



International Student Services
F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)
STEM Extension

What is a STEM OPT Extension?

A student with a qualifying Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree, who is in a valid period of standard post-completion OPT, may be eligible to apply for an additional 24-month extension of OPT. To apply for the extension:

- You must have an offer of paid employment for at least 20 hours per week with an employer enrolled in DHS's [E-Verify](#) program.
- The code for your major field of study listed on your Form I-20 must be on the Department of Homeland Security's [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#).
 - If the degree that your standard period of OPT is based on is not in a STEM field, but you have a prior STEM degree from Marymount or another school, you may also be able to base your extension on that degree. Discuss this with an International Student Services (ISS) advisor.
- You and your employer must complete and sign a [Form I-983 Training Plan](#), and you must submit that plan to the ISS office.
- The ISS office must recommend the STEM OPT extension in SEVIS, and issue you an updated Form I-20.
- Within 60 days of the recommendation in SEVIS, and before the expiration of your standard post-completion OPT, you must file [Form I-765](#), the **Form I-765 filing fee**, and the **updated STEM OPT Form I-20 with USCIS**.

When should you apply for STEM OPT Extension?

If qualified, you can submit your STEM OPT extension application to USCIS up to 90 days before your current OPT end date. It is important to note however that the STEM application must be received by USCIS within 60 days of the date on which the ISS office made the recommendation for STEM OPT in your SEVIS record, and before your current OPT expires.

What is required while on STEM OPT?

Throughout the STEM OPT extension period, the student and employer must comply with the reporting, training, supervision, evaluation, wage, documentation, and other obligations specified in the regulations and on Form I-983.

- **Validation report every 6 months.** Make a validation report to the ISS office **every six months** starting from the date the extension begins. The validation should confirm the accuracy of your name; your physical and mailing addresses; your employer's name and address; and the status of your employment. This six-month validation report is due to ISS within 10 business days of each reporting date.
- **Annual self-evaluation of training.** You must complete the "Evaluation of Student Progress" portion of the Form I-983 within 12 months of the listed STEM OPT start date. At the end of the STEM OPT extension, you must conduct a second, final self-assessment. Once the evaluations are complete, the student must collect signatures from their employer and return the form to the DSO, who will keep it in the student's physical record.
- **Maintain your employment.** You may not accrue more than 150 days of unemployment during your entire 36-month (12 months standard OPT and 24 months STEM OPT) OPT period.
- **Revised Form I-983 if there are material changes.** Report to ISS any material changes to or material deviations from your Form I-983 Training Plan by providing ISS with a revised Form I-983 within 5 days of the change.
- **Change or addition of employers.** If you wish to change employers, the new employer must be enrolled in E-Verify and employ you for at least 20 hours per week, and the job must directly relate to your STEM degree. The same goes

the new job. If you begin a new job with a new employer less than 10 days after leaving your prior employer, you simply submit a new Form I-983 to ISS. If the period of time between employers is longer than 10 days, you must first report the loss of employment to ISS within 10 days of stopping work, and later submit a new Form I-983 within 10 days of starting your new employment.

- **Report termination of employment.** Both you and your employer have a separate obligation to notify ISS of any termination of your employment. Your employer must notify us within 5 business days of the termination, and you must notify us within 10 days of the termination.
- **Report changes to your name and address.** You must notify ISS within 10 days of any change to your legal name or your mailing or physical addresses.
- **Copy of your EAD.** Make sure ISS has on file a photocopy of the front and back of your Employment Authorization Document (EAD card).

Report changes and submit validation reports and self-evaluations to ISS via email to iss@marymount.edu.

APPLYING FOR STEM EXTENSION

Application Procedure:

Make an appointment with an ISS advisor. Your ISS advisor will help explain all OPT procedures and how they apply to your individual case.

Bring the following documents:

- A \$410.00 check or money order made payable to: Department of Homeland Security or the [G-1450](#) form for paying with a credit card.
- Completed [Form I-983 Training Plan](#), prepared and signed by you and your employer. (Scan the top QR Code)
- 2 passport photos. Print your name and birth date on the back of each photo. Completed/Printed Immigration Form [I-765](#) (Scan the QR Code to the right)



- **Type or print in black ink**
- **Answer all questions fully and accurately. If a question does not apply to you type or print "N/A". If your answer to a question which requires a numeric response is zero or none, type or print "None" unless otherwise directed.**
- **Sections to pay attention to:**

Part 1: Mark Initial permission to accept employment

Part 2:

Line 1: Last name should be spelled out in all capital letters. Your first name should be spelled with only the first letter capitalized. For example: SMITH, Jane

Line 8: If you have an A-Number which is issued to people who has applied or was granted certain immigration benefits.

Line 9 Asks for a USCIS online account which you will have only if you filed applications or petitions before using an online system.

Line 14 & 15: If you have not already been issued a social security number and would like one please check "Yes" for items 14 and 15.

Line 21.a: This number (I-94 number) can be found online at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov> or, in some cases, on a white card in your passport. Please include all 11 digits.

Lines 23 & 24: Please see your I-94 for this information.

Line 26: Enter your SEVIS number located at the top left corner of your I-20

Line 27: Code for pre-completion practical training (c) (3) (A); post-completion practical training (c) (3) (B); 24-month extension for STEM students (c) (3) (C).

Line 28.a-28.c: Leave blank unless applying for STEM extension.

Part 3: Select the box to indicate if you read this application yourself or if you had an interpreter help you

Part 4: If an interpreter is used, have them fill out Part 4.

Part 5: If someone else prepares you I-765 for you, have them fill out Part 5.

Part 6: Additional information: **Very important!** You must complete this section if you had CPT or OPT permits in the past and/or if you had other SEVIS record ID numbers.

For each of the items listed above (i.e. CPT, OPT, different SEVIS ID numbers), complete one box in Part 6,

3.a., 3.b and 3.c complete Page 2, Part 2, Item 27

Starting on 3.d. Complete all your CPT or OPT approvals if you have previous ones. Information is in your previous I-20's

For example: N0000000000, CPT, 07/07/17-09/07/17, Bachelor's

In the next box 4.d or 5.d Complete all your previous SEVIS record ID numbers that you had in the past.

For example: Previous SEVIS ID N0000000000, 09/08/13-05/20/16, Bachelor's

- Copy of Diploma or copy of Official Academic Transcript (showing degree awarded and major)
- Photocopy of current OPT/EAD card (front and back)
- Photocopy of Passport IS page
- Photocopy of current Visa (if applicable)
- Photocopy of I-94 card (front and back) or [electronically](#)
- Photocopy of all I-20s, even if for a previous F-1 status (We may not send them all, but need for application.)
- Form [G-1145](#) (Not required, but recommended.)
- After review the above and updating SEVIS, **ISS will issue you a new Form I-20** that includes the recommendation for a STEM OPT extension. You must sign the new I-20 and include it with the above documents (except the Form I-983) in your application package to USCIS.

Mail your application to USCIS, so that USCIS **receives** it within 60 days of the recommendation in SEVIS, and before the expiration of your standard post-completion OPT. Make sure to include all of the above items in the package, *except* the Form I-983 Training Plan, which does not need to be submitted to USCIS.

Write on the bottom right hand corner of envelope "Form I-765."

USCIS Dallas Lockbox

For U.S. Postal Service deliveries: USCIS

PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

For Express mail and courier deliveries: USCIS

Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400

Lewisville, TX 75067

If you timely file a non-frivolous application for the 24-month STEM OPT extension, you will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.

You can check the status of your application and find out about standard processing times on the [USCIS website](#). In most instances, OPT applications take around three months to be approved. However, a student's work authorization is automatically extended for up to 180 days while the STEM extension application is pending.



Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information of Legal Obligations while on 24 Month STEM OPT as required by the Department of Homeland Security

Qualified students can apply for the 24 month STEM OPT extension up to 90 days prior to the end of their original 12 month OPT, and their application must be received and receipted by USCIS prior to the end of their original 12 month OPT. If a student timely files their 24-month STEM OPT application, their work authorization will automatically be extended for 180 days while their application is adjudicated. **Please note that your 24-month STEM OPT application must be received by USCIS within 60 days of the I-20 issue date.**

During this term, Marymount University will still be maintaining your F-1 status. You are therefore obligated by the Department of Homeland Security to:

- Send to ISS a copy of you EAD card.
- Engage only in employment connected to the degree your STEM extension is based on.
- Adhere to I-983 training plan and report any material changes to the training plan. Provide to ISS a brief written description of how employment relates to your major.
- Report to ISS your current address and subsequent changes to your address within 10 days of it changing.
- Report to ISS any name change within 10 days of its change.
- Report to ISS your employer's name, address, your employment start, end dates and hours worked per week as well as subsequent changes within 10 days of the change including the company's E-verify number and a new I-983 training plan.
- Report to ISS any periods of unemployment.
- Provide to ISS a brief written description of how your employment relates to your major.

Mandatory STEM OPT Employment Reporting

- Submit the Evaluation of Student Progress portion of the I-983 within 12 months (___/___/___) and 24-months (___/___/___) of the listed STEM OPT start date.
- Report OPT Participation within 6 months (___/___/___), 12 months (___/___/___) and 18 months (___/___/___) of the listed STEM OPT start date.

IMPORTANT! There are limits on unemployment. Students may have up to **150 days of unemployment**, during post completion OPT. If this time is exceeded, the student is considered to have violated their immigration status. The only exception is that periods of up to 10 days between the end of one job and the beginning of the next job will not be included in the calculation for the time spent unemployed.

SEVP Portal Reporting

During STEM OPT, you will be able to use the portal account to update your personal information. However, you will need to inform ISS whenever you change employers or job description since you must submit and updated I-983 training plan.

Types of work that is valid as employment while on STEM OPT

- Regular paid employment for at least 20 hours per week.
- Engage only in employment connected to the degree your STEM extension is based on.
- The job must be in the context of a bona-fide employer-employee relationship. Employment through sole proprietorships, "temp" agencies, and consulting firm arrangements that provide labor for hire do not consist of a bona-fide relationship.
- Employer must complete an I-983 training plan and have a valid E-verify number.

You can report this information to ISS by:

1. Sending an email to docs@marymount.edu with "STEM OPT requested information" in the subject field
2. Completing the electronic form STEM OPT employer found at www.marymount.edu.
3. Drop a hard copy of documents at our office. International Student Services, Gerard Hall, 1031 – Main Campus.

My signature below acknowledges receipt and understanding of the above information.

Printed Name _____
Signature _____ Date _____

Please feel free to call ISS with ANY questions at 703-526-6922.