.
I-983 Section 5: Training Plan

**Student Role:** Describe the student’s role with the employer and how that role is directly related to enhancing the student’s knowledge obtained through his or her qualifying STEM degree.

*(What you plan to learn)*
The employer should clearly describe the tasks and assignments that you will be carrying out during the training and how they relate to the student’s STEM degree. This plan must provide an approximate timeline of the tasks and the goals and expected learning outcomes of those tasks.

**Goals and Objectives:** Describe how the assignment(s) with the employer will help the student achieve his or her specific objectives for work-based learning related to his or her STEM degree. The description must both specify the student’s goals regarding specific knowledge, skills, or techniques as well as the means by which they will be achieved.

*(How you plan to learn it)*
The employer should clearly describe the specific skills that you will develop as well as the knowledge and techniques that you are expected to learn from the tasks. It should include how the tasks will help you develop the skills, learn the techniques and gain knowledge, pertinent to the STEM degree. Please include an approximate timeline of what the student should learn and by when.
Employer Oversight: Explain how the employer provides oversight and supervision of individuals filling positions such as that being filled by the named F-1 student. If the employer has a training program or related policy in place that controls such oversight and supervision, please describe.

The employer will explain how they will go about supervising you, this is to be explained generally of the organization, (how does the employer supervise anyone in the position that you will be filling). If the employer has a training program or specific policies, example reporting on tasks etc. Detailing these procedures and/or policies will suffice for this section.

Measures and Assessments: Explain how the employer measures and confirms whether individuals filling positions such as that being filled by the named F-1 student are acquiring new knowledge and skills. If the employer has a training program or related policy in place that controls such measures and assessments, please describe.

Here the employer will explain how they intend to evaluate your work and how they judge your degree of success or failure. Similarly, to the oversight section, if the organization has a training program or specific policies in place that controls such measures and assessments, a description of these procedures and/or policies will suffice for this section.
Step 2: Submit to OISSS

Submit the completed OPT Extension Acknowledgement Form and I-983 to OISSS. This can be sent via email or in person.

• Your DSO will review the documents and contact you with any necessary revisions, questions or concerns.

• Once the training plan is approved, the OPT extension will be requested in SEVIS on your behalf. New I-20’s will be generated as a result.
  • This can take 3-5 business for processing

• You will be contacted to pick up your I-20’s with the STEM OPT request

• Check your I-20 for accuracy

* Please note that the I-983 form and OPT Extension Acknowledgement form will not be submitted to USCIS as a part of the final application. These will remain in the office and can be requested by the Department of Homeland Security at any time.
Step 3: Prepare & Mail Your Application Materials
This tutorial provides instructions for submitting the STEM OPT application by mail. USCIS has recently made the I-765 form and STEM OPT applications available for e-filing. See the USCIS e-filing website for more information.

What is e-filing?
USCIS e-filing allows you to:
• Create a USCIS account
• Pay the USCIS I-765 fee online
• Complete the I-765 form online and upload documents

USCIS will send all notifications to you via your online account. These include pending notices, requests for evidence, denials and approvals. USCIS will also send you these notices in paper form through the mail.
NEW! Online STEM OPT Filing Option

**Pros of filing online**

- Lower risk of rejection due to payment issues, mistakes in filling out the application or forgotten documents
- Application moves to adjudicator faster than a paper application would
- No risk of your application documents lost in the mail, or mail delays
- Immediate receipt number
- You can receive and respond to requests for evidence or other problems online
- You can communicate with USCIS via your online account
- Students filing recently have reported no major problems and found the online process easy to understand

**Cons of filing online**

- OISSSS is not able to provide advising on the exact process, since we are not able to directly access the online application. (The questions in the online form should be similar to the paper I-765, so you can use this tutorial as a rough guide.)
- If you submit the I-765, and application fee, online BEFORE you receive your OPT I-20, your application will be DENIED. Don’t finish the I-765 until you have the OPT I-20.

**Should I file my OPT application online?**

The online option is simpler and has less risks than filing by mail. But, OISSS isn’t able to provide high levels of support in reviewing your application. If you encounter problems, check with OISSS and we will do our best to direct you to resources for support. The USCIS Ombudsman has a [helpful website](https://www.uscis.gov/ombudsman) with a [detailed Q&A about I-765 e-filing](https://www.uscis.gov/ocr/digital-services-guidance) questions which may be helpful to you.
STEM OPT Extension Application Checklist

- Two passport sized photos
- Check or money order for $410 made out to US Department of Homeland Security
- I-765 Employment Application *(Typed)*
- **Original** STEM OPT requested I-20
- Copy of the identity page of your passport
- Copy of your F-1 visa
- Print out of your most recent I-94
- Copy of all of your CCNY I-20's
- Copy of the EAD card from your previously granted OPT (front and back)
- Official transcript from CCNY OR a copy of your degree
- Offer letter from your sponsoring employer

If applicable:
- I-797 Notice of Action, if issued a change of status within the U.S.
- Copy of all I-20's from previous schools attended in the U.S.

*No documents required for F-2 dependents*
Preparing your documents

Passport Photo Requirements

The photos required to use for the OPT application must meet the specifications of U.S. style passport photos. To see a full description of these specifications, go to the U.S. Department of State website.

- Submit 2 identical color passport photos taken within 30 days of filing your application. The photos must have a white to off-white background, be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish, and be unmounted and unretouched. The passport-style photos must be 2” by 2”. You must remove your glasses and your head must be bare unless you are wearing headwear as required by a religious order of which you are a member.

- Using pencil or felt pen, lightly print your name and I-94 number on the back of the photo. Do not damage the photo surface by pressing hard while writing.
Preparing your documents

Check or Money Order:

USCIS Payment Methods: Check or Money Order Payment for $410.

Check/Money Order should be made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" with SEVIS number in the memo line. Money orders can be purchased at banks, post office, and some local grocery stores. Make sure a name and address are printed on the check. If the address has changed, that is fine.
Preparing your documents

Form I-765

Download the I-765 form from the USCIS website. Important: Use the most current version. It is best to download it just before mailing the application since USCIS updates it frequently.

How to fill out Form I-765

• Type or print legibly in black ink.
• Answer all questions fully and accurately.
• If a question does not apply to you, type or print “N/A”
• Print and complete ALL pages 1-7. If any pages are missing, your application will be rejected!

The following slides will help you complete the I-765 form and navigate the “tricky” questions.
Completing the I-765

**Top Portion:** Leave this section blank

**PART 1. Reason for Applying, pg. 1**
Check the “1.a.” box for “Initial Permission to accept employment.”
Completing the I-765

PART 2. Information About You, pg. 1

#1 Name
Please write your name exactly as it appears in the Surname/Family Name and Given Name fields on your I-20. Note your I-20 DOES NOT have the Middle Name field!

#2-4 Other Names Used
Enter your previous names, including nicknames you have used in official records or documentation. If your I-20 Preferred Name is different then the names you wrote for #1, include that here. If none, write “N/A”
Completing the I-765

PART 2. Information About You, pg. 2
U.S. Mailing Address
This is where you would like the Receipt Notice and the EAD card to be mailed. This is very important!

The address should be valid for at least 3-5 months, the length of time it will take to process the application. If you have plans to move during this time, use a reliable friend or family member’s address to receive the EAD (indicate this in #5.a.) It is also possible to use a P.O. Box for mailing addresses.

#5.a. If the mailing address belongs to someone other than yourself, put their full name (First Name Last Name) here. If this is your address, write “N/A.”

#5.b-5.e Write a valid mailing address in the U.S. It may be a residence, commercial address, or PO Box. You may not use CCNY’s address.

#6 If you listed a mailing address that is NOT your current physical living address, select “No” and complete #7.a-7.e with your current physical address. If “Yes”, write “N/A” in #7.a-7.e. Physical address should reflect where you actually live.

* If you live outside of NY, please pay attention to the special mailing instructions later in the tutorial.
Other Information

8. F-1 students do not have an A-Number, leave this blank.

9. F-1 students do not have a USCIS Online Account Number, leave this blank.

10-11. The responses to these questions should be straightforward. Please complete them accurately.

12. Check “Yes” since you have previously applied for an EAD. You will need to provide copies of your previous EADs.
Completing the I-765

PART 2, pg. 2, continued…

#13.a.-17.b. Social Security Number (SSN)

#13.a.-13.b. You will already have an SSN from your previous OPT. Check “Yes” and enter your SSN with one letter in each box.

#14. Since you probably already have an SSN, you will not need to apply for one. Check “No” and leave questions #15-17 blank.

Check “Yes” if you need a replacement SSN card and complete #15-17.b

13.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?  
- Yes [X]  
- No  

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 13.a., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 13.a., provide the information requested in Item Number 13.b.

13.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known).

14. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? (You must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15., Consent for Disclosure, to receive a card.)

- Yes [X]  
- No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 14, skip to Part 2, Item Number 18.a. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 14, you must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 15.

15. Consent for Disclosure: I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.

- Yes [X]  
- No

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Numbers 14.- 15., provide the information requested in Item Numbers 16.a. - 17.b.

Father’s Name
Provide your father’s birth name.

16.a. Family Name
(First Name)

16.b. Given Name
(First Name)

Mother’s Name
Provide your mother’s birth name.

17.a. Family Name
(Last Name)

17.b. Given Name
(Last Name)

You should receive your Social Security card from SSA about 2 weeks after receiving your approved EAD from USCIS.
Completing the I-765

PART 2, pg. 2-3 continued…
The responses to these questions are straightforward. Please complete them accurately.

#18 Countries of Citizenship, pg. 2
List all as applicable (use Part 6 of the I-765 if needed) or write “N/A” in 18.b. if you do not have multiple citizenships.

#19-20 Place of Birth, pg. 3
List the name of the country as it was named when you were born, even if it's name has changed

Make sure your Date of Birth is in the correct format of MONTH - DAY - YEAR. (01/31/1998 not 31/01/1998)
Completing the I-765

PART 2, pg. 3 continued…
Information About Your Last Arrival

#21.a. I-94 Number
Use your current I-94 number. This is at the number found on the electronic I-94 record or on the top left corner of the paper Form I-94 card (see example)

#21.b-e. Passport Information
Enter the information directly from your passport; use the information of the passport you last used to enter the U.S. (**this should match the country on your I-20**)

#21.c. Travel Document
Write “N/A” here
Completing the I-765

PART 2, pg. 3, continued…

#22 Date of Last Entry into the U.S.
Your most recent entry date can be found on your passport admission stamp, electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card.

#23 Place of Last Arrival into the U.S.
Name of the Port of Entry city from your most recent entry. This information can be found on your passport admission stamp, travel history section of your electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card (usually as a code, i.e. “NYC” for New York City). If you drove across the border, write the name of the city where entered the U.S.

#24 Immigration Status at Last Entry
Status in which you entered the U.S. If you entered with an I-20 as a student, write “F-1 Student.”

#25 Current Immigration Status
Current status should be “F-1 Student.” If not, talk to an OISSS advisor, and this status should be reflected in your current I-94.

#26 SEVIS ID
Your SEVIS ID appears on the top left side of your I-20 and starts with N00…
Completing the I-765

PART 2, pg. 3, continued…

Information about your Eligibility Category

#27 Eligibility Category
Use the code (c) (3) (C) for STEM OPT.

#28.a. Degree: Indicate here the name of your STEM-qualifying major.

Note that for some programs, the name of your Major differs from the way it appears on your I-20. This will be addressed in section 6 of the I-765.

You cannot qualify based on a minor.

#28.b. Employer’s Name: Your employer should be able to provide you with this information.

#28.c. E-Verify Number: Your employer should be able to provide you with this information.

For more information about the E-Verify program, see http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify
Completing the I-765

PART 2, pg. 3, continued...

#29-31.b Other Eligibility Categories
Write “N/A” in these fields or leave check boxes blank as they are not applicable to applying for STEM OPT.
Completing the I-765

PART 3. Applicant’s Statement, pg. 4

#1.a. Select 1.a. to indicate that you have read and understood the questions.

#3-6 Provide your information as requested

1.a. I can read and understand English, and I have read and understand every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question.

1.b. The interpreter named in Part 4, read to me every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question in a language in which I am fluent, and I understood everything.

2. At my request, the preparer named in Part 5, prepared this application for me based only upon information I provided or authorized.

3. Applicant’s Daytime Telephone Number

4. Applicant’s Mobile Telephone Number (if any)

5. Applicant’s Email Address (if any)

6. Select this box if you are a Salvadoran or Guatemalan national eligible for benefits under the ABC settlement agreement.
Completing the I-765

PART 3, pg. 4 continued…

Applicant's Declaration and Certification
Read the entire declaration carefully.

Applicant's Signature

#7.a.-7.b. Hand sign your name and provide the date of the signature.

Important!
Your signature will be scanned and must fit within the box. It must NOT touch the box outline. If the signature is too big and crosses a line, your application could be delayed. Be conservative and use a signature smaller than normal. Please see the example.

Troubleshooting Signature Line:
In some cases the “Don't forget to sign!” automatic reminder will not disappear when you print the form.

You should remove the auto filled “Don't forget to sign!”

We recommend trying:
• To open the form in the most recent version of Adobe Reader.
• To print a blank version of the form’s second page from your web browser.
Completing the I-765

PARTS 4 and 5, pgs. 4-6

These sections are not applicable to you, since you've completed the form yourself, so write “N/A.” This section is for those who use an interpreter or other paid preparer to complete the form.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 4. Interpreter's Contact Information, Certification, and Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter's Full Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.a. Interpreter's Family Name (Last Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.b. Interpreter's Given Name (First Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interpreter's Business or Organization Name (if any)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 5. Contact Information, Declaration, and Signature of the Person Preparing this Application, If Other Than the Applicant (continued)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparer's Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.a. I am not an attorney or accredited representative but have prepared this application on behalf of the applicant and with the applicant's consent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.b. I am an attorney or accredited representative and my representation of the applicant in this case extends does not extend beyond the preparation of this application.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparer's Certification</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By my signature, I certify, under penalty of perjury, that I prepared this application at the request of the applicant. The applicant then reviewed this completed application and informed me that he or she understands all of the information contained in, and submitted with, his or her application, including the Applicant's Declaration and Certification, and that all of this information is complete, true, and correct. I completed this application based only on information that the applicant provided to me or authorized me to obtain or use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 8.a. Preparer’s Signature |
| N/A |
| 8.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy) |
| N/A |
Completing the I-765

Page 7, Part 6 if you:
• have ever received CPT or OPT authorizations.

If this does not apply to you skip to the next slide.

PART 6, Additional Information, pg. 7

#1.a.-1.c. Provide your name again as listed in Part 2, 1.a-1.c.

#2. Leave blank

#3.a-3.c. Reference Pg. 3, Part 2, Item 27 (If you already used sections 3.a-3d use the next available section, 4a-d, etc.)
#3.d. Write details of your previous work authorizations. They should include the type of authorization (CPT, Post completion OPT, STEM OPT, etc.), part time or full time authorization, and the start and end dates.

#3.d. Include copies of all I-20’s and EAD cards related to the authorizations in the application.

Part time CPT authorization

Full time post completion OPT
6/1/2017 – 5/31/2018
(these are examples)
Completing the I-765

If you completed Page 7, Part 6

You must add your signature and the date to the page.

Sign and date in the blank space at the bottom of page 7.

Signature: July 3, 2019
Completing the I-765

Your I-765 form is complete.

Continue to gather the additional documents.
Gathering the Documents

Photocopy of passport and visa:

- Photocopy the passport biographic page (with photo and passport expiration date); passport must be valid 6 months into the future.
- Photocopy the F-1 visa, if applicable; visa does not need to be valid.
Gathering the Documents

Photocopy of current OPT EAD: (and previous STEM EADs if applicable)

- Include a copy of the front and back of the card.
- Include I-797 notice of approval if available.
Gathering the Documents

Photocopy of I-94 Information:

The I-94 can be either:

OR
• a paper I-94 card stapled into your passport. Include a copy of both sides, even though the back side may be blank.

OR
• a copy of an I-797 Change of Status Approval Notice which includes a new I-94.
Gathering the Documents

STEM OPT I-20:

- You will receive two original I-20's requesting the STEM OPT. One you will keep and the other will be sent with the full of the application. Both will have original signatures from the DSO.
- Sign the I-20 in the indicated section at the bottom of page 1 before sending.
- The STEM OPT request and start and end dates will appear on page 2
- Send the original I-20, not a photocopy.
Gathering the Documents

Photocopy of Diploma or Official Transcripts

Your diploma or official transcripts must show the major and degree level that makes you eligible for the STEM extension. Final Transcripts are preferred.

For information about obtaining your CCNY diploma if you do not have it, see: https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/registrar/diplomas

For information about ordering official transcripts see: https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/registrar/transcript-request
Gathering the Documents

Photocopy of all PREVIOUSLY ISSUED I-20’s (all pages):

- Include all pages of all of your previous CCNY I-20’s
- If you have attended other schools on your F-1 status, you MUST include I-20’s from those institutions as well
- If you have had previous work authorizations, the I-20’s with these authorizations are required
- COPIES OF THESE I-20’s, no originals
Gathering the Documents

Previous Degrees or Previous STEM Extensions

• If the OPT STEM Extension is based on a prior degree not listed on your current 12-Month OPT, you must also include a copy of your I-20 from the previous school.

• If you have previously had another STEM extension, you must include a copy of your previous STEM I-20.

• If the I-20 is not available, either request 1) a screenshot of your F-1 SEVIS record from the previous school OR 2) a letter from your previous international office stating your name, SEVIS ID, the dates of your attendance, and your STEM major and CIP code.
Submitting the Application

Application Deadline

USCIS must receive the OPT STEM application:

• No later than 60 days after the OPT STEM I-20 ISSUE DATE on page 1.
  • The issue date is located next to the advisor’s signature on page 1 of the OPT
    STEM I-20.
• No later than the end date of your current 12-month OPT as noted by your EAD.
  Please account for mailing time.
• If you have received a Cap-Gap Extension of your I-20, you must still submit your
  STEM application to USCIS before the expiration of your 12 month EAD
• You may apply up to 90 days before your current OPT end date.
• Track the status of your mailed application to be certain it was delivered on time.

Your application must be submitted to USCIS from within the U.S.
Submitting the Application

Shipping Options

Express mail (FedEx, UPS, etc.)
OR
U.S. Postal Service (USPS)

• Express mail allows for faster shipment but may be more expensive

• USPS is not as expensive but may take longer for delivery. You may want to consider using Express or Priority 1-2 day service and requesting certified/return receipt service to receive proof of delivery to USCIS

• Request tracking information for the chosen mailing method

Where to Mail Your Application

• Use the address of USCIS Service Center that corresponds to where you live

• You will use a different address depending on whether you choose Express Mail or USPS.

• See the next slide for USCIS Service Center mailing addresses
### Submitting the Application

#### USCIS Mailing Addresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Category</th>
<th>Filing Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT): (c)(3)(C), 24-month extension for an F-1 student who has received a degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) that appears on the STEM designated Degree Program List published on the SEVP website | **USCIS Chicago Lockbox**  
U.S. Postal Service (USPS)  
Attn: I-765 C03  
P.O. Box 805373  
Chicago, IL 60680-5374  
FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:  
USCIS  
Attn: I-765 C03 (Box 805373)  
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor  
Chicago, IL 60603-5517 |

https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses
Awaiting the EAD Card
Within 30 days of sending the STEM OPT application, you should receive the I-797 Notice of Action.

The I-797 is very important. If you lose the receipt, it may be very difficult to replace it.

The I-797 is necessary if you want to:
1) inquire about the status of your OPT STEM application
2) travel outside the U.S. while your OPT STEM is pending

Receipt Number
The case number for the STEM OPT application at USCIS. Check the status of the case on the USCIS web site at https://www.uscis.gov

Received Date
Date when USCIS begins processing the application. (It may not be the actual the application was received, but it is when the case was entered into the system.)
Application Problems

RFE: If there is a problem with your application, the USCIS may send you a notice by mail called a “Request for Evidence (RFE).” An RFE does not mean that your application has been rejected. It simply means that you need to send in additional documents before your EAD can be issued.

- Getting an RFE will delay the processing of your application.

Rejection/Denial: In some cases, if too many items are missing from your application, USCIS will return the entire application to you. If this happens, you must make the corrections and send the application before the end date of your 60-day grace period.

If you receive either one of these, contact OISSS IMMEDIATELY.
Average processing time at USCIS is 90 days/3 months. While waiting, keep these things in mind.

• Your F-1 status & employment authorization will be automatically extended for up to 180 days while your OPT STEM application is pending if the application was submitted prior to the OPT expiration. You may work during this time.

• A change in employment will require a new 24-Month STEM request AND a new I-983 with the new employer to be submitted to OISSS.

• You must work full time in your field of study while on your OPT STEM Extension.

• You may accumulate no more then 150 days of unemployment while on OPT STEM. This includes any time used during 12-month OPT.

• If you decide to return to school as a full-time student, you must request a transfer or a change of level from OISSS within 60 days of your EAD expiration date.

• Review card to make sure the information is accurate. If not, contact an OISSS advisor.

• Present your EAD to employers as proof of your legal work authorization in the US.

• The EAD is a required document for entry to the U.S. during STEM OPT.

• Email a copy of your EAD card to oisss@ccny.cuny.edu.
Avoid Immigration Scams

• It is very rare for USCIS or SEVP to contact you via phone regarding your application or your SEVIS record. Most notices from SEVP Portal are sent by email, and most notices from USCIS are sent via mail. They will generally never ask you for money.

• See USCIS’s website on how to avoid immigration scams, report fraud, and find authorized legal services.

• You can report immigration scams by contacting the FTC. Please visit the USCIS Avoid Scams Initiative website to learn more about avoiding immigration scams and reporting fraud.
Maintaining F-1 Status while on STEM OPT
Reporting Requirements

STEM OPT regulations require that you report your continued participation in STEM OPT every 6 months.

- The reports can be submitted through the google form on the OISSS website. It can be accessed by clicking here.

- 12 month and 24 month (final) report must be the self-evaluation from page 5 of the I-983. This must be signed by hand by you and your employer.

Here’s a tip: Check your STEM OPT start date and mark your calendar for each 6 month interval of your STEM Extension for your reporting deadlines. (Example: Your STEM Extension Starts January 1, 2017. You must submit 6 month validations on July 1, 2017, on January 1, 2018, on July 1 2018 and on Jan 1, 2019.)
Reporting Requirements

SEVP Portal Reporting Reminders

SEVIS SEVP Portal will also email you reminders regarding your 6 Month Validations and Annual Evaluations.

*Remember, you’ll do this reporting through the google form as well.*

- You can also check your reporting deadlines via the SEVP Portal.
Reporting Requirements – Making Changes

While on OPT STEM, you must update the CCNY Department of International Student & Scholar Services within 10 days of any changes to the following information:

- Your Name
- Your Residential Address
- Your Phone & Email Address
- Employer Name or Address
- Starting or Ending Employment
- Material changes to your I-983. A revised I-983 must be submitted to OISSS. These may include but are not limited to:
  - Change in employer address or supervisor.
  - Any change of the employer’s Employer Identification Number, (i.e., the company’s Federal Tax ID number) resulting from a change in the employer’s ownership or structure.
  - Any reduction in your compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked.
  - Any significant decrease in hours per week that you engage in a STEM training opportunity.
  - Changes to the employer’s commitments or your learning objectives as documented on the Form I-983.
- Date of departure from the U.S. if you leave prior to OPT STEM end date and want to end your OPT.
- Change of status to another visa category

Some of these may be made using the SEVP Portal, however employment updates and visa changes must be emailed to oisss@ccny.cuny.edu
If you change employers during your 24-month STEM OPT period, follow the instructions below. (If your STEM EAD has not yet been approved by USCIS, contact OISSS for more information.)

1. Confirm that the company is enrolled in E-verify. Any STEM OPT employer must be enrolled before you may begin your employment.
2. Prepare and submit a new I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT Students before your anticipated start date. OISSS must approve this plan before you may begin.
3. Submit a final evaluation (page 5 of the I-983) to OISSS to properly end your employment and training plan with the former employer. This must be signed by the former employer as well.
4. You will receive a new I-20 with the new employer information

The SEVP Portal does not allow STEM OPT students to make employment changes to their records. This must be done by a DSO at the Department of International Student & Scholar Services.
Traveling while on STEM OPT

Important Reminders

- Avoid long absences from the U.S. during the STEM OPT period. Time spent outside of the U.S. while unemployed by a U.S. employer counts toward your 90 days of unemployment.

- Attempting to re-enter the U.S. close to the expiration date of your OPT can be risky.

- You must not enter the U.S. in a status other than F-1. This may result in the loss of your OPT eligibility.

Travel While STEM OPT is Pending, But Before STEM OPT Card is Received

- There is a higher risk associated with travel and return while your STEM OPT is pending after the program completion date of your OPT EAD. If there are any problems with your application, you may not be able to respond to USCIS in a timely manner, which could delay processing of your EAD.

- If your STEM OPT application is denied while outside the U.S., and your original OPT EAD has expired, you will not be able to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status and will not be able to reapply.
Applying for F-1 Visa on STEM OPT

If you are traveling abroad and your F-1 visa has expired, you must obtain a new F-1 visa before returning to the U.S. When going to your visa interview, bring the documents below:

- Valid passport (at least 6 months in the future)
- Valid STEM I-20 with travel endorsement from a CCNY International Student Advisor within the past 6 months
- STEM EAD Card
- Proof of current STEM OPT employment (employer should match employer info listed on the I-20)
- Evidence of sufficient funds (e.g. a bank statement, a letter from a sponsor or a job offer letter)

Check the U.S. Department of State website for more information about getting a visa and specific requirements at the local embassy or consulate.
• You have a 60 day grace period following the end of your STEM OPT EAD.

• The only additional extension of OPT available is the OPT Cap-Gap Extension, for students who have an accepted cap-subject H-1B application.

• Failure to exit, continue your F-1 status, or timely request a Cap-Gap Extension or USCIS Change of Status will result in accrual of days of unlawful presence.

• If you receive an extension of your OPT, the grace period will begin after the end of the extension period.

If you do not extend your STEM OPT via the H1-B Cap-Gap, and your EAD expires, you have the following options before the end of the 60 days grace period:

• Exit the U.S. within 60 days.

• Continue your F-1 Status & Studies: Transfer your I-20 to continue studies at another school OR request a Change of Educational Level to begin new studies at CCNY.

• Work with immigration legal counsel regarding a Change of Status application to a new visa category. You will need to check with your legal counsel regarding your allowed period of stay or required exit date if you have a pending change of status when your grace period ends.
Can I file for an H1-B and a STEM Extension at the same time?
Yes, but filing these applications concurrently can sometimes cause complications in your SEVIS record. You can apply for an STEM OPT Extension before your OPT EAD expires. If you are planning to file for an H-1B and STEM at the same time, you should submit your STEM OPT application on time, before the original 12 month EAD expires. You should also be mindful to take extra steps when filing for your STEM OPT Extension and continuing your F-1 status:

• Before requesting a STEM I-20, check with your employer and the legal counsel working on your H-1B and confirm that your employer recommends that you file STEM/H-1B concurrently at this time.

• When submitting your STEM OPT Extension, include the STEM/Cap-Gap Letter if a Cap-Gap appears on your OPT STEM I-20.

• If no Cap-Gap currently appears on your I-20, but your employer has filed for the H-1B and your OPT expires before 9/30, include the STEM/H1B Letter.

• Update OISSS as soon as possible regarding any Withdrawal or Denial of your H-1B petition. These actions may have an impact on your SEVIS record, and an OISSS adviser will need to review the record to see if any corrections need to be made.

• If your H-1B is approved, the STEM OPT Extension (or pending STEM OPT Extension) will end on the date your H-1B becomes effective. Report the end of your OPT to OISSS. Your F-1 record will be completed after the effective date of your H-1B.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s):

Employment

What is considered full-time employment on the 24-month OPT STEM Extension? Students must work at least 20 hours per week for an E-Verify employer in a position directly related to the STEM degree, following the goals and objectives stated in the I-983 training plan. All employers must be authorized on the I-20 and in SEVIS.

I have two part-time jobs. One of the employers is enrolled in E-Verify but the other is not. Is this allowed? No, only full-time employment is allowed at your STEM-eligible E-Verify registered employer.

How many days of unemployment am I allowed while on the 24-month STEM OPT Extension? Students who receive a 24-month OPT STEM extension are given an additional 60 days of unemployment for a total of 150 days over their entire post-completion OPT period.

What counts as unemployment? Each day during the period when OPT authorization begins and ends that the student does not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment.

Can I continue to work while my 24-month STEM OPT Extension is pending? If a student’s EAD expires while the STEM Extension application is pending with USCIS, the student is authorized to work until USCIS makes a decision about the application, but not more than 180 days from the date the student’s initial OPT EAD expires.

What documents should I present to my employer once my 12-month OPT expires and my STEM OPT is pending? The student should present the employer with the expired EAD card, the form I-20 recommending the student for STEM OPT Extension, and proof of the timely filing with USCIS (STEM OPT I-797 receipt notice).

Can I change STEM employers after my STEM EAD is approved? Yes, see our OPT Reporting page for instructions on submitting a request to change employers. You should not start working before receiving authorization for the new employer.

Can I switch employers while my STEM OPT application is pending? Yes, but we do NOT recommend this. We recommend changing employers after the EAD is approved, if possible. Please contact OISSS for instructions regarding how to change employers while your application is pending.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s):
Travel & Re-entry

Can I travel outside the US during my approved OPT STEM period? Yes. However, if the student whose approved period of OPT has started travels outside of the U.S. while unemployed, the time spent outside the U.S. will count as unemployment against the 90/150-day limits. See the OPT Travel page for required documents.

If a student travels while employed either during a period of leave authorized by an employer or as part of their employment, the time spent outside the US will not count as unemployment.

Can I travel outside the U.S. while my 24-month STEM Extension OPT is pending? Yes*, travel while your OPT STEM application is pending is possible if you have a valid F-1 visa and STEM I-20 signed within the past 6 months. You should travel with a copy of your I-797 receipt notice and proof of your STEM employment. See the OPT Travel page for required documents.

* If your employer has filed for an H-1B for you, please discuss your travel plans with the legal counsel working on the H-1B request. OISSS advisers can advise on travel as an F-1, but we cannot advise on how the travel might impact your H-1B application.

Can I renew my visa while on STEM OPT? Yes, you are eligible to renew your visa while on STEM OPT. Remember, that you are still applying for an F-1 nonimmigrant visa, which means you must demonstrate ties to your home country. See Applying for a Visa for a complete list of documents and advice on renewing the visa during STEM OPT and feel free to discuss your concerns with an adviser. Be advised that you MUST have an approved STEM EAD to apply for a new visa.

What documents do I need to re-enter the U.S with approved STEM OPT?
If you are eligible for travel, you will need:
• A valid passport with an unexpired F-1 visa stamp (if applicable).
• Form I-20, signed on page 2 by an adviser at CCNY within the last 6 months.
• Unexpired EAD Card.
• Proof of employment (or employment offer).
For questions please contact:

oisss@ccny.cuny.edu
212-650-8106
Walk in hours: Monday – Thursday
9 am to 2 pm