

24-month STEM OPT Extension

The 24-month STEM OPT extension is available for students who meet the eligibility requirements.

A student may participate twice in the STEM OPT extension over the course of their academic career. To participate twice in the STEM OPT extension, a student must earn a second qualifying degree, at a higher education level, and be participating in an initial period of OPT at the time they apply to USCIS for their second STEM OPT extension.

What are the eligibility requirements?

1. Students who have already been approved for 12 months of post-completion OPT; **and**
2. Who have earned a bachelor's or higher degree in a field included on the U.S. Government's list of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields; **and**
3. Who are employed in a paid job directly related to his/her field of study; **and**
4. Who have a job or job offer with an employer enrolled in the U.S. Government's E-Verify program.

Please Note: All four of the above criteria must be met in order for a student to be eligible for the 24-month OPT extension.

An employer:

- Must be enrolled in USCIS' E-Verify employment eligibility verification program
- Must guarantee the student will complete a minimum of 20 hours of work per week
- Must provide the student with formal training and learning objectives by completing the Form I-983, which must include how the training opportunity has a direct relationship to the student's qualifying STEM degree
- That signs the Form I-983 must be the same entity that employs the student and provides the practical training experience
- Can be a start-up business so long as all regulatory requirements are met.
- Does not need to be the same as the student's post-graduation OPT employer.
 - *Volunteer/Unpaid position is not eligible for the 24-month STEM OPT extension*
 - *Self-employment is not eligible for the 24-month STEM OPT extension*

Required documents:

- An original I-765 – Requesting Renewal of your permission to accept employment, Use Eligibility Category (c)(3)(C) on page 3, item #27; employer’s E-Verify number on page 3, items 28-28.c.
- Copy of your transcript showing your STEM degree or a copy of your Diploma showing your STEM degree.
- 2 passport-sized photos. The photos must be identical, in color, and with a plain white or off-white background. They must be no more than 30 days old when the I-765 is filed at USCIS. Use a pencil to gently write your name and I-94 number on the back of your photo. Put photos in an envelope. You should attach the fee and the photo envelope on top of the entire application (on the upper left-hand corner). Please do not staple the fee and the photos.
- Filing fee of \$410, paid by money order, personal check, cashier’s check, or credit card using Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions. If you pay by check, you must make your check payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. *If you use a personal check, please be sure to wait for the check to be cashed before closing your bank account. Please only include the I-765 filing fee and do not include a biometrics fee with the application.*
- Copies of first page and travel page of all I-20’s. (pages 1 and 2)
- Copy of new I-20 with STEM Extension Recommendation from DSO at Bates College.
- Copy of biographical page of passport.
- Copy of F-1 visa. If in old passport then enclose a copy of the biographical page of passport containing visa and write “Old Passport” on the page.
- Copy of I-94 record. Available on line: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>
- G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance.
- Form I-983 completed by student and employer and approved by DSO at Bates College.

Submit the STEM Extension I-20 Request Form. Upon approval a new I-20 will be created. *Please allow a processing time of 5-10 business days.*

F-1 student must mail the form I-765 and all required documents to USCIS within 60 days from the date DSO recommended the STEM OPT in SEVIS.

Sending your application: We recommend using a trackable mail service such as FedEx or United Parcel Service (UPS). The address you use on the I-765 determines where you should send your application (see I-765 instructions).

If your OPT extension is approved, you must submit a scanned copy of your EAD card to the DSO.