Optional Practical Training – STEM Extension

General Information


Students in STEM disciplines who have graduated with a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree in a STEM field are eligible for a 24 month extension of their post-completion OPT for two education levels. This extension is available twice per lifetime and cannot be issued in installments of less than 24 months. The STEM extensions do not replace the standard 12 month OPT and can only be requested during the standard 12 month post-completion OPT period.

Eligibility Requirements

- The student cannot have previously received two 24 month STEM extensions for previous OPT authorizations.
- The student must have successfully completed a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree in a field listed on the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List.
- The student must be currently on post-completion OPT and working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to the student’s STEM designated program of study listed on the student’s I-20.
- The student and employer must have a bona fide employer/employee relationship. If your employer is a consulting agency, you will have your placement company complete the I-983 and you will be required to submit a new I-983 for each new placement.
- The student must be in valid F-1 status over the course of the OPT authorization, not exceeded 90 days unemployment.
- The student must have an offer of employment, or continued employment, from an employer who is registered in the E-Verify program at the time of the application for the 24 month extension, complete the I-983 with the student in the application, AND the employer must agree to report to the Office of International Student & Scholar Services any early departure or termination of employment within 48 hours of the event.

Application Dates

Earliest date: 90 days before your current OPT end date
Latest date: End date of your current OPT

Note: The application must be received by USCIS before the current EAD expires. Students who have applied for the extension may continue working on the expired EAD for 180 days or until the application is approved as long as they have received the receipt of the application from USCIS.

Application Procedure

1. Complete the following documents and submit via email:

   (For the International Student Services office only)
   - Optional Practical Training STEM Extension Eligibility Form
   - 24 Month OPT STEM Extension Employer Verification
   - Form I-983 – type and print, sign in blue ink – Return form with “wet” signatures:
     - Under Training Plan, your direct supervisor must complete
     - Under the Employer Certification sections, a company representative with signatory authority must sign

   (For USCIS)
   - Check or Money Order for $410, made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”
   - Two passport-style color photographs (must be taken within 30 days of your application)
   - Form I-765 – type and print, sign in blue ink
2. Submit all documents via email to lenka.garimella@umsl.edu and wait for feedback.

3. Mail your application to USCIS. USCIS must receive your application within 60 days of the issuance of the I-20

Please see “Mailing Address for OPT and OPT STEM Application” list. The USCIS standard processing time is 60 - 90 days.

While on OPT STEM Extension

Reporting Status: All changes must be reported to the University of Missouri - St. Louis within 10 days of the change:
- Legal name
- Residential or mailing address
- Employer name
- Employer address
- Employment details
- Loss of employment

Validation Report: Students on STEM extension will be notified by SEVP Portan via email to submit a validation report confirming current employment every six months starting from the date extension begins and ending when the student’s F-1 status ends. The validation report is due within 10 days of each reporting date. NOTE: Failure to submit the annual 6 month report will result in the termination of your I-20 by USCIS.

I-983 Evaluation on Student Progress: Students must also submit the annual Evaluation on Student Progress listed on the I-983 (page 5). The first annual progress report must be submitted to the International Student Services office 12 months after the approval of your STEM OPT. The second annual report must be submitted 24 months after the approval of your STEM OPT. Failure to submit the I-983 reports within 10 days of these anniversary dates will result in the termination of your I-20 by USCIS

Job Requirements while on OPT STEM Extension:

No more than 150 days of unemployment during the entire 36 months of OPT (90 days OPT, 60 days STEM)

While on STEM OPT
1. You must be employed in a position directly related to the program of study listed on your I-20
2. The employer must be E-Verified
3. You must submit an updated I-983 completed by you and your employer to the International Student Services office for any employment change within 10 days of the change. You must submit I-983 evaluations within the assigned deadline
4. If you change job on STEM Extension, you must submit the Final Evaluation on Student Progress (Page 5th of I-983) to ISSS for the job which just ended and entire new I-983 form for the new employer. Change of STEM Employer is recorded by DSO in SEVIS, but is not filed with USCIS. Student will receive a new I-20 reflecting new employer.

Mailing Address for OPT and OPT STEM Extension Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mail your application to: USCIS Chicago Lockbox</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Postal Service (USPS):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 805373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL 60680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USCIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attn: I-765 C03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131 South Dearborn – 3rd Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL 60603-5517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPT STEM Extension Eligibility Form

Section 1
Name: ________________________________  Student ID#: ______________________________
UMSL Email: ________________________________  Phone Number: ______________________________
Alternate Email: ________________________________  Degree Level: ______________________________
UMSL Degree Program: _____________________________________________________________________________________
Current Local Address: _____________________________________________________________________________________
[street address and apt. #] [city] [state] [zip code]

Section 2
Company Name (As listed in E-Verify): _____________________________________________________________________________________
Company Address: _____________________________________________________________________________________
Job title: ________________________________________________________________
Supervisor's name: ______________________________  Supervisor's email: ______________________________
Supervisor’s phone number: ______________________________  Employment start date: ______________________________

Please read this acknowledgement statement and sign below:

- I understand and have read carefully the information in this packet regarding the 24 month OPT Extension for STEM degree holders.
- By my signature below, I certify that I have not previously received two 24 month extensions from previous STEM degrees.
- My employment (and current offer to start or continue employment) is directly related to the STEM field listed on my I-20
- I understand that while I am on post-completion OPT I am required to report to UMSL Global (via the online reporting tools) any change in the information listed below within 20 days of the change:
  - Legal name
  - Residential Address (address where I physically live and can receive mail)
  - Employer name and address
  - Change or loss of employment
- If my application for this OPT extension is successful, I also understand that it is my responsibility to make a validation report to UMSL Global.

By my signature below I certify that I: 1) understand it is my responsibility to report to UMSL Global any changes to my legal name, local address, employment status and main employer within 10 days of the change; 2) I understand that I am responsible for maintaining my F-1 status while on OPT by engaging in acceptable employment that is directly related to my field of study and keeping my days of post-completion unemployment within allowed limits.

______________________________________________________________________________________________
Student’s Signature  Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
To be completed by student & employer:

24-Month OPT STEM Extension Employer Verification

Section 1 (To be completed by student)

Name: _______________________________ Student Number: _____________________________

The information in this employer verification form is required before our office can issue the recommendation necessary for the student to apply for the 24 month OPT extension. Please fill in the fields below with the requested information about the company and the position that has been offered to the student. This form must be accompanied by the original letter on company letterhead that confirms the offer of (continued) paid employment for the above named student. If you have any questions, please contact an advisor at UMSL Global.

Section 2 (To be completed by employer)

Company Name (As listed in E-Verify): _______________________________________________________

E-Verify Company Identification Number: __________________________ Company EIN #: __________

Company Address: _______________________________________________________________________

Job title: _________________________________________________________________________________

Employment start date: __________________ Number of working hours per week: __________________

Supervisor's name: __________________ Supervisor's title: _______________________________________

Supervisor's email: __________________ Supervisor's phone number: _____________________________

Notice to Employers: This form enables the University of Missouri-St. Louis to certify to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that the above mentioned F-1 student is eligible for this 24 month extension of his/her OPT based upon the following criteria as established in 8 CFR 214.2 (f)(10)(ii)(C):

1. The student’s employer is registered in the E-Verify program, as evidenced by either a valid E-Verify Company Identification Number or, a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number

2. The employer agrees to report any departure or termination of employment to UMSL Global or any other means or process identified by DHS if the departure or termination is prior to the end of the authorized period of OPT. This reporting must take place within 48 hours of the event. An employer shall consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left the employment, or if the student has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the consent of the employer, whichever occurs earlier.

Employer Certification

Your signature below certifies that the employer listed on this form agrees to the reporting requirement explained in item 2 in the Notice to Employers. Employers who hire STEM OPT students must agree to report any departure or termination within 48 hours of the event.

Name & Title of Person Completing this Form: ________________________________________________

Email: ___________________________________________ Phone Number: _____________________________

Signature: __________________________________ Date: _________________________________