



STEM OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EXTENSION (STEM OPT) FOR MIT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN F-1 IMMIGRATION STATUS



OVERVIEW

STEM OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EXTENSION (STEM OPT) OVERVIEW



STEM OPT EXTENSION – OVERVIEW

- The International Students Office (ISO) at MIT supports international students by providing immigration guidance, aiding in legal status upkeep, assisting with transitioning to the U.S., fostering global interactions, and advocating on behalf of the international student community.
- The *ISO STEM Optional Practical Training Extension (STEM OPT)* slides are **MANDATORY** for F-1 students seeking to remain inside the U.S. and continue their off-campus work/employment authorization in F-1 status **AFTER** the Post-Completion OPT end date listed on their Post-OPT EAD card.
- F-1 students who are currently in an active/approved period of Post-Completion OPT, and meet the STEM OPT Extension (STEM OPT) [requirements](#) can apply for an additional 24 months of [Optional Practical Training \(OPT\)](#) U.S. work/employment authorization with USCIS.

These slides are meant to inform F-1 students about STEM OPT Extension; covering application, and mandatory immigration/ISO tasks **REQUIRED** before, during, and after a student's STEM OPT Extension (STEM OPT) period.

- To apply for the STEM OPT Extension (STEM OPT), F-1 students **MUST** review the ISO *STEM Optional Practical Training Extension* slides and information on the ISO *F-1 STEM OPT Extension* [webpage](#) **BEFORE** their Post-Completion OPT expires and **BEFORE** they can submit a STEM OPT application to the ISO and USCIS. ***This is a prerequisite for obtaining the **REQUIRED** new STEM OPT Form I-20, needed for the STEM OPT application to [USCIS](#).***

When requesting a new Form I-20 via [iMIT](#), for STEM OPT, a student will be asked:

- The date the student attended an information session = Date the student finished reviewing the ISO *F-1 STEM OPT* slides and information on the ISO *F-1 STEM OPT Extension* [webpage](#).
- ISO Advisor Presenting Session = “ONLINE”
- Following a thorough review of the slides and website, if a student has any additional questions, they may visit the ISO Knowledge Base [webpage](#), the ISO Employment [webpage](#), or they can contact their [ISO Advisor](#) directly.



WHAT IS OPTIONAL PRACTICAL
TRAINING – “OPT”?

WHAT IS OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING – “OPT”?



What is OPT?

- OPT stands for “Optional Practical Training”, **which is a temporary form is U.S. work/employment authorization** for F-1 students who have completed at least one full academic year (two full academic terms) of full-time enrollment in a degree program.

What is the 24-Month STEM OPT Extension?

- The STEM OPT Extension is available to students in an active F-1 immigration status who have earned a Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctoral degree in a field listed on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) “[STEM-Designated Degree Program List](#)” and are currently engaged in a period of Post-Completion OPT.
- The STEM OPT Extension allows students the continuation of their “practical training” through work/employment directly related to their degree/major field of study as specified on their Form I-20.

PRE Completion OPT

- Before graduation.
- Job Offer **NOT** Required.
- Part-Time or Full-Time.

POST Completion OPT

- After graduation.
- Job Offer **NOT** Required.
- Full-Time **ONLY**.

STEM Extension OPT

- Occurs **AFTER** Post-Completion OPT, for [STEM-eligible students](#) **ONLY**.
- All work/employment during STEM OPT **MUST BE** full-time (i.e., 20.01+ hours a week).
- Job Offer **Required**.

WHAT IS OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING – “OPT”?



“How can I find out if my degree program is eligible for the STEM OPT Extension?”

Students can easily access this information by following three (3) simple steps:

1. Locate the “PROGRAM OF STUDY” section (box 3) on page 1 of their most recently issued Form I-20.
2. Find the “MAJOR 1” or “MAJOR 2” code (i.e., CIP Code) and its corresponding title located in the middle of box 3 on the Form I-20.
3. Visit the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [website](#) and review the “[STEM Designated Degree Program List](#)”, which lists all the degrees that are currently STEM-eligible.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

EDUCATION LEVEL

MASTER'S

PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Required

START OF CLASSES

05 SEPTEMBER 2023

MAJOR 1

Management Science 52.1301

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES

Student is proficient

PROGRAM START/END DATE

05 SEPTEMBER 2023 – 31 MAY 2024

MAJOR 2

None 00.0000

EARLIEST ADMISSION DATE

05 AUGUST 2023



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

A circular inset illustration on the left side of the slide. It shows a hand holding a blue pen, poised to check off a list on a clipboard. The clipboard has three red checkmarks and some horizontal lines representing text. The background of the illustration is white, and the entire scene is framed within a circular white area against a dark blue background.

Eligibility Criteria

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR STEM OPT
EXTENSION (STEM OPT)?**

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR STEM OPT EXTENSION (STEM OPT)?

The primary purpose of students in F-1 status should be to complete an educational objective; therefore, employment has specific restrictions to ensure a focus on study. Students **must not** pursue any work/employment (paid or unpaid) without **prior** authorization.

NOTE: Engaging in unauthorized work/employment would result in immediate **termination of F-1 status and mandatory departure from the U.S.**

ATTENTION

- **USCIS processing times are subject to variation and *can take up to 3-5 months for approval*. To ensure timely receipt of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD card), students should initiate their OPT applications *as early as possible*.**
- Up to two 24-month STEM OPT Extensions may be granted **per lifetime**, based on completion of an advanced degree level and approved post-OPT. For more information, Study in the States has launched the [STEM OPT Hub](#).

****NOTE: Students who file their STEM OPT application *on time* and their Post-OPT period expires while their STEM OPT application is pending, will automatically have their employment authorization [extended for 180 days](#).**

Eligibility Criteria

F-1 students are eligible to apply for the STEM OPT Extension if the student and their employer(s) meet all the below STEM OPT Extension [requirements](#):

1. The student is currently participating in a valid and active period of Post-Completion OPT.
2. The student has earned a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math) degree field, as listed on their Form I-20 and the DHS "[STEM-Designated Degree Program List](#)" – **OR** – for eligibility based on a previous STEM degree, the degree must have been earned within the last 10 years from an accredited institution in the U.S.
3. The student is/will be working in their degree field of study.
4. The student will be working full-time (20.01+ hours or more a week).
5. The student is or will be employed ([job offer required](#)) with an employer(s) who is registered in the [USCIS E-Verify Program](#). The employer(s) **MUST** participate in the USCIS E-Verify Program and have a valid "Employer Identification Number (EIN/Tax ID Number)".
6. The student **and** the employer(s) complete and sign the [Form I-983](#).
7. The student will be paid (at least the federal minimum wage or similar [compensation](#)).
8. The student will be trained by the employer and **NOT** [self-employed](#) (Form I-983).
9. The student has **NOT** exceeded more than 90 days of unemployment time during their current Post-Completion OPT authorization period.
10. The student has **NOT** previously received more than one STEM OPT Extension in total and has **NOT** yet received a STEM OPT extension under the current qualifying STEM degree.
11. The student is **WITHIN** 90 days of the end date listed on the student's current Post-Completion OPT EAD card **and** the student submits all required materials to the ISO **BEFORE** the expiration date listed on their currently approved Post-Completion EAD card.



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STEM OPT EXTENSION WORK/EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

STEM OPT STUDENT & EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

STEM OPT Student Responsibilities

Throughout the duration of STEM OPT, F-1 students are required to consistently fulfill all the following STEM OPT Extension requirements:

1. The student is/will always be working in their degree field of study for which the STEM OPT was authorized.
2. The student will be working full-time (20.01+ hours or more a week).
3. The student is or will be employed (job offer required) with an employer(s) who is registered in the [USCIS E-Verify Program](#). The employer(s) **MUST** participate in the USCIS E-Verify Program and have a valid "Employer Identification Number (EIN/Tax ID Number)".
4. The student and the employer(s) follow and continually update the completed and signed [Form I-983](#) Training Plan.
5. The student will be paid (at least the federal minimum wage or similar compensation) for all work/employment done during their STEM OPT period.
6. The student will be trained by the employer and **NOT** self-employed (Form I-983).
7. The student reports ANY personal and/or employer changes to the ISO (via iMIT) within 10 days of the change.
8. The student will always submit their required "[STEM OPT Extension Reports](#)" within 10 days of the required reporting date.
 - Including their Form I-983 "[Annual Self-Evaluations](#)" (page 5).

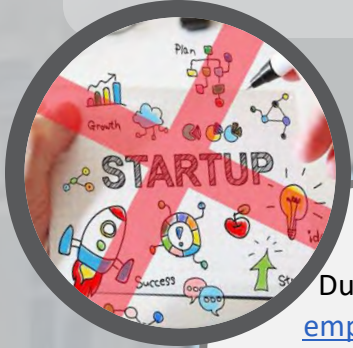
STEM OPT Employer Responsibilities

Throughout the duration of STEM OPT, the F-1 student's employer(s) are required to consistently fulfill all the following STEM OPT Extension requirements:

- The employer is enrolled in the [USCIS E-Verify Program](#) and remains in good standing for the student's entire STEM OPT duration.
- The employer completes and certifies the [Form I-983 Training Plan](#) for STEM OPT students. In the Form I-983, the employer must attest that:
 - They have enough resources and trained personnel available to appropriately train the F-1 student.
 - The student will not replace a full- or part-time, temporary, or permanent U.S. worker(s).
 - Working for the employer will help the student attain their OPT training objectives.
 - The employer will report material changes regarding the student's STEM OPT employment to the ISO (iso-help@mit.edu) within 10 business days of the change.
 - The employer will implement and maintain a formal training program to augment the student's academic learning throughout the OPT training period.
 - The employer will complete the Form I-983 "[Annual Self-Evaluations](#)" (page 5) with the student.
 - The employer will provide an OPT practical experience opportunity that is commensurate with those of similarly situated U.S. workers in duties, hours, and compensation.



STEM OPT EXTENSION WORK/EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS



Personal Start-Up/Self-Employment STEM OPT)

During an F-1 student's period of STEM OPT, they **MUST** be a "bona fide employee" of the employer completing the Form I-983.

- The employer signing Form I-983 must be the same entity to employ you and provide the practical training experience required by Form I-983.
- Multiple employer arrangements, sole proprietorships, employment through "temp" agencies, employment through consulting firm arrangements that provide labor for hire, and other relationships **that do not constitute a bona fide employer/employee relationship are generally not supported.**
- ****Volunteer, unpaid positions, and self-employment are NOT allowed during the 24-Month OPT STEM Extension (see next slide).**
- Students will be trained by the employer and not self-employed (Form I-983).
- Working on a personal start-up/self-employment during STEM OPT is problematic. As DHS has clarified, "F-1 students cannot qualify for STEM OPT extensions unless they will be bona fide employees of the employer signing the Form I-983 because F-1 students may not provide employer attestations on their own behalf. However, STEM OPT applicants can participate in a start-up or small business so long as all regulatory requirements are met. The employer that signs the Training Plan must be the same entity that employs the student and provides the practical training experience. These requirements mandate that the company remains in good standing with E-Verify and has the resources to comply with the proposed training plan."

Additional information:

- DHS [Start-Up Guidance](#)
- Study in the States [website](#)

Limited Unemployment Time (STEM OPT)

During STEM OPT Extension **cannot** exceed more than **150 days of unemployment time**. To do so is considered a violation of F-1 status by USDHS and you must leave the U.S.

- The 150 days are combined from your 12-month Post-Completion OPT (90 days), and 24-month STEM OPT (60 days) periods
 - e.g., If you used 30 days of unemployment time during Post-Completion OPT, then you have 60 days remaining + the additional 60 days of unemployment time once your STEM OPT application is approved by USCIS for a total of 120 days.
- It is your responsibility to keep track of your unemployment days.

Unemployment time is defined as each calendar day that the student is not employed in qualifying employment:

- If employment does not start on the OPT-approved start date on EAD.
- If you receive the EAD after the OPT approved start date on EAD.
- Between periods of employment.
- Includes weekends.

ATTENTION

Remember, once USCIS approves STEM OPT, the benefit is considered used, even if a student **does not** utilize the full STEM OPT allotted time/benefit.



STEM OPT EXTENSION WORK/EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS



What Is Volunteering?

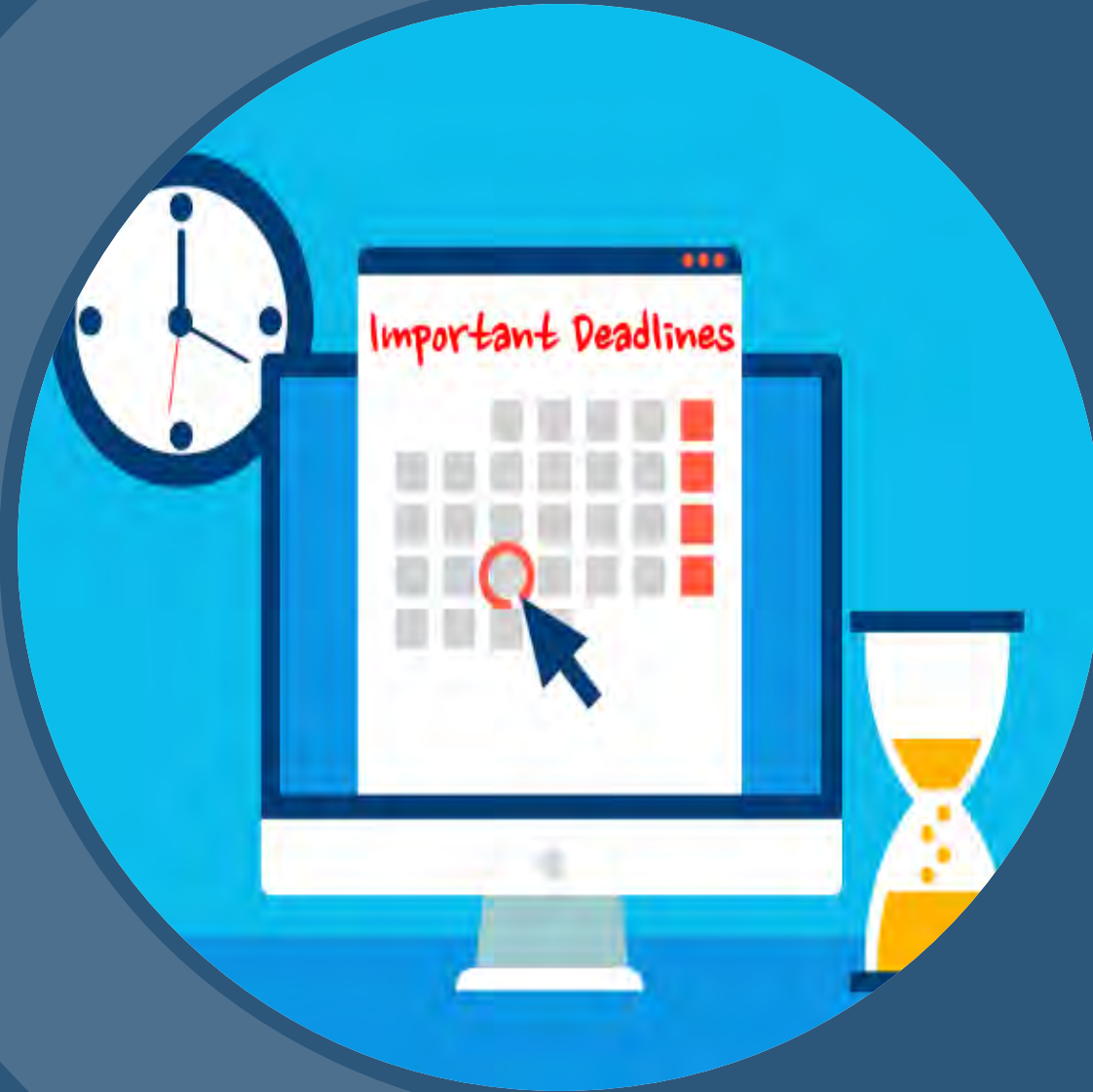
- “**VOLUNTEERING**” is defined as [[DOL 553.103](#) / [Fair Labor Standards Act](#)], “Any service for a public agency for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons”, such as:
 - Church, Synagogue, Mosque, Temple or similar religious entity.
 - Soup kitchen, homeless shelter, registered in an established volunteer program at a hospital, etc.
 - Community service activity through an MIT student club/organization.



*What Is **NOT** Volunteering?*

- Unpaid internship(s).
- Refusing payment for work done.
- Doing the work/employment related-activity and getting paid once authorization has been approved, etc.
- Doing work with a start-up “project” that is not incorporated.

****If the work/employment is classified as ‘[volunteering](#)’, then students need a letter from the hosting organization outlining dates, location, and confirming absence of compensation or benefits.****



IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES FOR STEM OPT EXTENSION

WHEN TO APPLY FOR THE STEM OPT EXTENSION?

IMPORTANT DATES, DEADLINES, & EXAMPLES

90 Days Before
Current Post-
Completion OPT
EAD Card Expires

STEM OPT
Extension
Start Date

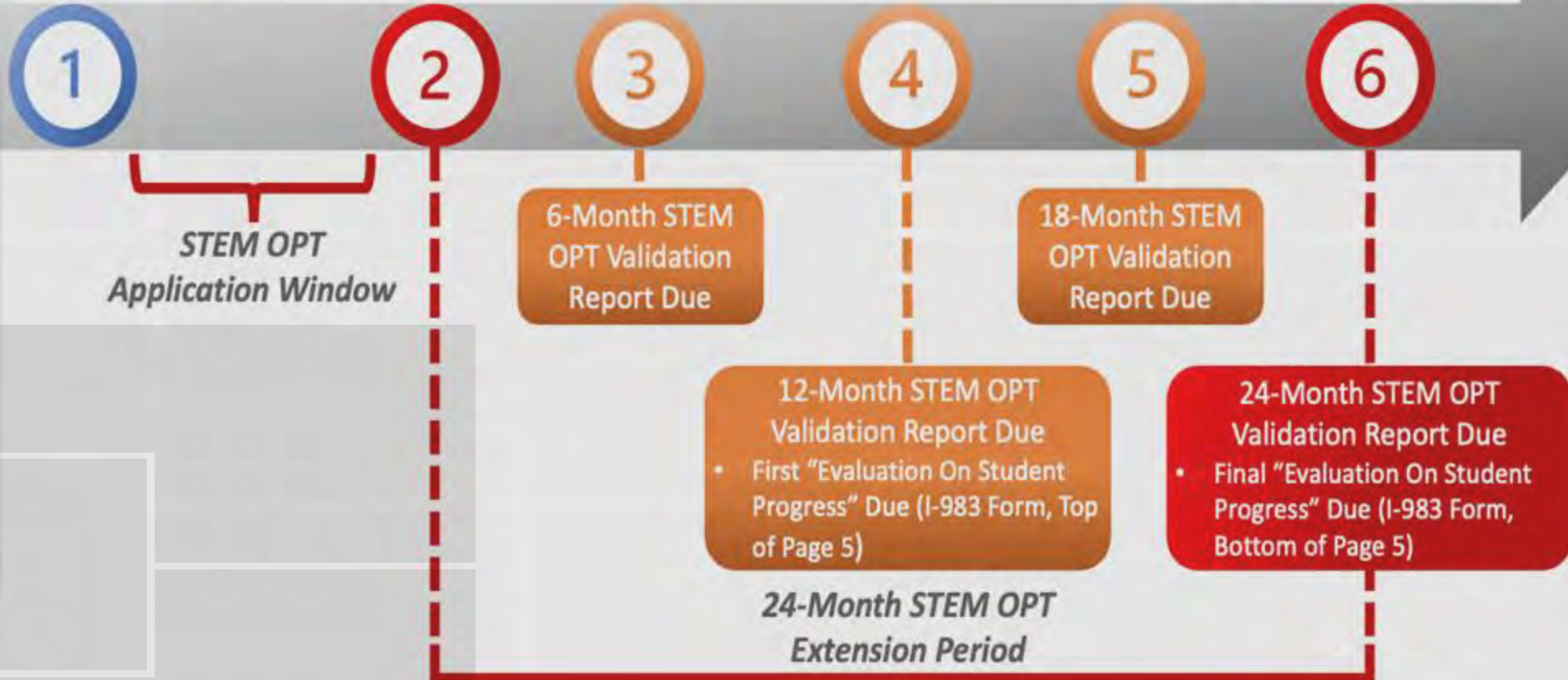
90 Days Before
Current Post-
Completion OPT
EAD Card Expires

USCIS can **ONLY** receive a STEM OPT application

- **AFTER** a student has received a new STEM OPT Form I-20 from the ISO.
- **BEFORE** the end date listed on their Post-Completion OPT EAD card.
- **No earlier than 90 days BEFORE** the student's current Post-Completion OPT EAD card expiry date.
- **No later than 59 days AFTER** the date that the STEM Extension Form I-20 is issued by the ISO.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Submission **AFTER** the EAD card end date = **DENIAL!**
- Students **MUST BE** physically present within the U.S. when USCIS receives their OPT application.
- Students can calculate the earliest date using timeanddate.com.



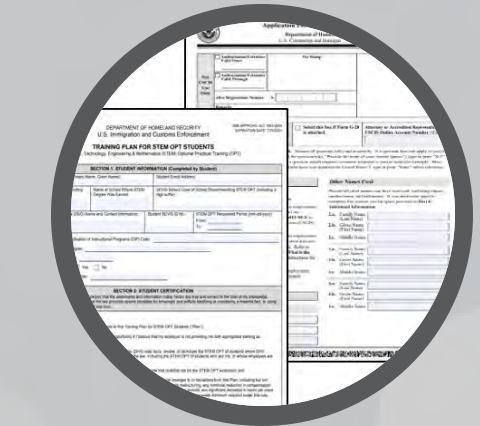
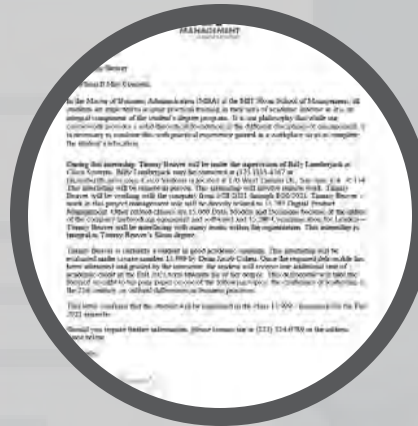
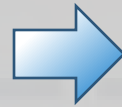
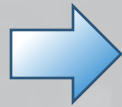
ATTENTION: Students have STEM OPT Reporting Requirements to the ISO/DHS **every 6 months** from the start date of their STEM OPT period (i.e., the day after their Post-Completion OPT EAD card end date). **Set Calendar Reminders NOW!**



**WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO OBTAIN
STEM OPT AUTHORIZATION?**



DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR A STEM OPT REQUEST TO IMIT



MIT ADMINISTRATIVE FEE

- \$200 MIT Administrative Fee for STEM OPT extension, paid by credit card, [online](#) (save PDF of payment receipt).

COPIES OF CURRENT STATUS

- Copy of previously issued EAD Card(s).
- Copy of most recently issued "[Arrival I-94 Record](#)".

EMPLOYER OFFER LETTER

- Letter, on company letterhead, signed by your employer verifying:
 - That the employer is enrolled in the e-Verified program.***
- Employer's name and complete address (including zip code)
- Supervisor's name, title, and contact information (e-mail and phone number).
- Employment start date, site of activity, position title, and description of how the employment is directly related to your primary field of study.

Completed, & Signed I-983 Form & Form I-765

- A completed [Form I-983](#) signed by the student and their STEM OPT employer (for every employer).
 - A completed, signed paper I-765 Form – **OR** – the "**DRAFT**" I-765 Online Form.
- **DO NOT submit an online I-765 Form until you have received your new STEM OPT Form I-20 from the ISO!****

I-983 FORM EXAMPLE (PAGE 1)

Tips To Complete Form I-983 STEM TRAINING PLAN!

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

OMB APPROVAL NO. 1653-0054
EXPIRATION DATE: 7/31/2021

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

SECTION 1: STUDENT INFORMATION (Completed by Student)

Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name):
LAST NAME, First Name (Must Match I-20)

Student Email Address:
Use a Non-MIT email address

Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned:
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT (including 3-digit suffix):
You can find this information listed on your I-20, page 1, box 2 "School Information"

Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information:
**77 Massachusetts Ave ISO
E18-219, Cambridge, MA 02139
617-253-3795**

Student SEVIS ID No.:
Starts with N00, Top of Form I-20

STEM OPT Requested Period (mm-dd-yyyy):
From: **The day after your current OPT expires**
To: **24 months from current OPT the date above**

Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code:
This information is listed on your I-20, pg 1, box 3 "Program of Study"

Level/Type of Qualifying Degree: **I.e. Bachelor's, Master's, PhD**

Date Awarded (mm-dd-yyyy): **Graduation date, or anticipated completion date (OK if it doesn't match I-20 end date!)**

Based on Prior Degree: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Employment Authorization Number: **Enter USCIS # on current EAD Card**

ONLY list Massachusetts Institute of Technology if you earned your STEM degree here. Otherwise, list the school that granted your STEM degree in

SECTION 2: STUDENT CERTIFICATION

I certify that:

- I have reviewed, understand, and will adhere to this Training Plan for STEM OPT Students ("Plan");
- I will notify the DSO at the earliest available opportunity if I believe that my employer is not providing me with appropriate training as delineated on this Plan;
- I understand that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may deny, revoke, or terminate the STEM OPT of students whom DHS determines are not engaging in OPT in compliance with the law, including the STEM OPT of students who are not, or whose employers are not, complying with this Plan;
- My practical training opportunity is directly related to the STEM degree that qualifies me for the STEM OPT extension; and
- I will notify the DSO at the earliest available opportunity regarding any material changes to or deviations from this Plan, including but not limited to, any change of Employer Identification Number resulting from a corporate restructuring, any nontrivial reduction in compensation from the amount previously submitted on the Plan that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked, any significant decrease in hours per week that I engage in a STEM training opportunity, and any decrease in hours below the 20-hours-per-week minimum required under this rule.

Signature of Student (Sign in ink): _____

Printed Name of Student: **Print Name Here** Date (mm-dd-yyyy): **Date here**

**DON'T FORGET TO SIGN!!
Do not just type your name!**

NOTE: A student's STEM OPT start date is the day after their Post-Completion OPT EAD card expires, and two years minus one day into the future.

For Example: If a student's Post-Opt EAD card has approved dates of June 15, 2023, to June 14, 2024, then a student's STEM OPT dates will be June 15, 2024, to June 14, 2026.

I-983 FORM EXAMPLE (PAGE 2)

SECTION 3 MUST BE COMPLETED BY YOUR EMPLOYER!

SECTION 3: EMPLOYER INFORMATION (Completed by Employer)

Employer Name: _____ Street Address: _____ Suite: _____

Employer Website URL: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Employer ID Number (EIN): _____ Number of Full-Time Employees in U.S.: _____ North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code: _____

OPT Hours Per Week (must be at least 20 hours/week): _____

Start Date of Employment (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

Start date with this employer

Compensation:
A. Salary Amount and Frequency: _____
B. Other Compensation (Type and Estimated Amount or Value):
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

SECTION 4: EMPLOYER CERTIFICATION

I declare, and affirm under penalty of perjury that the statements and information made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that the law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willfully falsifying or concealing a material fact, or using any false document in the submission of this form.

I certify on behalf of the employer that this Training Plan for STEM OPT Students ("Plan") is approved and that:

- I have reviewed and understand this Plan, and I will ensure that the supervising Official follows this Plan;
- I will notify the DSO at the earliest available opportunity regarding any material changes to this Plan, including but not limited to, any change of Employer Identification Number resulting from a corporate restructuring, any reduction in compensation from the amount previously submitted on the Plan that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked, any significant decrease in hours per week that a student engages in a STEM training opportunity, and any decrease in hours below the 20-hours-per-week minimum required under this rule;
- Within five business days of the termination or departure of the student during the authorized period of OPT, I will report such termination or departure to the DSO (Note: business days do not include federal holidays or weekend days, and an employer that considers a student to have departed when the employer knows the student has left the practical training opportunity, or when the student has not reported for practical training for a period of five consecutive business days without the consent of the employer); and
- I will adhere to all applicable regulatory provisions that govern this program (see 8 CFR Part 214), which include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - The student's practical training opportunity is directly related to the STEM degree that qualifies the student for the STEM OPT extension, and the position offered to the student achieves the objectives of his or her participation in this training program;
 - The student will receive on-site supervision and training, consistent with this Plan, by experienced and knowledgeable staff;
 - The employer has sufficient resources and personnel to provide the specified training program set forth in this Plan, and the employer is prepared to implement that program, including at the location(s) identified in this Plan;
 - The student on a STEM OPT extension will not replace a full- or part-time, temporary or permanent U.S. worker. The terms and conditions of the STEM practical training opportunity—including duties, hours, and compensation—are commensurate with the terms and conditions applicable to the employer's similarly situated U.S. workers or, if the employer does not employ and has not recently employed more than two similarly situated U.S. workers in the area of employment, the terms and conditions of other similarly situated U.S. workers in the area of employment; and
 - The training conducted pursuant to this Plan complies with all applicable Federal and State requirements relating to employment.

Note: DHS may, at its discretion, conduct a site visit of the employer to ensure that program requirements are being met, including that the employer possesses and maintains the ability and resources to provide structured and guided work-based learning experiences consistent with this Plan.

Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority (Sign in ink): _____

Printed Name and Title of Employer Official with Signatory Authority: **Signature Authority Printed Name and Title**

Date (mm-dd-yyyy): **Date here** Printed Name of Employing Organization: **Print Name of Employing Organization**

**DON'T FORGET TO HAVE YOUR EMPLOYER SIGN!!
Do not just type the name!**

I-983 FORM EXAMPLE (PAGE 3)

The employer that signs the I-983 Training Plan must be the same entity that employs the student and provides the practical training experience.

SECTION 5: TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS (Completed by Student and Employer)

Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name):

Employer Name: Enter employer's name as it appears in "Section 3: Employer Information" (page 2)

EMPLOYER SITE INFORMATION

Site Name:

Site Address (Street, City, State, ZIP):

Name of Official:

Official's Title:

Official's Email:

Official's Phone Number:

Note: for the remaining fields in this section, employers who already have an internal/pre-existing training plan in place may fill in the details based on that 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.

Employer must verify how your duties and activities relate to the position and how the position is directly related and applying to your degree from MIT.

Enter the employer's site name and address, which may be the same as the employer information entered in Section 3. However, if the student is working for a branch or subsidiary of a large entity, or anywhere other than the headquarters, then provide that name and address of that worksite in the "Employer Site Information"

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.

Employer Must Complete This Box

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.

Employer Must Complete This Box

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.

Employer Must Complete This Box

I-983 FORM EXAMPLE (PAGE 4)

Additional Remarks (optional): Provide additional information pertinent to the Plan.

**Employer Must Complete This Box
(optional)**

SECTION 6: EMPLOYER OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION

I declare and affirm under penalty of perjury that the statements and information made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that the law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willfully falsifying or concealing a material fact, or using any false document in the submission of this form.

Employer Official with Signatory Authority - I certify that:

1. I have reviewed, understand, and will follow this Training Plan for STEM OPT Students (Plan).
2. I will conduct the required periodic evaluations of the student.*
3. I will adhere to all applicable regulatory provisions that govern this program (see 8 CFR Part 214.2(f)(10)(i)); and
4. I will notify the DSO regarding any material changes to or material deviations from this Plan at the earliest available opportunity, including if I believe the student is not receiving appropriate training as delineated in this Plan.

Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority (Sign in ink):

Printed Name and Title of Employer Official with Signatory Authority:

Date (mm-dd-yyyy):

Signature Authority Printed Name and Title

Date here

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITIES: Section 101(a)(15)(F) of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, as amended (INA), 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(F), Section 641 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), Pub. L. 104-208, Div. C, 110 Stat. 3009-546 (codified at 8 U.S.C. 1372), Section 502 of the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-173, 116 Stat. 543 (codified at 8 U.S.C. 1782) and Homeland Security Presidential Directive No. 2 (HSPD-2), authorize U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to collect the information requested in this form.

PURPOSE: The information collection on this form is used to assist in the administration of the STEM Optional Practical Training (OPT) extension so that Designated School Officials (DSOs) can properly recommend the Student for and review and help coordinate his or her STEM optional practical training opportunity.

ROUTINE USES: The information collected on this form may be shared with the individuals who signed the Plan, relevant DSOs acting as liaisons with the DHS, Federal, State, local, or foreign government entities for law enforcement purposes, Members of Congress in response to requests on the Student's behalf, or as otherwise authorized pursuant to its published Privacy Act system of records notice - Privacy Act of 1974: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, DHS/ICE-001 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) System of Records (<https://www.dhs.gov/systemsrecords-notices>).

DISCLOSURE: The information you provide is voluntary. However, failure to provide the information requested on this form may delay or prevent participation in a STEM OPT opportunity.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 7.5 hours per response, including time required for searching existing data sources, gathering the necessary documentation, providing the information and/or documents required, and reviewing the final collection. You do not have to supply this information unless this collection displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. If you have comments on the accuracy of this burden estimate and/or recommendations for reducing it, send them to: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Policy, 500 12th Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20536.

*See evaluation forms that follow for student's first evaluation, to occur before the one year anniversary of the start date of the student's STEM OPT employment authorization, and final program evaluation.

STOP!

PAGE 5 ONLY NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED 12 MONTHS AND 24 MONTHS AFTER YOUR STEM OPT START DATE!

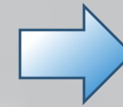
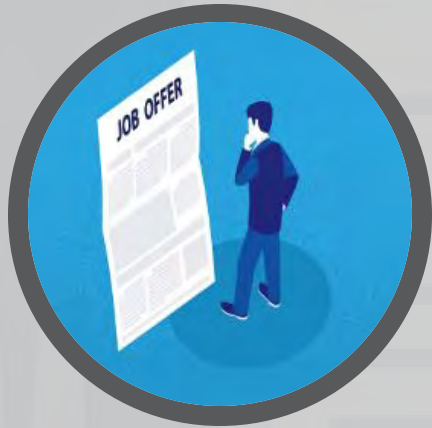
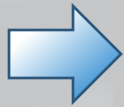
OR

IF YOU LEAVE THIS EMPLOYER DURING STEM OPT!

I-983 FORM EXAMPLE (PAGE 5)

EVALUATION ON STUDENT PROGRESS	
Provide a self-evaluation of your performance, using the measures previously identified, in applying and acquiring new knowledge, skills, and competencies identified in the Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. Discuss accomplishments, successful projects, overall contributions, etc., during this review period. Address whether there are any modifications to the objectives and goals for projects, or new areas for skill and competency development.	
Range of Evaluation Dates: From (mm-dd-yyyy):	To (mm-dd-yyyy):
<div>ONLY COMPLETE THIS BOX (WITH YOUR SELF-EVALUATION) 12 MONTHS AFTER YOUR STEM OPT START DATE!</div>	
Printed Name of Student:	Date (mm-dd-yyyy):
Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority (Sign in ink):	
Printed Name of Employer Official with Signatory Authority:	Date (mm-dd-yyyy):
FINAL EVALUATION ON STUDENT PROGRESS	
Provide a self-evaluation of your performance, using the measures previously identified, in applying and acquiring new knowledge, skills, and competencies identified in the Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. Discuss accomplishments, successful projects, overall contributions, etc., during this review period. Address whether there are any modifications to the objectives and goals for projects, or new areas for skill and competency development.	
Range of Evaluation Dates: From (mm-dd-yyyy):	To (mm-dd-yyyy):
<div>ONLY COMPLETE THIS BOX (WITH YOUR SELF-EVALUATION) AT THE END OF YOUR 24-MONTH STEM EXTENSION PERIOD OR IF YOU LEAVE THIS EMPLOYER DURING YOUR 24-MONTH STEM</div>	
Printed Name of Student:	Date (mm-dd-yyyy):
Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority (Sign in ink):	
Printed Name of Employer Official with Signatory Authority:	Date (mm-dd-yyyy):

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO OBTAIN STEM OPT AUTHORIZATION?



STEP 1

- Students **MUST** read the ISO [website](#) and these slides.

THOROUGHLY!

STEP 2

- Obtain an offer letter from an [e-verified](#) company/organization (see sample letter on [website](#))
- STEM employer offer letter **MUST** include confirmation that the company/organization is e-verified.
- NOTE:** The employer is **not required** to give us their e-verified number, **but they are required to confirm that they are an "e-verified employer"**.

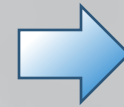
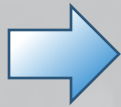
STEP 3

- Students must obtain a completed [Form I-983](#) signed by the student and the STEM OPT employer (*for every employer*). See slides 17, 18, 19.
- Directions on how to complete the Form I-983 can be found [here](#).
- Your DSO's information can be found [here](#), and the [contact information](#) is ISO's information.

STEP 4

- Initiate a STEM OPT Form I-20 request (via [iMIT](#)) **at least two (2) weeks before an intended STEM OPT mailing/submission date to USCIS**.
- Students will log in to iMIT (through Limited Client Services) and click on *F-1 Practical Training > STEM OPT Extension Application > Start New Request >* and complete all six (6) mandatory e-Forms **after** reviewing the ISO *F-1 STEM OPT Extension* [webpage](#).
- Remember to submit all the required materials and satisfy the required MIT/ISO Administrative Fee.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO OBTAIN STEM OPT AUTHORIZATION?



STEP 5

- After approval of the student's STEM OPT e-Form request, they will electronically receive their STEM OPT Form I-20 to the address email address listed in their [SEVP Portal](#) account. [see next slide]

STEP 6

Thoroughly Review the STEM OPT Application!

- Ensure a complete copy of the **ENTIRE STEM OPT Application**, including any payments.
- This documentation may prove valuable for future reference.
- Consider scanning, copying, etc., to safeguard it.

**Questions about filing a STEM OPT application online?
[See slides 28 & 29]*

STEP 7

- Submit the STEM OPT application [online or by mail] by following the instructions on the ISO [website](#).
- Ensure that USCIS receives a STEM OPT application within the designated timeframes.
 - BEFORE** a student's Post-Completion OPT EAD card end date.
 - NO Earlier** than 90 days before the Post-Completion OPT EAD card end date.
 - NO Later** than 59 days after, the STEM OPT Form I-20 was issued by the ISO.
- NOTE:** Students **must be** physically present within the U.S. when USCIS receives their OPT application.

STEP 8

- NOTE:** Unlike the initial 12 months of OPT, as long as your STEM application is timely filed, you can continue working for up to 180 days while waiting on your new EAD card.
- This is unique to the STEM OPT. This rule can be found in immigration's policy guidance [here](#). The paper receipt notice received from USCIS may be given to an employer as proof that a STEM OPT application was timely filed – not the Form I-20, but this is a question for the employer.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO OBTAIN STEM OPT AUTHORIZATION?

Department of Homeland Security U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement		I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status OMB NO. 1653-0038	
SEVIS ID: N00012345678			
SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME Beaver	GIVEN NAME Timmy	Class of Admission F-1	
PREFERRED NAME	PASSPORT NAME		
COUNTRY OF BIRTH	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP		
CITY OF BIRTH	DATE OF BIRTH		
FORM ISSUE REASON CONTINUED ATTENDANCE	ADMISSION NUMBER	ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE	
SCHOOL INFORMATION			
SCHOOL NAME Massachusetts Institute of Technology	SCHOOL ADDRESS 77 MASSACHUSETTS AVE, Building E18-219, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139		
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Maria Brennan International Student Advisor	SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE BOS214F00215000 24 JANUARY 2023		
PROGRAM OF STUDY			
EDUCATION LEVEL MASTER'S	MAJOR 1 Management Science 52.1301	MAJOR 2 None 90.0000	
PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient	EARLIEST ADMISSION DATE August 07, 2023	
START OF CLASSES September 5, 2023	PROGRAM START/END DATE September 5, 2022 May 31, 2024		
FINANCIALS			
ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR: 12 MONTHS	STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR: 12 MONTHS		
Tuition and Fees \$ 82,852	Personal Funds \$ 118,072		
Living Expenses \$ 35,226	Funds From This School \$		
Expenses of Dependents (if)			
Other \$	On-Campus Employment \$		
TOTAL \$ 118,072	TOTAL \$ 118,072		
REMARKS			
SCHOOL ATTESTATION			
I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all eligibility for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.			
SIGNATURE OF: Alison Day, Assistant Director for Operations and Advising		DATE ISSUED 04/25/2024	PLACE ISSUED CAMBRIDGE, MA
STUDENT ATTESTATION			
I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(a) to determine my nonimmigrant status. Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.			
SIGNATURE OF: Timmy Beaver		DATE April 25, 2024	
NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN		SIGNATURE	ADDRESS (city/state or province/country) DATE

THE NEW STEM OPT FORM I-20 WILL INCLUDE:

The "STEM OPT Recommendation" will be listed on page 2.

The Form I-20 will be signed for 'travel' (on page 2), which will be valid for travel for 6 months.

ATTENTION

- ISO processing times for a STEM OPT Form I-20(s) is 10 business days (excluding weekends and holidays).
- Students **MUST** wait for their new STEM OPT Form I-20 **before** they can apply for STEM OPT with USCIS, as the new STEM OPT Form I-20 is required in the application to USCIS. **DO NOT** mail/submit an **OPT application to USCIS without the new Form I-20 from the ISO.**
- AGAIN: STEM OPT dates are automatically determined based on the approved Post-Completion OPT EAD card dates, and they are FIXED/FINAL.**

REMINDER: Travel signatures during OPT/STEM OPT are **only** valid for 6 months from the date of the signature (page 2) of the most recently issued Form I-20.

APPLICATION



**WHAT DOES ONE SUBMIT TO USCIS
FOR STEM OPT AUTHORIZATION?**



HOW TO FILE A STEM OPT EXTENSION (STEM OPT) APPLICATION?

Filing OPT Application By Mail

1. Go to USCIS [website](#).
2. Download, read, and complete the following:
 - The [Form I-765](#).
 - The [Instructions](#) for Form I-765.
 - Read the USCIS webpages; “[Where to File](#)” and “[Form Filing Tips](#)”.
 - (Optional but recommended) the [Form G-1145](#).
3. Follow the ISO step-by step I-765 instructions on the ‘[I-765 Additional Tips](#)’ [handout](#).

The image displays the USCIS Form I-765 and the USCIS online portal. The top portion shows the Form I-765, 'Application For Employment Authorization', with sections for 'Part 1. Reason for Applying' and 'Part 2. Information'. The bottom portion shows the USCIS online portal, featuring a 'Sign In' button, email and password fields, and links for 'Forgot your Password?', 'Show Password', 'Create an account', and 'Legal' resources.

Filing OPT Application Online

Although USCIS hasn't supplied a comprehensive guide for online filing of the Form I-765 for F-1 OPT and F-1 STEM OPT applications, related resources from webinars in May and November 2021 by the CIS Ombudsman's Office are available. Feel free to review these resources, which are listed on the ISO [website](#). The ISO will provide updates as they become available.

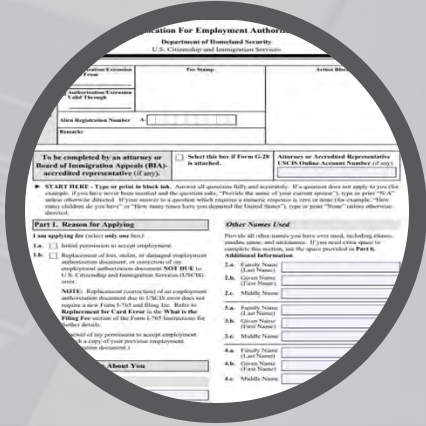
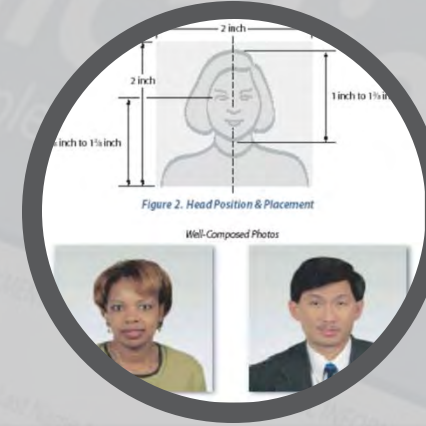
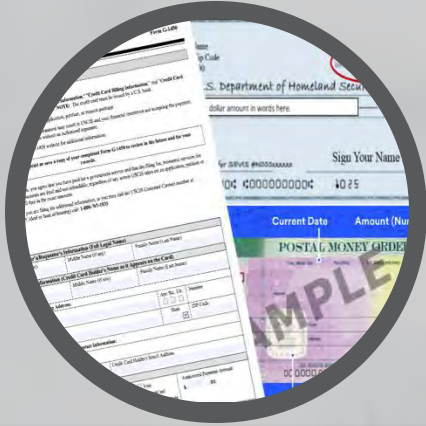
IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

For students opting to submit their OPT application online, the following steps are crucial:

- Assemble **ALL** necessary documents as though filing the OPT application via mail to USCIS. This preparation should occur before the online submission.
- Students **MUST** acquire their new OPT Form I-20 from the ISO **PRIOR** to initiating the online OPT application.
- During the online submission of Form I-765, students must upload **ALL** essential supporting documents and make the application fee payment electronically.
- **Review the ISO's 'USCIS Online Form I-765 Filing Resource Guide: Overview of online filing basics'.**

“WHAT DO I INCLUDE WITH MY APPLICATION?” (PART 1)

CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTS (ASSEMBLE IN ORDER)



1: Check or Money Order

- Secure a 'Check' or 'Money Order' for the [USCIS OPT fee](#).
- The check or money order **MUST** be made payable to the "U.S. Department of Homeland Security". **--- OR ---**
- Submit a [G-1450 Form](#) with correct U.S. debit or credit card information. **ATTENTION:** Inaccurate credit or debit card information (i.e., incorrect card number, expiration date, etc.), **a student's OPT application will be subject to denial or rejection.**

2: G-1145 Form

- Complete the [G-1145 Form](#).
 - ONLY** input a mobile/cell phone number and a personal email address (**NOT an MIT email address**).

3: Two U.S. Passport Sized Photos

- Obtain Two NEW passport-sized photos.**
- Students' passport photos **MUST** be less than 30 days old.
- No glasses allowed.
- Students should write their name and SEVIS # number in pencil or felt pen, (pressing lightly), on the back of each photo.
- Finally, paperclip them to the OPT application.

4: Original, Completed, & Hand-Signed Form I-765

Complete, print, and hand-sign the Form I-765.

- A student should try to complete/fill in most of the Form I-765 by typing the answers within the PDF.
- A student is then required to print and sign the Form I-765 BY HAND, no digital signature allowed.**

“WHAT DO I INCLUDE WITH MY APPLICATION?” (PART 2)

CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTS (ASSEMBLE IN ORDER)



5-6: Copies ALL Form I-20's

- **Make Photocopies/Scanned copies of all Form I-20's ever issued.**
- A photocopy of the new OPT Form I-20 (pages 1 and 2), **is required**.
- Photocopies of any previously issued Form I-20(s), in reverse date order (pages 1 and 2), **are required**. This means all Form I-20(s) from MIT and any previous school Form I-20(s).
 - **Save them as one (1) PDF document.**
- **Remember to sign all Form I-20(s) BY HAND (e.g., DO NOT digitally sign any of the Form I-20s!).**

7: Most Recent I-94 Record

- A copy of the student's most recently issued electronic "[Arrival I-94 Record](#)" (as a PDF).
- **NOTE:** A student's I-94 Record will change if they travel outside the U.S. This is expected and **DOES NOT** impact a submitted and/or pending OPT application.

8-9: Photocopies of Passport & Visa Sticker

- Photocopy of the student's **VALID** passport photo page.
 - **ATTENTION:** If the student has an older passport and a newer passport, they can include copies of both in their OPT application.
- Ensure that they differentiate between the two passports (e.g., "Old Passport" / "New Passport").
- A photocopy of the student's most recently issued F-1 Visa Sticker (**it is ok if the visa sticker is expired**).

10: Previous EAD Card(s)

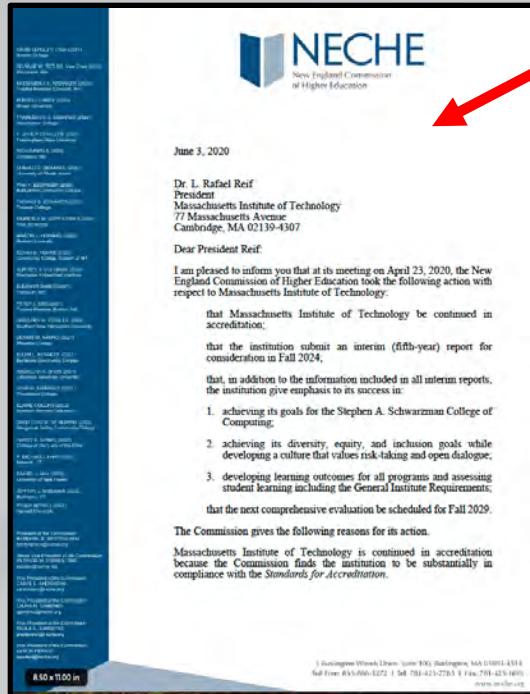
- Photocopies of any previously issued F-1 EAD card(s).
- Include photocopies of any previous Employment Authorization Documents (EAD cards), if applicable.
- **NOTE:** All EAD cards indicate "**NOT VALID FOR REENTRY**". This is OK and means that the card cannot be used for reentry alone. Refer to the ISO [website](#) for the needed materials for reentry.

“WHAT DO I INCLUDE WITH MY APPLICATION?” (PART 3)

CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTS (ASSEMBLE IN ORDER)

11: Copy of MIT Accreditation

MIT's accreditation information can be found on MIT's Accreditation [webpage](#).



12: Proof of Degree Completion

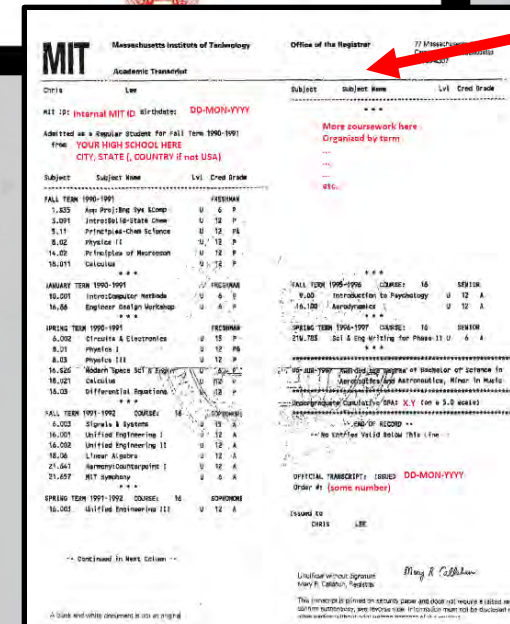
USCIS WANTS:

(1) Copy of the STEM degree diploma with level and program of study.

AND

(2) “Unofficial Transcripts” and/or “Official Transcripts” (sealed).

*To obtain transcripts and/or a diploma – Students will need to contact the MIT Registrar's Office.



OPTIONAL COVER LETTER

*"I am missing my previous Form I-20(s) and/or my previous EAD card(s)!
What do I do now?!"*

- If a student is missing any previous Form I-20(s) and/or EAD card(s) - This is OK - A student can provide a cover letter explaining the situation.
- **NOTE: a cover letter is *NOT* needed, unless something is missing, or further explanation is required, etc.**

Sample Cover Letter

Sample OPT Cover Letter

[DATE OF REQUEST]

[STUDENT NAME]:
[SEVIS ID NUMBER]:
[OPT REQUESTED: PRE or POST-COMPLETION or STEM]
[OPT DATES REQUESTED]:

Dear USCIS Officer:

Please accept this cover letter for my F-1 [PRE or POST-COMPLETION or STEM] Practical Training request. I am writing this letter because **[REASON FOR LETTER]**.

Enclosed, please find my [PRE or POST-COMPLETION or STEM] application materials

Please contact me if you require additional information or documentation to process this request.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE OF STUDENT]

[NAME OF STUDENT]

BEFORE MAILING / SUBMITTING AN OPT APPLICATION... DOUBLE-CHECK EVERYTHING!

Filing OPT Application **By Mail:**

1. Used the most recent paper [Form I-765](#)?
2. Was the box at the top of the Form I-765 (page 1, question 1.a) indicating what one is applying for, checked?
3. Was the Form I-765 signed on page 5, **BY HAND**?
4. Were all 7 pages of the Form I-765 included?
5. Was the USCIS [website](#) reviewed to make sure that the [application fee](#) is correct?
6. Was the F-1 Form I-765 mailing instructions confirmed on the USCIS [website](#)?
7. If mailing an OPT application, **DO NOT** use staples to attach the OPT application materials together; use paperclips instead.

The image shows the top portion of Form I-765, 'Application for Employment Authorization'. It includes the USCIS logo, the title 'Application for Employment Authorization', and the form number 'Form I-765 (08/01/04; 10-13-09)'. The form is divided into sections for 'For USCIS Use Only' and 'For Applicant Use Only'. The 'For USCIS Use Only' section includes checkboxes for 'Authorization Extension Valid From' and 'Authorization Extension Valid Through', and a field for 'Alien Registration Number'. The 'For Applicant Use Only' section includes a 'Remarks' field and a 'To be completed by an attorney or Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA)-accredited representative (if any)' checkbox. Below this is a 'START HERE' section with instructions for filling out the form. The bottom section is 'Part 1. Reason for Applying', which includes a 'I am applying for (check only one box)' section with options for 'Initial permission to accept employment' and 'Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error'. It also includes a 'NOTE' about replacement and a 'Part 2. Information' section with fields for 'Your Full Legal Name' (Last, First, Middle) and 'Your Full Legal Name' (Last, First, Middle).

Filing OPT Application **Online:**

1. The USCIS's [tutorial](#) for step-by-step information on how to create a USCIS online account was reviewed?
2. Reviewed the 'ISO's *USCIS Online Form I-765 Filing Resource Guide*'?
3. Combined all Form I-20(s) every issued into one (1) PDF document?
4. Selected **"(c) (3) (C)"** for STEM OPT Extension (STEM OPT)?
5. Was the USCIS [website](#) reviewed to make sure that the application fee is correct?
6. Was the F-1 Form I-765 online instructions confirmed on the USCIS [website](#)?

The image shows the USCIS online account sign-in page. It features the USCIS logo and the text 'U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services'. The page has a 'Sign In' heading and a form with fields for 'Email *' and 'Password *'. Below the password field are links for 'Forgot your Password?' and 'Show Password'. A 'Sign In' button is located below the form. Below the button is the text 'One account for all of your USCIS needs.' and a link to 'Create an account.'. At the bottom, there is a link for 'Didn't receive confirmation instructions?'. The footer section is titled 'Legal' and includes links for 'Department of Homeland Security Consent', 'DHS Privacy Notice', 'Paper Reduction Act Burden Disclosure Notice', and 'Terms of Use'.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

After Mailing In/Submitting A STEM OPT Application to USCIS?

- 3-5 months for USCIS to process an application, unless the student submits a “[Premium Processing](#)” request to USCIS and pays the required “Premium Processing” fee.

After Documents Have Been Received By USCIS:

- If a student submits the G-1145 Form, they will receive a text or email within 2-4 weeks. This will include their OPT receipt number.
- A hardcopy paper “Receipt Notice” should be received via USPS regular mail within 3-4 weeks from the date of application receipt by USCIS.
- If a student used a personal check or the G-1450 Form, they should see the withdrawal of the OPT from their account.

After Approval By USCIS:

- If approved, a student should receive a paper “Approval Notice” via USPS regular mail.
- Their Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card will be mailed to them separately from the Approval Notice. It will also be sent via USPS Priority Mail.
- If a student **does not receive** the above documents or responses from USCIS in a timely manner, they should contact their [ISO Advisor](#).
 - Student can check their OPT application status online through USCIS’s “Case Status” [website](#) (i.e., see receipt notice information).



The Waiting Game

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

What Happens If...?

*“I made a mistake on my OPT Application...
Now What!?”*

- Remain calm and contact an [ISO Advisor](#).
- **DO NOT** mail/submit duplicate applications!

**DON'T
PANIC**



TRAVEL BEFORE & AFTER SUBMITTING A STEM OPT APPLICATION

ATTENTION: There are important considerations students should be aware of regarding any travel outside the U.S., either ***before or after*** the Post-Completion OPT end date listed on their EAD card. While travel outside the U.S. is allowed after a student has submitted their STEM OPT application to USCIS, ***it should be done with caution.***

TRAVEL **AFTER** SUBMITTING A STEM OPT APPLICATION

STEM OPT EXTENSION **APPROVED**

If a student intends to reenter the U.S. **AFTER** the Post-OPT end date stated on their OPT EAD card.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) [outlines](#) the reentry procedure in response to the question, '***Can I reenter if I left while on OPT?***': "If USCIS has approved your OPT you will be expected to have your EAD in hand to reenter the United States, in addition to your Form I-20, valid passport and visa, and a letter of employment if you have one. If you exceed the limits on unemployment while outside the United States, you will not be eligible to reenter the United States in F-1 status."

Therefore, students will need the [required documents](#) to reenter the U.S. **AFTER** the Post-OPT end date stated on their OPT EAD card.

****NEVER enter the U.S. in tourist or in another status; this will terminate a student's F-1/J-1 status!****

- 1. Valid Passport:** Passport must be valid at least 6 months into the future, at all times.
 - 2. Valid F-1 Visa Sticker/Stamp:** F-1 entry visa sticker/stamp must be valid (not expired), except for citizens of Canada and Bermuda.
 - 3. "Certificate of Eligibility" Immigration Document:** Students most recently issued MIT Form I-20 signed for travel by the ISO (page 2) within the past six (6) months.
 - Most recently issued Form I-20 **must** have the student's current employer(s) information listed on page 2.
 - Most recently issued Form I-20 **must** be signed for travel (page 2) **within the past 6 months.**
 - 4. EAD Card(s):** Physical EAD card(s).
 - 5. Employer Support Letter(s):** Recently issued letter from employer.
- *Students also need to check and see if they need a visa to enter the country(s) they are visiting or transiting through and if the country(s) currently has any travel restrictions.

ATTENTION: If a student travels outside the U.S. and has a "Change of Status (COS)" application pending with USCIS (H-1B, O-1, etc.), they must:

- **REFER TO** their COS employer and/or their attorneys with **ALL** travel questions.
 - e.g., If you have a pending/approved H-1B, you must discuss **ALL** international travel with your H employer and their attorneys, because a departure from the U.S. could be considered "abandoning the COS petition"
- If a student travels outside the U.S. and will remain in F-1 Status on STEM OPT, then they must:
 - **REFER TO** this slide.
 - Additional information on the ISO [website](#).

TRAVEL **AFTER** SUBMITTING A STEM OPT APPLICATION

STEM OPT EXTENSION **PENDING**

*If a student intends to reenter the U.S. **AFTER** the Post-OPT end date stated on their OPT EAD card and their STEM OPT application is **pending** with USCIS.*

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) [outlines](#) the reentry procedure in response to the question, '**Can I reenter if my request for OPT is still pending?**': "Yes but traveling during this time should be undertaken with caution. USCIS may send you a request for evidence while you are away, however, so you would want to make sure you have provided a correct U.S. address both to your DSO and on the application and would be able to send in the requested documents. Also, if USCIS approves your OPT application, you will be expected to have your EAD in hand to reenter the U.S. Like a request for further information, USCIS can only send the EAD to your U.S. address."

*Therefore, if a student plans on reentering the U.S. **AFTER** the program Post-OPT end date stated on their OPT EAD card, and their STEM OPT application is **pending** with USCIS, then there are additional risks for a student to consider.*

*These **risks** include but are not limited to:*

- If a student's STEM OPT application is **denied or rejected** while they are outside the U.S. after their Post-OPT end date stated on their OPT EAD card has passed, then their F-1 status automatically ends, and they cannot reapply for STEM OPT or return to the U.S. under F-1 status.
- Receiving a **Request for Evidence (RFE)** from USCIS requires a response from within the U.S. If a student is abroad, they might be unable to address the RFE, leading to STEM OPT being denied.
- If a student's EAD card is **approved while they are outside the U.S.**, then they must possess the card in order to return to the U.S. Therefore, the student would need to coordinate the EAD's delivery from a U.S. address to their foreign location abroad.
- If a student's approved EAD card is **lost in the mail** while they are outside the U.S., then they **cannot** request a replacement card from outside the U.S., creating a significant issue.

*Therefore, students entering the U.S. during their authorized STEM OPT Extension period **should have** all the [required documents](#) for reentry into the U.S.*



**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER STEM OPT
EXTENSION AUTHORIZATION IS
APPROVED?**

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER STEM OPT AUTHORIZATION IS APPROVED?

What Happens After STEM-OPT Is Approved?

Once a student has an approved EAD card, then they are **REQUIRED** to [report to iMIT](#) as soon as anything changes. Has the student moved to a new U.S. address? Have they updated iMIT with their new employer information? **All this information *MUST* be updated with the ISO!**

- During STEM OPT, students **MUST** have a valid Form I-20 listing their current STEM OPT employer (on page 2), a valid passport (for 6 months into the future), and a valid [I-94 Record](#). **Students must check their I-94 record upon every entry into the U.S.**, and make sure the I-94 Record has “F-1” listed for the “Class of Admission” and “D/S” for the “Admit Until Date”. Students must also have a valid OPT EAD card.
- **NOTE:** If a student’s STEM OPT EAD card has been approved, then they **MUST** double-check all the information on the EAD card and upload a copy of the EAD card to iMIT once they have received it.
- If a student leaves the U.S. and their F-1 entry visa sticker is expired, then the student must apply for a new F-1 entry visa sticker at the [U.S. Embassy/Consulate](#) abroad to return to the U.S. in F-1 status with STEM OPT.
- Students who are **NOT** traveling outside the U.S. **DO NOT** need a valid F-1 visa sticker in their passport to remain in the U.S.
- **Students should NEVER use or enter the U.S. as a Tourist (B-1/B-2) or on the Visa Waiver Program (WV / ESTA). If a student enters the U.S. as a tourist, while on STEM OPT, it will automatically cancel their F-1 status and STEM OPT authorization.**



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER STEM OPT AUTHORIZATION IS APPROVED?

IMPORTANT: During the STEM OPT Extension duration, a student and their employer **must** meet all the STEM OPT Requirements for the student to remain in a valid F-1 status.

What Is Considered “Qualified STEM OPT Work/Employment”?

- The student and their employer meet all the STEM OPT Requirements:
 - Work/Employment **must be** directly related to the student’s degree/major and provide practical experience in their field of study.
 - Work/Employment **must be** in the U.S. and the student **must be** maintaining a U.S. address.
 - Working/Employment **must be** 20.01+ hours **or more** per week.
 - Students’ employer is e-verified.
 - Student will be paid (at least the federal minimum wage or similar compensation).
 - Must be a “bona fide employee” of the employer completing Form I-983.
 - Student **must have reported** all work/employment and/or changes within 10 days of starting work/employment and/or when any changes occur. This **must be** reported to the student’s iMIT account.
- **NOTE:** Students can begin/continue their OPT work/employment if they have “timely filed” their STEM OPT application with USCIS, as their OPT work/employment automatically extends for 180 days while the STEM OPT application is pending.

ATTENTION: A student should always be able to provide evidence of their work/employment activities (job offer letter, pay stubs, W2 forms, etc.)



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER STEM OPT AUTHORIZATION IS APPROVED?

IMPORTANT: During the *STEM OPT Extension* duration, a student and their employer **must** meet all the [STEM OPT Requirements](#) for the student to remain in a valid F-1 status.

Volunteer and/or Unpaid Work/Employment?

- Any volunteer or unpaid work/employment during STEM OPT is **NOT** allowed unless it is a “[True Volunteer](#)” position.

Personal Start-Up and/or Consulting?

Remember, a student **must be** trained by the employer and not self-employed (Form I-983) during the STEM OPT Extension. Working on a personal start-up/self-employment during STEM OPT is problematic. As DHS has [clarified](#), “F-1 students cannot qualify for STEM OPT extensions unless they will be bona fide employees of the employer signing the Form I-983 because F-1 students may not provide employer attestations on their own behalf. However, STEM OPT applicants can participate in a start-up or small business so long as all regulatory requirements are met. The employer that signs the Training Plan must be the same entity that employs the student and provides the practical training experience. These requirements mandate that the company remains in good standing with E-Verify and has the resources to comply with the proposed training plan.”

Additional Info: DHS [Start-Up Guidance](#), Study in the States [website](#).





ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS DURING STEM OPT



ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS DURING OPT

Know The Rules!

- Follow **ALL** The **OPT Rules And Regulations**.
- The type of 'qualifying work/employment' one can participate in on STEM OPT Extension (STEM OPT) is extensive.
- Work/Employment during OPT only requires that a student works 20.01+ hours a week or more and that the work/employment is directly related to their degree/major field of study.



ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS DURING OPT

*Passport **MUST** Always Be Valid.*

- If one needs to renew their passport, this can be done from inside the U.S.
- This would require the student to contact their [embassy/consulate](#) in the U.S. and inquire about the materials needed to process a new passport.



ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS DURING OPT

Mandatory Reporting To The ISO Within 10 Days

- Students are required to report **ANY** changes to iMIT, encompassing, though not limited to:
 - Issuance of EAD card (upload a copy).
 - Change of U.S. address.
 - Employer's name and address.
 - Start and end dates of all OPT work/employment.
 - Change of employers (End previous employer, Add new employer).
 - Change of name or citizenship.
 - Decision to end OPT and leave the U.S.
 - Transfer to another school or begin new a program.
 - Change of U.S. immigration status (e.g., H-1B, O-1, etc.).

DON'T FORGET TO REPORT!



ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS DURING OPT

Unemployment Time

- Students **MUST NOT** surpass 150 days of 'Unemployment Time' during STEM OPT. This is a combination of the 90 days of 'Unemployment Time' from Post-Completion OPT and the additional 60 days of 'Unemployment Time' the student receives once their STEM OPT has been approved.
 - For example, if a student used 25 days of 'Unemployment Time' during Post-OPT and 25 days during STEM OPT, they have used 50 days of 'Unemployment Time' and have 100 days remaining.
- 'Unemployment Time' during OPT/STEM OPT refers to each calendar day when the student is not engaged in [qualifying employment](#).
- To stop the accumulation of 'Unemployment Time', students need to secure qualifying work/employment.



ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS DURING OPT

IMPORTANT!

- Students have **mandatory** STEM OPT reporting obligations every 6 months during their STEM OPT Extension. Make calendar reminders **NOW!**
- Unpaid work/employment is **NOT** allowed during the 24-Month STEM OPT Extension period.



WHEN TO APPLY FOR THE STEM OPT EXTENSION (STEM OPT)?

IMPORTANT DATES, DEADLINES, & EXAMPLES

90 Days Before
Current Post-
Completion OPT
EAD Card Expires

STEM OPT
Extension
Start Date

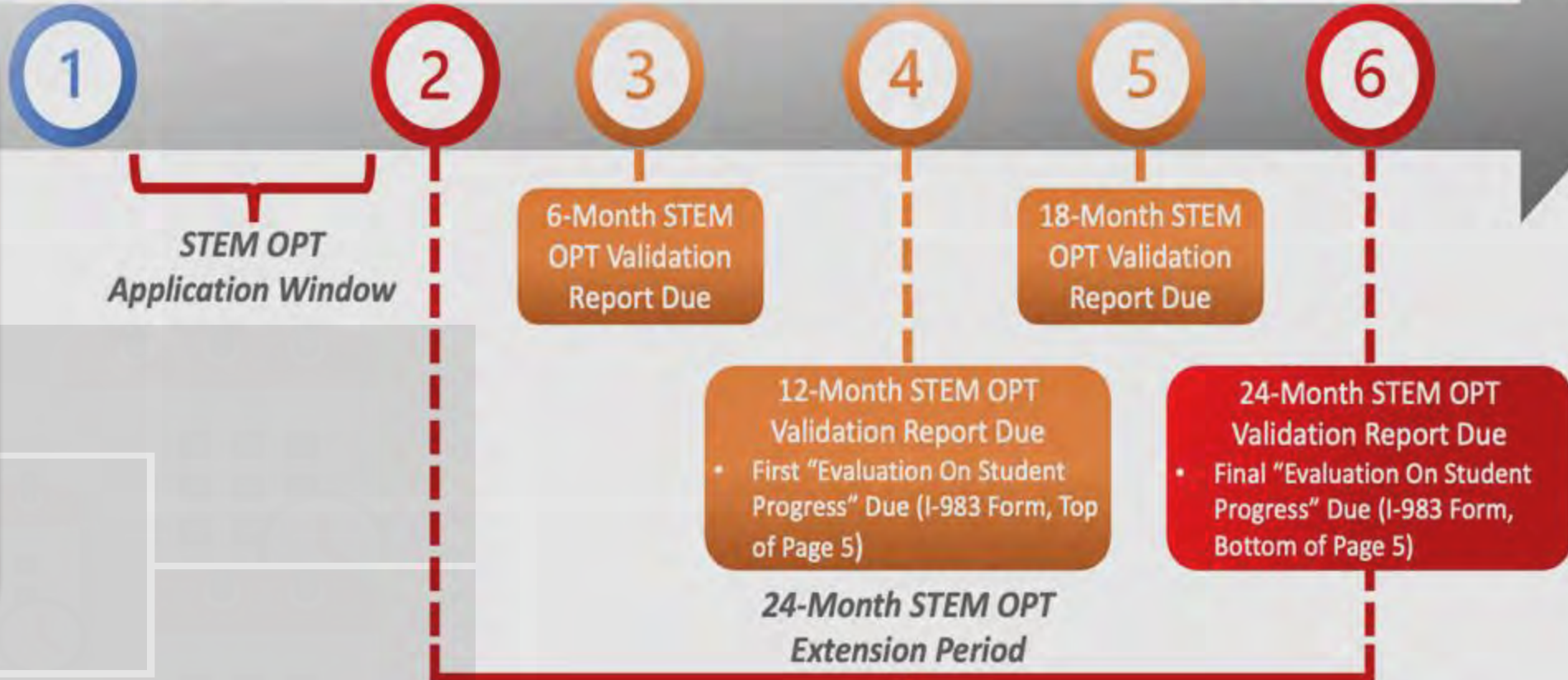
90 Days Before
Current Post-
Completion OPT
EAD Card Expires

USCIS can **ONLY** receive a STEM OPT application

- **AFTER** a student has received a new STEM OPT Form I-20 from the ISO.
- **BEFORE** the end date listed on their Post-Completion OPT EAD card.
- **No earlier than 90 days BEFORE** the student's current Post-Completion OPT EAD card expiry date.
- **No later than 59 days AFTER** the date that the STEM Extension Form I-20 is issued by the ISO.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Submission **AFTER** the EAD card end date = **DENIAL!**
- Students **MUST BE** physically present within the U.S. when USCIS receives their OPT application.
- Students can calculate the earliest date using timeanddate.com.



ATTENTION: Students have STEM OPT Reporting Requirements to the ISO/DHS **every 6 months** from the start date of their STEM OPT period (i.e., the day after their Post-Completion OPT EAD card end date). **Set Calendar Reminders NOW!**

ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS DURING OPT

USDHS Enforcement & Increased Scrutiny

- Employer Site Visits & School Site Visits.
- USCIS Requests for Evidence on Benefit Applications: OPT, STEM OPT, H-1B, Green card, etc.
- Keep records of proof of Program curriculum, enrollment history/transcript, proof of internship/work/employment relationship.
- Interdisciplinary Programs – how does MIT document curriculum (established curriculum, appears on transcript/diploma)?
- New DHS [Guidance](#) on OPT/STEM OPT Direct Relationship to Degree.
- Why is the degree-field experience needed for the position?
- How is one applying their degree field experience to this position?



ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS DURING OPT

SEVP OPT Portal

- iMIT [reporting](#) is **REQUIRED**. The SEVP Portal is only to be used for informational purposes. **NEVER enter any data/information directly into the [SEVP Portal Account](#).**
 - **ATTENTION** – Be advised, that a student will **ONLY** receive the email from DHS **if** their EAD card has been approved and they are within the dates listed on the EAD card (check Junk/SPAM folders). **NOTE:** Make sure one creates their SEVP Portal Account right away, as the link from DHS expires.
- Difficulties with SEVP Portal? Visit the Study in the States [website](#).
- Students **MUST:**
 - Submit all personal and employer updates to [iMIT](#).
 - Request a new Form I-20 with updates/for a [travel signature](#).



ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS DURING OPT

60-Day Grace Period

- The 60-day grace period for all F-1 students comes after the end date listed on the student's approved STEM OPT EAD card. **NOTE: If a student exceeds the 150 days of 'Unemployment Time', then their 60-day grace period is considered *forfeited*.**
- **NO WORK or STUDY** during a grace period but a student may remain in the U.S. to travel or prepare for departure.
- If a student departs the U.S. before the 60-day grace period ends, then the remainder of the grace period time is **forfeited**, and the student **cannot** use their F-1 status to enter the U.S. after that time.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & RESOURCES

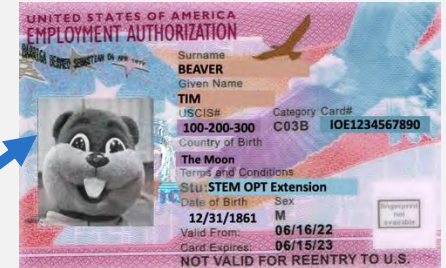
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

CHANGING U.S. IMMIGRATION STATUS?

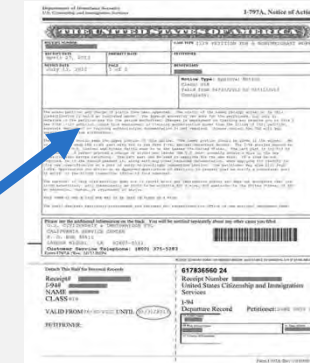
STUDENTS STILL HAVE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS TO THE ISO!

- Students are **required** to update iMIT once they have an approved Change of Status (COS) – **even if the COS takes place in the future!**
 - It could be for an H-1B, O-1, etc. The ISO will need a copy of the COS I-797A or I-797B Paper Approval Notice from the employer/USCIS **NO LATER than 10 days after the COS is approved.**
- Students will log in to iMIT (through limited client services), select “F-1 Practical Training”, “OPT/STEM OPT Reporting”, “Start New Request”, then complete the “Report Departure from U.S., Visa Status Change (e.g., Cap-Gap I-20 Request), or Unemployment on OPT” e-Form and submit the following documents:

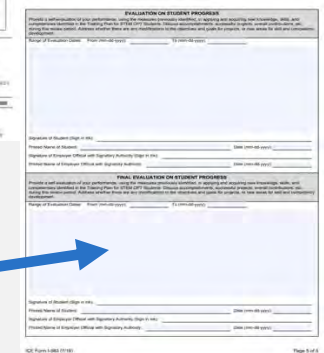
(1) A copy of the student's current EAD card.



(2) A copy of the student's COS Approval Notice (I-797A or I-797B):



(3) A copy of the student's completed I-983 Final Evaluation Form (bottom of page 5):



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

OPTIONS AFTER STEM OPT EXTENSION

H-1B Specialty Occupations

[H-1B immigration status](#) is a temporary work status for individuals in specialty occupations. An H-1B can be issued for a **maximum** of 6 years (in 3-year increments) and is an employer-filed petition to USCIS.

There are two (2) ways to file an H-1B petition:

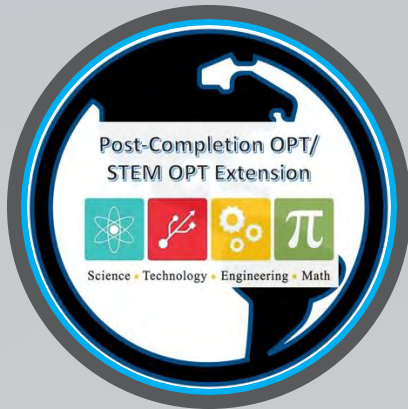
1. "Change of Status (COS)": This means that a student does not need to depart the U.S., and their H-1B will automatically start on October 1st if approved.
2. "Consular Processing/Notification (CPN)": This means that a student will remain in F-1 status until they depart the U.S., obtain an H-1B visa sticker, and then re-enter in H-1B status.

There are two (2) types of employers who can file an H-1B petition:

1. "Private Sector Employer:" (e.g., Google or Amazon, etc.). These H-1B petitions in the Private Sector can only be filed once a year; the [lottery](#) begins in March and applications can be submitted on or after April 1st.
 - Private Sector H-1B's can only begin on October 1st of the calendar year that the H-1B was approved. The H-1B "CAP" or quota is 65,000 annually, available to employers April 1st, plus 20,000 additional H-1B spaces for advanced degree holders.
2. "Non-Profit Sector H-1B Employer": (e.g., a university or a non-profit organization, etc.). These H-1B petitions in the Non-Profit Sector are not subject to Cap and can be filed whenever. The students can switch to H status on the calendar date requested by the Non-Profit employer for the approved H-1B.

NOTE: The [Cap-Gap Extension](#) extends an eligible F-1 student's status to bridge the gap between the end of their F-1 status and the start of H-1B status. This allows the student to remain in the U.S. during the "gap" and continue working (if on active OPT/STEM OPT). The cap-gap extension is available to students who were either on approved OPT or in their F-1 60-day grace period when their H-1B was filed and have a pending or approved Change-of-Status H-1B Petition with USCIS.

STEM OPT EXTENSION (STEM OPT)/STEM OPT VS. H-1B



STEM OPT Extension

- OPT/STEM OPT is based on a student's degree field (not on a specific job).
- Students can change jobs/employers using their OPT/STEM. iMIT must be updated for the new job.
- Students also have 90 days of unemployment time while on Post-Completion OPT and an additional 60 days on STEM OPT = 150 days.

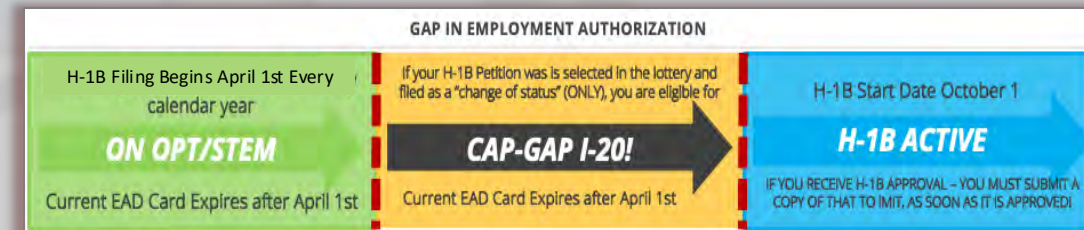


H-1B Specialty Occupations

- H-1B is directly linked to an employer/job.
- Not as easy to change jobs/employers since U.S. immigration status is based on the job.
- Once H-1B is approved, a student's F-1 Status and their OPT/STEM OPT benefits end.

Need a Cap-Gap Form I-20?

- Submit a request in [iMIT](#) with all the required materials.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)



Question: “What is considered full-time employment on the 24-month OPT STEM Extension?”

Answer: Part-time work/employment (less than 20 hours a week) is **NOT** allowed during STEM OPT.

- Students must work at least 20.01+ hours per week for an E-Verify employer in a position directly related to the STEM degree field of study, following the goals and objectives stated in the signed Form I-983 Training Plan.



Question: “I have two part-time jobs. One of the employers is enrolled in E-Verify but the other is not. Is this allowed?”

Answer: No, all employment during the 24-month STEM OPT Extension must be full-time (over 20.01+ hours a week) with an e-Verified employer as outlined on the Form I-983.



Question: “How many days of unemployment am I allowed while on the 24-month STEM Extension?”

Answer: Students who have an approved 24-month OPT STEM EAD card are given an additional 60 days of unemployment time for a total of 150 days over their entire Post-Completion OPT and STEM OPT durations.

- For example, if a student used 25 days of 'Unemployment Time' during Post-OPT and 25 days during STEM OPT, they have used 50 days of 'Unemployment Time' and have 100 days remaining.



Question: “What counts as unemployment time on STEM OPT Extension?”

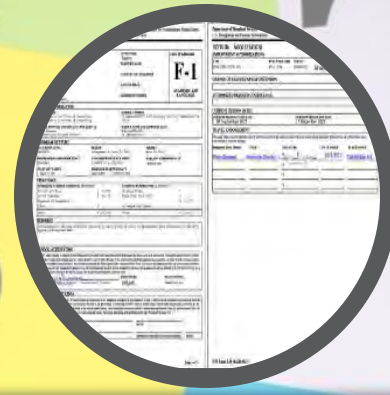
Answer: Each calendar day during the period when OPT authorization begins and ends that the student does not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment.



Question: “Can I continue to work while my 24-month STEM Extension OPT is pending?”

Answer: If a student's EAD expires while the STEM Extension application is pending, the student is authorized to work until USCIS decides on the application, but not more than 180 days from the date the student's Post-Completion OPT EAD expires.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)



Question: "How do I report any changes during my STEM Extension?"

Answer: If you have a residential address change, personal contact information change, supervisor contact information change, and/or an employer address change, you must [report](#) this information to [iMIT](#) **within 10 calendar days of the change.**

Question: "I am changing my employer during STEM OPT Extension – What do I do?"

Answer: A student will need to submit two (2) e-Forms in iMIT.

1. The "Edit / End Current Employer Information on OPT / STEM OPT" e-Form. The student will add the end date for their current employer and submit the I-983 Final Evaluation Form (bottom of page 5).
2. The "Add New Employer Information on OPT / STEM OPT" e-Form. The student will add all the new employer information and the new I-983 Form (pgs. 1-4).

Question: "What documents should I present to my employer once my Post-Completion OPT expires and my OPT STEM is pending?"

Answer: The student should present the employer with the expired EAD card, the form I-20 recommending the student for STEM Extension, and proof of the timely filing with USCIS (Receipt Notice from USCIS).

Question: "How do I get a travel signature while on STEM OPT Extension?"

Answer: The student will log in to iMIT (through limited client services), select "F-1 Student Services", and submit the "Request Replacement of Form I-20" e-Form. Instructions can be found on the ISO website [here](#).

Question: "I have submitted my STEM OPT application to USCIS, when can I travel outside of the U.S.?"

Answer: I.C.E. [states](#) that "Traveling during this time should be undertaken with caution. USCIS may send you a request for evidence (RFE) while you are away... Also, if USCIS approves your OPT application, you will be expected to have your EAD (card) in hand to re-enter the United States."

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

ISO Contact Information:

Tel: 617-253-3795

Email: iso-help@mit.edu

Website: <https://iso.mit.edu>

Office Location: 50 Ames Street, Second Floor, E18-219

ISO In-Person Office Hours:

- Monday-Friday, 10:00am-3:00pm; Wednesdays 1:00pm-3:00pm
*(for **urgent** situations only)*
- All services continue to be available online (including requesting documents, travel signatures, and advisor appointments)
- Additional questions? Contact your [ISO Advisor](#)

Additional Links:

- ISO Immigration/Employment [website](#)
- ISO F-1 Optional Practical Training [webpage](#)
- ISO F-1 STEM Optional Practical Training [webpage](#)
- ISO Knowledge Base [webpage](#)