STEM Optional Practical Training (OPT) Workshop

Fall 2023
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STEM OPT Tutorial Note

Please be advised that this tutorial is only used for informational purposes only.

Students are responsible for their own personal applications. Students should make sure that the STEM OPT application has full documentation and is timely filed while understanding the F-1 regulations on STEM OPT.

Please contact the ISS Office if you have any additional questions.
Basics of STEM OPT
Basic Information on STEM OPT

What is STEM OPT?

F-1 students who graduated in eligible science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees may apply for a 24 Month extension after their standard 12 Month Post-Completion OPT.

F-1 students may participate in STEM OPT employment up to two times per lifetime.
Basic Information on STEM OPT

When does STEM OPT start?

- STEM OPT begins the day after Post-Completion OPT
- Extension of F-1 I-20 status

Post-Completion OPT

12 months

24 months

STEM OPT Extension
Eligibility for STEM OPT
# Eligibility for STEM OPT Extension

| 01 | Valid Immigration Status | ● Valid F-1 I-20 Status  
|    |                          | ● Currently on Post-Completion OPT  
|    |                          | ● EAD Card, unexpired |
| 02 | Eligible Degree          | ● Bachelor’s or higher degree in eligible STEM field  
|    |                          | ● Major CIP Codes must be on [DHS STEM Designated Degree List](#)  
|    |                          | ● Within the last 10 years and unused for STEM OPT |
| 03 | Qualified Employment     | ● E-Verified Employer  
|    |                          | ● Paid Employment  
|    |                          | ● At least 20 hours per week  
|    |                          | ● Must complete I-983 Training Plan with Employer |
Checking Your STEM Degree

- Check if your degree is eligible for STEM OPT by checking the CIP code listed on your I-20
- Your STEM degree must be listed in the STEM Designated Degree Program List

**DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List**

*Last Updated: July 12, 2023*

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) STEM Designated Degree Program List is a complete list of fields of study that DHS considers to be science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) fields of study for purposes of the 24-month STEM optional practical training extension described at 8 CFR 214.2(j). Under 8 CFR 214.2(j)(10)(ii)(C)(2), a STEM field of study is one included in the Department of Education’s Classification of Instructional Programs taxonomy within the two-digit series containing engineering, biological sciences, mathematics, and physical sciences, or a related field. In general, related fields will include fields involving research, innovation, or development of new technologies using engineering, mathematics, computer science, or natural sciences (including physical, biological, and agricultural sciences).

Accordingly, this list designates the following four primary CIP series at the 2-digit CIP code level: Engineering (14), Biological and Biomedical Sciences (26), Mathematics and Statistics (27) and Physical Sciences (40). Any new additions to those areas will automatically be included on this STEM Designated Degree Program List.

This list also includes CIPs from the following 18 related CIP series at the 6-digit CIP code level: Agricultural/Animal/Plant/Veterinary Science and Related Fields (01); Natural Resources and Conservation (03); Architecture and Related Services (04); Communication, Journalism and Related Programs (09); Communications Technologies/Technicians and Support Services (10); Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services (11); Education (13); Engineering/Engineering-Related Technologies/Technicians (15); Military Science, Leadership and Operational Art (28); Military Technologies and Applied Sciences (29); Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies (30); Science Technologies/Technicians (41); Psychology (42); Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting and Related Protective Services (43); Social Sciences (45); Transportation and Materials Moving (49); Health Professions and Related Programs (51); and Business, Management, Marketing and Related Support Services (52).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIP Code</th>
<th>Two-Digit Series</th>
<th>2020 CIP Code</th>
<th>CIP Code Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0308</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture and Sustainable Agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0901</td>
<td></td>
<td>Animal Sciences, General.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0902</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural Animal Breeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0903</td>
<td></td>
<td>Animal Health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0904</td>
<td></td>
<td>Animal Nutrition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0905</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dairy Science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0906</td>
<td></td>
<td>Livestock Management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0907</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poultry Science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0999</td>
<td></td>
<td>Animal Sciences, Other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.1001</td>
<td></td>
<td>Food Science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.1002</td>
<td></td>
<td>Food Technology and Processing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment Types on STEM OPT

What is allowable employment during STEM OPT?

- Must be paid employment (at least 20 hrs or more per week)
- No volunteer, unpaid, and self-employment
- Employers must have E-Verify & EIN numbers
- Employer must meet ALL the requirements listed on the [STEM OPT Website](https://www.ice.gov/)
  - Must establish bona fide relationship between employee and employer
  - Strict USCIS guidelines on third party placements/staffing agencies
  - F-1 OPT/STEM OPT students should not train or manage another F-1 student with STEM OPT Extension
  - Employer should meet all the requirements listed in the ‘[STEM OPT Employer Responsibilities section](https://www.ice.gov/)
- Must have STEM OPT employment from the start of STEM OPT period
STEM OPT
Application Process
STEM OPT Application Timeline

Start preparing I-983 with employer

Submit STEM OPT Application to USCIS

USCIS Accepts STEM OPT Extension Application
  (Regular Processing Time: 3-5 months, Premium Processing: 30 days)

STEM OPT Extension begins

If timely filed, may continue to work up to 180 days after EAD expires

USCIS must receive STEM OPT application before EAD end date

Reminder: Must be employed by a STEM OPT employer from the start of STEM OPT period
# STEM OPT Application Process

## Internal Process (Before mailing to USCIS)

1. Report your current OPT employment through SEVP OPT Portal
2. Complete I-983 with Employer
3. Submit STEM OPT documents to the ISS office
   a. Drop it off or email at internationalstudents@ucr.edu
4. Pay the $300 ISS STEM OPT processing fee and (A link for payment will be sent to student). **Beginning January 1, 2024**
5. Submit processing fee receipt to ISS office
6. ISS will issue STEM OPT I-20 and make recommendations on documents
7. Receive STEM OPT I-20 from ISS office by email

## External Process

1. Prepare final STEM OPT application and mail materials to USCIS
   a. Include filing fee and passport photos
   b. *IMPORTANT: USCIS must receive your documents before EAD expires*
2. Continue to maintain STEM OPT Employment during application process
   a. STEM OPT applicant may work up to 180 days after EAD card expires
3. STEM OPT EAD card will arrive
4. Maintain STEM OPT Reporting Responsibilities
STEM OPT Application Checklist

To access checklist, click here

After Submitting your OPT Application Online

- Check the USCIS Form I-765 status
- Recruit an Employer Evaluation Letter
- Check the USCIS status
- Check the USCIS I-765 Application
- Check the USCIS I-765 Approval
- Check the USCIS I-765 Approval

STEM OPT Approval

If OPT is denied, USCIS may issue a Notice of Intent to Deny. Please set up an appointment with USCIS to discuss your case.

Current Status

- Current Status
- Current Status
- Current Status
- Current Status
- Current Status

STEM OPT Reporting Requirements

- STEM OPT Reporting
- STEM OPT Reporting
- STEM OPT Reporting
- STEM OPT Reporting
- STEM OPT Reporting

Changes in personal and employment information (Submit report within 10 days of change):

- Change of employer
- Change of address
- Change of school
- Change of major
- Change of degree

If you do not complete the STEM OPT Program:

- If you do not complete the STEM OPT Program:
- If you do not complete the STEM OPT Program:
- If you do not complete the STEM OPT Program:
- If you do not complete the STEM OPT Program:

For students who complete the STEM OPT Program:

- For students who complete the STEM OPT Program:
- For students who complete the STEM OPT Program:
- For students who complete the STEM OPT Program:
- For students who complete the STEM OPT Program:

Online I-765 Tax

- Online I-765 Tax
- Online I-765 Tax
- Online I-765 Tax
- Online I-765 Tax
- Online I-765 Tax

Figures:

- Figures
- Figures
- Figures
- Figures
- Figures

International Students

- International Students
- International Students
- International Students
- International Students
- International Students
Required STEM OPT Application Documents
To Request for a STEM OPT I-20

To receive a STEM OPT I-20, please submit the following documents to the ISS office. Once received, the ISS office will review your documents and will issue you a new I-20 recommending you for STEM OPT.

Documents for ISS office

- Form I-983 Training Plan (ISS office keeps this form)
- Draft Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization (Optional)
- Copy of current EAD card (front & back)
- Employee Offer Letter
  - Company Letterhead
  - Job Position
  - Job Responsibilities/Description

Submit your documents at the ISS office or by email: internationalstudents@ucr.edu
Form I-983 Training Plan

Purpose: The Form I-983 Training Plan must clearly articulate the STEM OPT student’s learning objectives and affirm the employer’s commitment to helping the student achieve those objectives.

The Form I-983 Training Plan must be completed by student and employer and submitted to the ISS office. For the application process, complete pages 1-4 only. *The ISS office will keep this form and does not go to USCIS. Page 5 will be completed only during the evaluation period.*
Form I-983 (pg. 1 of 5)

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Optional Practical Training (OPT)

SECTION 1: STUDENT INFORMATION (Completed by Student)

Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name):
Student Email Address:
Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:
Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned:
SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT (including 3-digit suffix):
Designated School Officer (DSO) Name and Contact Information:
SEVIS ID No.:
STEM OPT Requested Period (mm-dd-yyyy):
Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code:
Level of Degree Awarded (mm-dd-yyyy):
Based on Prior Degree? □ Yes □ No
Employment Authorization Number:

SECTION 2: STUDENT 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 this law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willfully supplying or concealing a material fact, or using any false document in the submission of this form.

I certify that:
1. I have reviewed, understand, and will adhere to this Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. (Plan). If I do not follow this plan or if I fail to maintain my status as a student, I may be expelled from the United States.
2. I understand that the educational institution I am attending will be responsible for ensuring that I am in compliance with the terms of this plan and that non-compliance may result in the revocation of my OPT.
3. I understand that if I am not compliant with the terms of this plan and I fail to maintain my status as a student, I may be expelled from the United States.

I will notify the DSO of any changes to my employment status and provide supporting documentation. If I fail to comply with the terms of this plan or if I fail to maintain my status as a student, I may be expelled from the United States.

Date (mm-dd-yyyy):

Signature of Student:
Printed Name of Student:

Email Address
Enter your preferred email address.
USCIS will use this to send updates.

SEVIS School Code
(Can be found on your Form I-20)
LOS214F00177000

STEM OPT Requested Period
Start Date: Day after EAD card expires
End Date: Two years from start date

SEVIS ID No:
Add number that starts with “N00-”
Can be found on pg 1 of the I-20

Qualifying Major CIP Code
Add CIP Code from STEM I-20
Can be found on pg 1 of the I-20

Employment Authorization Number
Enter the EAD card number listed on your current EAD card.

Name of School
University of California Riverside

Name of School Where STEM Degree was Earned
If most recent degree is STEM, University of California Riverside
If STEM degree was earned elsewhere, enter name of U.S. school of STEM degree

DSO Contact Information
Name
Email address
951-827-XXXX

*Required for ISS office only
*Not for USCIS
**Form I-983 (pg. 1 of 5)**

### Section 2: Student Completes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Completes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTIONS 2: STUDENT CERTIFICATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I certify that:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I have reviewed, understand, and will adhere to this Training Plan for STEM OPT Students (&quot;Plan&quot;);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 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;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 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;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My practical training opportunity is directly related to the STEM degree that qualifies me for the STEM OPT extension; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 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 non-trivial 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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Student Signature**

**Name of Student**

**Date (mm-dd-yyyy):** **Date of Signature**

---

**Student Certification**

- Signature of student/employer - handwritten, electronically reproduced copies of a signature, electronic signatures produced with software programs or applications
### Employer Completes

**SECTION 3: EMPLOYER INFORMATION (Completed by Employer)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Name: Employer/Company Name</th>
<th>Street Address: Company Address</th>
<th>Suite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer Website URL: Company Website</td>
<td>City:</td>
<td>State:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer ID Number (EIN): EIN Number (9 digits)</td>
<td>Number of Full-Time Employees in U.S.:</td>
<td>North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code: NAICS Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPT Hours Per Week (must be at least 20 hours/week): Working hrs/week</td>
<td>Compensation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date of Employment (mm-dd-yyyy): STEM OPT Start Date</td>
<td>A. Salary Amount and Frequency:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | B. Other Compensation (Type and Estimated Amount or Value):
| | 1. |
| | 2. |
| | 3. |
| | 4. |

**Employer Information**

- **Employer Name:** Employer or Company Name
- **Street Address:** Employer or Company’s physical location
- **Employer ID Number (EIN):** Unique nine-digit number, also referred to as the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or Federal Tax Identification Number
- **Start Date of Employment:** Start date of STEM OPT
Section 4
Employer Completes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>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.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority (Sign in ink):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name and Title of Employer Official with Signatory Authority:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date (mm-dd-yyyy):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name of Employing Organization:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signature of Employer Official**
- Handwritten or electronic signatures accepted
- Should be employee with signatory authority for employer
- Should be familiar with student’s goals and performance
- Must be able to attest to the terms & conditions of STEM practical training
Form I-983 (pg. 3 of 5)

Section 5
Student and Employer Completes

Training Plan

- Must complete Section 5 with your employer

- Employer’s information should be your direct supervisor or whoever will be providing you with the training
**Form I-983 (pg. 3 of 5)**

**Section 5**
Student and Employer Completes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SECTION 5: TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS (Completed by Student and Employer)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAST NAME, FIRST NAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employer Name:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY NAME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>EMPLOYER SITE INFORMATION</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site Name:</strong> SITE NAME (If different from Employer Name, enter name of site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Address (Street, City, State, ZIP):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address where you will be physically working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of Official:</strong> Name of Direct Supervisor (First and Last Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official's Title:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Direct Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Official's Email:</strong> Email of Direct Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official's Phone Number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number of Direct Supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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’s Role

Describe what tasks and assignments the student will carry out during the training and how they relate the student’s STEM degree at UCR. Should also indicate how the role is enhancing the knowledge obtained through the STEM degree. The plan must cover a specific span of time, detail specific goals, and objectives.

Tips:
- Have your offer letter
- Be detailed and descriptive
- Include your position title and your job responsibilities
- Include your STEM Degree name
- Must explain how your job position is going to enhance your knowledge related to your STEM degree
Goals and Objectives

Describe the specific skills, knowledge, and techniques the student will learn or apply; how the student will achieve the goals set out for his or her training; and the training curriculum including the timeline.

Tips:
- Think of around 3-4 goals and objectives at this position during your STEM period
- Describe how each goal will include learning objectives enhancing your STEM degree
- Each goal should have S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound) elements
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.

Tips:
- Describe the methods of how the employer will be providing oversight and supervision
- Be descriptive when explaining each method
Section 5 (Continued)
Measures and Assessments

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.

Tips:
- Describe how your employer will be measuring and assessing your knowledge and skills in your position
- Be as descriptive as you can
Form I-983 (pg. 4 of 5)

Section 6
Employer Completes

Employer Certification
- Employer must sign this section
- Should review above information and affirm by signature
- Does not need to be same official who signed Section 4
Section 6
Student & Employer Completes

ATTENTION:
You do not need to submit until evaluations are due.

Evaluation

- Must be completed by student
- Evaluation must be signed off by the student AND the employer
- Mark your calendars for annual evaluation deadlines

Submit your documents in person at the ISS office or by email:
internationalstudents@ucr.edu
Form I-765
There are two options to file for the Form I-765

**Option 1:** Physical Mail

**Option 2:** Filing Online (New)

- Do NOT submit the I-765 Form to USCIS without obtaining a STEM OPT I-20 from ISS
- Each filing option requires different supporting documents
- The application timeline is the same for both options
- Please do not submit duplicate OPT applications and/or fee using different filing options
- If you choose to file online, we recommend completing the paper I-765 application for practice and to receive feedback from the ISS office
Please make sure to get the most updated form directly from the USCIS website.

- **Form I-765**

**Purpose:** The Form I-765 is the application form for the EAD card

The Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization must be submitted to USCIS. Please submit all 7 pages

**Tips:**
- Typed, not handwritten
- Hand-sign signature (in black ink)
- Always get the most updated version from USCIS website
  - **Form I-765**
- For the I-765 Template, [click here](#)
Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):

1.a. Initial permission to accept employment.
1.b. 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.
1.c. Renewal of my permission to accept employment. (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name  
   (Last Name)  
1.b. Given Name  
   (First Name)  
1.c. Middle Name

Part 1. Items #1a~1c

Select one of the following:
- #1a. If this is your first time applying for STEM OPT
- #1b. If you are replacing your lost, stolen, or damaged EAD card
- #1c. If this is not your first time applying for STEM OPT

Part 2. Items #1a~4c

Enter your full legal name and other names you use
### Part 2. U.S. Address

**Items #5a~5e: U.S. Mailing Address**

- EAD will be sent to this address
- Select an address that will be valid for more the next 4-5 months
- If friend, relative or employer’s address, write FULL name under “In Care of Name (if any)”

**If you change your address,**

- The U.S. Postal Service will not forward any government mail to new addresses
- Must submit an Official Change of Address (click on link) to USCIS through the USCIS website
Form I-765 (pg 3 of 7)

**Part 2. Eligibility Category**

**Item #27**
Enter STEM code (c)(3)(C)

**Item #28**

- **a)** Enter Degree level & STEM Major i.e. "Master’s in Biology"
- *If you cannot fit your major name, please complete pg 7, Additional Information, section.*
- **b)** Employer’s name as listed in E-Verify
- **c)** Confirm the E-Verify number with employer

Skip rest of page from Item #29.
Form I-765

Part 3. Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature

Applicant’s Statement (Items #1a~2)
Select Item #1a (if you are preparing the STEM OPT application yourself)

Applicant’s Contact Information
Complete Items #3~6
Form I-765 (pg 5 of 7)

Part 3. Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature (Continued)

COVID-19 REMINDER:
This document goes to USCIS so, signatures must be handwritten

Applicant’s Signature & Date

**IMPORTANT:** Remember to sign before mailing STEM OPT packet!
Signature should be handwritten and in black ink.

If you selected Item #1a in Applicant’s Statement, skip Part 4 and jump to page 7.
Form I-765 (pg 7 of 7)

Part 6. Additional Information

Complete this section if you need to provide additional information. If the following pertain to you, please complete this section:

- Previous OPT Approval
- Explaining STEM Major
- Different SEVIS ID in the past
- Change of Visa Status
- Not enough room for name
Part 6. Additional Information

If you need to explain **OPT approval**, we suggest this format:

- Title: Previous OPT Authorizations
- Enter EAD card Start date –End date
- Enter OPT Degree level: (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate); Post-Completion OPT or STEM OPT
- Enter EAD Card Number
- Enter text “Please see attached for copy of EAD card”
### Part 6. Additional Information

If you need to explain **STEM Major degree**, we suggest this format:

- **Title**: STEM Degree Major
- **Enter STEM major name** (as on your I-20)
- **Enter School Name**
- **Enter major CIP code** (as on your I-20)
- **Enter text “Please see attached for copy of STEM I-20 and STEM diploma or transcript”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.a. Page Number</th>
<th>3.b. Part Number</th>
<th>3.c. Item Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As of April 12, 2021, USCIS announced that F-1 students may file I-765 online for OPT/STEM OPT.

Here is the announcement.

Please keep in mind that the student is responsible for application.

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**Online Option**

**Filing Form I-765 Online**

- **Welcome to your USCIS Account**
  - Select what you want to do
  - Edit My Profile
    - Editing your profile includes email, password, phone number, security questions, two-step verification and backup code.

- **Login to a USCIS Service**
  - **my USCIS**
    - Apply for immigration benefits, find tools and resources to assist in preparation for naturalization, and search for doctors in your local community.
  - **FIRST**
    - Submit, manage and receive Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.
  - **myE-Verify**
    - Confirm your records for employment eligibility, track E-Verify or Self-Check case status, and protect your identity by locking your Social Security Number (SSN).

**Filing I-765 Online**

**Step One**
- Go to I-765 website and click ‘File Online’
- Create USCIS Account
- Two-Factor Authentication
- Cannot file for anyone else
Filing Form I-765 Online

Welcome To Your USCIS Account
Select What You Want To Do

Step Two
● Click on ‘File a form online’
Filing Form I-765 Online

Step Three

- Click on 'Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)
- Click 'Start form'
- Read through notes
Filing Form I-765 Online - Sections

Getting Started
- Basis of Eligibility
- Reason for Applying
- Preparer and Interpreter Information

About You
- Your Name
- Your Contact Information
- Describe Yourself
- When and Where you were Born
- Your Immigration Information
- Other Information

Evidence
- One 2x2 Passport Photo of You
- Form I-94
- Employment Authorization Document
- STEM OPT I-20
- College Degree (Diploma or Transcript)
- Institution Accreditation (if your STEM degree was earned at another institution)

Additional Information
- Additional Information

Review and Submit
- Review your Application
  - $410 payment
  - $1,500 Premium Processing (optional)

Need to have digital copies of these items...
Filing Form I-765 Online - Required Documents

- One 2x2 Passport Photo of You
- Form I-94
- STEM OPT I-20
- College Degree (Diploma or Transcript showing completion of degree)
- Institution Accreditation (Only if your STEM degree was earned at another institution)
Filing Form I-765 Online - Tips

● Draft forms are saved for 30 days from the last time you worked on your form.

● Format of Form
  ○ Photos: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
  ○ Documents: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
  ○ Foreign Language documents must have English translation
  ○ Maximum size: 6 MB per file
  ○ Do not use special characters for file name

● Review your entries before you pay

● Once you make your payment, your application will automatically be submitted and cannot make corrections.

● Once you submit your application, you can track your case through your account.

● USCIS does have discretion for Biometrics Appointments.

● If you submitted your application via paper mail, you can link your case to your USCIS account.
Other Required Documents
Form G-1145

- Only for paper applications
- Optional but, strongly recommended
- Typed, not written
- To receive email notifications on your packet

Download the most updated version through the USCIS website - Form G-1145
Recent Form I-94

For online and paper applications

Provide a copy of your most recent Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

You can access your Form I-94 through:

I-94 Website (click on link)

- I-94 Admission Number will indicate most recent entry
- Class of Admission should say “F1”
- ‘Admit Until Date’ should say Duration of Status (D/S)
USCIS Application Filing Fee

$410 USCIS Application Filing Fee

Online Application - Acceptable Payment Methods
- Credit Card
- Bank Transfer

Paper Applications - Acceptable Payment Methods
- Personal Check
- Money Order
- Cashier’s Check
- Credit Card (*Form G-1450*)

Payable to:
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Personal Check - Must be from a U.S. Bank

Money Order

Money Orders can be purchased at:
- Banks
- Post-offices
- Local markets (i.e. Albertsons)
- Local pharmacies (i.e. CVS)
U.S. Passport-Style Photos

- For paper applications, prepare 2 passport-style photos
- For online applications, it only requires 1 passport-style photo
- Must meet specifications on U.S. Department of State website
- Must be a recent photo (taken within 30 days)
- Clip the photo and application fee to top of application packet

Correct Passport Size and Position:
- 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm)
- The head centered and sized between 1” and 1.4” (25 and 35 mm)

Background:
- Plain and white or off-white
- No shadows

Shadows and Lighting:
- Clear and in color
- No shadows
- Not digitally altered

Accessories:
- No glasses
- No hats or head coverings (unless for religious or medical purposes)

Where can you take passport photos?
- Costco (affordable option)
- U.S. Postal Service
- Local drugstores (i.e. Walgreens, CVS, Rite Aid)

(On the back of photos)
Gently write your name and I-94 number or SEVIS ID
STEM Diploma or Transcript

For online and paper applications
Please provide a copy of your STEM Diploma OR Transcript

Your copy should include:
- Your Name
- STEM Major & Degree Level
- Date Degree Received or Completed

The Office of the Registrar will assist in obtaining your diploma or your transcript

- To request a UCR Transcript, click here
- To learn how to receive your UCR Diploma, click here
After reviewing your documents, a DSO will issue you a new I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation. ISS will contact when the I-20 is ready for pick up.

You will be sent:
- Digital Copy of your STEM OPT I-20
- You can choose to ship it to your location (E-Ship Global)

When preparing to send it to USCIS,
- Sign the bottom of page 1 (blue ink)
- Make sure the STEM OPT requested dates are on page 2
- Make sure there is a travel signature on page 2 from DSO
- Make a photocopy of the STEM OPT I-20 (not the original copy)
- Mail your STEM OPT application within 60 days of I-20 issue date

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please review and confirm the accuracy of all information in your documents before mailing your documents. Student is responsible to ensure that all information is correct.
Mailing your STEM OPT Application
Mailing your Paper OPT Application

Once you have received your STEM OPT I-20, you will need to assemble your STEM OPT application packet for USCIS. Please gather the following documents in order as listed below. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure all documents are correctly submitted.

- $410 USCIS Application Filing Fee
- 2 recent Passport-Style (2x2 inches) Photos
- Form G-1145 (for eNotification updates on application)
- Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization
- Copy of STEM OPT I-20 (issued by ISS office) - REQUIRED BEFORE APPLYING
- Copy of current EAD card (front & back)
- Copy of Transcripts with STEM or STEM Diploma
  - If based on previous STEM diploma, please provide STEM I-20 as well.
- Copy of Form I-94
- Copy of valid Passport (Biographical Page)
- Copy of recent F-1 Visa (Canadian Nationals are Exempt)

Your STEM OPT application must arrive at USCIS within 60 days of the I-20 issue date. Documents should not be stapled together. Remember to hand-sign all of the required documents! All photocopies should be black & white. Make sure to keep a copy of entire packet for your records.
Mailing your Paper Application to USCIS

We recommend choosing a mailing courier that offers a tracking number. USCIS must receipt your packet no later than your EAD expiration date.

**NOTE:** Address may change from time to time. Check the [I-765 website](http://example.com) (click here) for updated address.
While STEM OPT Application is pending
Track your Application

USCIS Case Status Online
○ Track your application by entering the receipt number
○ Link for USCIS Case Status Online

USCIS Email Updates (paper applications)
○ USCIS will send you email notifications through the email on Form G-1145

USCIS Processing Time
○ Check the latest processing time for your type of application
○ Link for Case Processing Time
  ■ Please select ‘I-765 Form,’ and select ‘Potomac Service Center.’

Change of address
○ You must update your address by filing Form AR-11 (click here) directly with USCIS
While STEM OPT Application is Pending...

- **You can continue Employment After Filing**
  - If USCIS received your STEM OPT application in a timely manner, you may continue working up to 180 days after your EAD card expires

- **You change your employer**
  - Risky but possible
  - You must report your change of employment as soon as possible
  - You must submit a final evaluation of the Form I-983 for your previous job
  - You must submit a new Form I-983 for your new job

- **You receive a Request For Evidence (RFE)**
  - USCIS will send an RFE if additional information or evidence is required
  - Contact the UCR ISS office to speak with an International Student Advisor
International Travel and OPT

Not recommended while STEM OPT is pending
- Higher risk associated with re-entry while STEM OPT is pending (especially after EAD card expires)
- Strongly recommended to wait until STEM OPT EAD card arrives

Required Travel Documents for Pending STEM OPT
- Valid Passport (valid for at least 6 month at the time of entry)
- Valid F-1 Visa Stamp
- STEM OPT I-20 with travel signature (within 6 months)
- I-797 Receipt Notice

Required Travel Documents for Approved STEM OPT
- Valid Passport (valid for at least 6 month at the time of entry)
- Valid F-1 Visa Stamp
- STEM OPT I-20 with travel signature (within 6 months)
- Valid STEM OPT EAD Card
- Employee Verification Letter or Offer Letter

To request for an update travel signature, please complete the Document Request Form and submit to internationalstudents@ucr.edu.
Beware of Employment Scams

Check out UCR Career Center’s page on how to [Avoid Employment Scams and Fraud](#)

**Common Scams Themes:**

- Sending you a check before you begin your job
- Asking you for payment for equipment, certification, training materials, etc.
- Overpayment scams
- Pyramid Schemes

**Be Careful:**

- If posting does not indicate company information or it is difficult to find information on company
  - Do your research on companies before committing
- If company sends you an unexpected check and asks you to cash it in
- If company asks you to transfer money from one account to another
- Offers you an offer without interacting/interview with you
USCIS Decision
OPT Approvals- EAD Card

- **New EAD Card**
  - You will receive a new EAD Card with new dates printed on your card
  - If you see any errors on the card, contact the ISS office for assistance
  - Send ISS Office a copy of your new EAD Card
  - Present your new EAD card to your employer

- **Email copy to**
  [internationalstudents@ucr.edu](mailto:internationalstudents@ucr.edu)

- **Automatic Extension of your F-1 status & employment**
Request for Evidence (RFEs)

If USCIS needs more information/evidence, they will send an RFE.

- Contact ISS office and work with an International Student Advisor
- Remember! RFEs must be answered by deadline date on letter

Please contact ISS office to review required RFE documents
OPT Rejection/Denial

Rejection/Denial
- USCIS will send you a denial notice
- Please contact ISS office for assistance

Common Reasons for Denials:
- USCIS receives OPT application too early or too late (EAD card expired)
- E-Signatures
- Payment problems
- RFE was not received by deadline date
- OPT I-20 was already past 60 days of recommended date

Please contact ISS office immediately to discuss F-1 options
STEM OPT Reporting Requirements
Function of **SEVP OPT Portal** *(click here)* during STEM OPT authorization will be limited

Through the SEVP OPT Portal, you can:

- **Update Personal Information**
  - Name
  - Address
  - Phone Number

- **Review/Verify Employer Information**
  - Cannot be updated through OPT Portal
  - Changes in employer information must be done through ISS office

- **Receive alerts of STEM OPT Reports due**

- **Must update within 10 days of change**
# STEM Reporting Roadmap

## STEM EAD Start Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>1 Month</th>
<th>6 Months</th>
<th>12 Months</th>
<th>18 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Validation Report Due</td>
<td>STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
<td>STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
<td>STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
<td>STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Evaluation Report Due</td>
<td>STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
<td>I-983 Training Plan w/ Self-Evaluation (Pg 1~5)</td>
<td>STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
<td>I-983 Training Plan w/ Final Self-Evaluation (Pg 1~5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## STEM EAD End Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24 Months</th>
<th>1 Month</th>
<th>6 Months</th>
<th>12 Months</th>
<th>18 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Self-Evaluation Due</td>
<td>STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
<td>I-983 Training Plan w/ Final Self-Evaluation (Pg 1~5)</td>
<td>STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
<td>STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NOTE
- SEVP OPT Portal will remind you with alerts
- Recommended to add schedule alerts on your calendar
- Useful Tool for Due Dates: [https://www.timeanddate.com/date/dateadd.html](https://www.timeanddate.com/date/dateadd.html)
# STEM OPT Reporting Requirements

During your 24-months STEM OPT Extension, you are required to report the below information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Action and Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every 6 months</td>
<td><strong>Validation Report is due</strong>&lt;br&gt;● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Month of STEM OPT</td>
<td><strong>Evaluation on Student Progress is due</strong>&lt;br&gt;● Submit Complete I-983 with completed and signed 12 month self-evaluation&lt;br&gt;● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-Month of STEM OPT</td>
<td><strong>Final Evaluation on Student Progress is due</strong>&lt;br&gt;● Submit I-983 with completed and signed 24 month Self-Evaluation&lt;br&gt;● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Personal Information</td>
<td>● Update through SEVP OPT Portal or STEM OPT Reporting Form&lt;br&gt;● Update within 10 days of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Employer</td>
<td>● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form&lt;br&gt;● Submit I-983 with Final Evaluation (2nd portion of page 5 in I-983)&lt;br&gt;● Submit new I-983 Training for new employer (pg 1~4)&lt;br&gt;● Update within 10 days of change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please complete complete the documents to ISS office or email at internationalstudents@ucr.edu.
Please complete this form for:

- Validation Report
- Change in Employer
- 12-Month Evaluation
- 24-Month Final Evaluation

This form is available at the ISS office or you can email at internationalstudents@ucr.edu
Unemployment Time

- You will have an additional 60 days of unemployment time on top of 90 days during Post-Completion OPT.

- In total, you will have 150 days of unemployment time:
  - 90 days (Post-Completion OPT) + 60 days (STEM OPT) = 150 days

Post-Completion OPT

Start with 90 unemployment days

STEM OPT Extension

Extra 60 unemployment days

Rolls over if unused
After STEM OPT Extension Ends
After your STEM OPT Extension Ends

When your 24-Month STEM OPT extension ends, F-1 students will have a 60-day grace period to decide on their steps. During the 60-day grace period, students may decide on the following options:

- Start a new program at UC Riverside
- Transfer to another institution
- Apply for a change of visa status
- Return to home country
Resources
Helpful Resources

ISS - Employment & Taxes Webpage

Forms/Handouts from ISS Office

- STEM OPT Website
- STEM OPT Application Checklist
- STEM OPT Reporting Form

Government Forms

- Form I-983
  - Instructions for I-983
- Form I-765
- Form G-1145
- Form I-907

Government Resources

- Study in the States - STEM OPT
- Study in the States - I-983 Overview
- USCIS - STEM OPT
- USCIS - Practical Training

For more UCR F-1 Workshops

UCR ISS Events Calendar

COVID-19 Resources

- UCR COVID-19 Updates
- SEVP Frequently Asked Questions
- Study in the States - COVID-19
Who Can Help?

UCR International Students and Scholars (ISS)

Email  internationalstudents@ucr.edu
Office Phone  951-827-4113
Office Hours  10:00AM - 12:00PM, 1:00PM - 4:00PM

We are available through
● Email
● Phone
● Zoom