Optional Practical Training (OPT)
24-Month STEM Extension Tutorial

International Students and Scholars (ISS) Office
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internationalstudents@ucr.edu
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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.

NOTE: 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
Eligibility for STEM OPT
Eligibility for STEM OPT Extension

01 Valid Immigration Status
- Currently in valid F-1 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.

**STEM Designated Degree Program List**
*Effective May 10, 2016*

The 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(f). Under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)(C), a STEM field of study is a field of study “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 CIP summary groups/series at the 2-digit CIP code level: Engineering (CIP code 14), Biological and Biomedical Sciences (CIP code 26), Mathematics and Statistics (CIP code 27), and Physical Sciences (CIP code 40). Any new additions to those areas will automatically be included on this STEM Designated Degree Program list. Consistent with the definition of “related field” above, related fields in this list include fields involving research, innovation, or development of new technologies using engineering, mathematics, computer science, or natural sciences. DHS designates these fields at the 6-digit level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIP Code</th>
<th>2010 CIP Code</th>
<th>CIP Code Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0308</td>
<td>Agronomy and Sustainable Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0901</td>
<td>Animal Sciences, General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0902</td>
<td>Agricultural Animal Breeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0903</td>
<td>Animal Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0904</td>
<td>Animal Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0905</td>
<td>Dairy Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0906</td>
<td>Livestock Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0907</td>
<td>Poultry Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0999</td>
<td>Animal Sciences, Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.1001</td>
<td>Food Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.1002</td>
<td>Food Technology and Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.1099</td>
<td>Food Science and Technology, Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.1101</td>
<td>Plant Sciences, General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.1102</td>
<td>Agronomy and Crop Science</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
- Must establish bona fide relationship between employee and employer
  - Strict USCIS guidelines on third party placements (Check latest USCIS Guidance)
- Must have STEM OPT employment at the time of application
STEM OPT
Application Process
**STEM OPT Application Timeline**

- **90 Days Before EAD Expires**
  - Start preparing I-983 with employer

- **Mail STEM OPT Application to USCIS**

- **USCIS Accepts STEM OPT Extension Application**
  - (Processing Time: 3-5 months)

- **EAD Card Expiration Date**
  - 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**
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. ISS will issue STEM OPT I-20 and make recommendations on documents
   a. Allow 3-5 business days
5. Receive STEM OPT I-20 from ISS office
   a. In person pick up
   b. eShipGlobal

External Process
(After mailing to USCIS)

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
UCR STEM OPT Application Checklist

Applications Process
1. Request for STEM OPT-20 from ISS office
2. Fill up I-20 and assemble application
3. Mail application to ISS

You can submit your STEM OPT documents either in person or by email at internationalstudents@ucr.edu. Please allow 1-2 business days to receive your documents and issue your STEM OPT-20.

STEM OPT Application Documents to review by ISS
- Personal Data/Training Plan (completed by you and your employer): ISS office will keep the home 1-250. It will not go to ISS.
- Designated School Official Contact Information:
  - Name:
  - Email: internationalstudents@ucr.edu
  - Phone: (909) 827-4415

- You do not need to complete page 5 Evaluation on Student Progress for your application at this time.

- Form I-861
- Form I-20
- (Recommended) Employee Offer Letter on company letterhead indicating:
  - You are currently employed
  - The company is participating in Employer Program
  - Brief description of your training plan

- Copy of current EAD card (Front & Back)

STEM OPT Application Documents to mail to USCIS

After you pick up your STEM-20, please assemble the application documents in order as listed below. Documents should be paper-based, not PDF.

- STEM OPT Application Fee Pay
- Two passport-style (2 x 2 inches) photos
  - U.S. Department of State Passport Photograph Guidelines
- Form I-861
- Form I-20
- Designated School Official Letter on company letterhead

- Copy of STEM OPT-20 (signed by you and ISS)
- Copy of current EAD card (Front & Back)
- Copy of your STEM degree transcript or diploma

- For eligible STEM majors, refer to the STEM/Directly Related Degree List
- Copy of Form I-129
- Copy of valid passport (Recommended to be valid within 6 months)
- Copy of I-94 visa
- Copy of current Post-Completion OPT-20

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):
- USCIS
- P.O. Box 22181
- Phoenix, AZ 85036

For FedEx, UPS, and DHL delivery:
- USCIS
- Attn: NSF AOS
- 1800 E. Galbraith Circle S
- Suit 200
- Phoenix, AZ 85034

After you pick up your application to USCIS:

1. Within 14-30 days: USCIS will mail an I-797C receipt notice. (Mail an application or petition is received.)
   a. Use the case number to track OPT application status (https://egov.uscis.gov/ecaspublic/do/)
   b. Mail a copy of the receipt notice to ISS

2. Within 90-150 days: USCIS will mail final OPT decision:
   a. If OPT is not approved, USCIS will mail:
      - Approval Notice
      - Set an appointment with ISS Advisor
   b. If OPT is approved, USCIS will mail:
      - Approval Notice

Please contact international students office if you need your OPT application to be expedited.

After STEM OPT Approval:

STEM OPT Portal
- For Post-Completion OPT and STEM OPT (limited reporting)

The STEM OPT Portal is an important and convenient tool to fulfill the OPT reporting requirements during your OPT period. This portal is only available for students on Post-Completion OPT and STEM OPT. However, for STEM OPT, it is only available for updating personal information, not employer information. If your portal login is not working, please contact the ISS office as the ISS will need to reset your Portal account.

STEM OPT Reporting Requirements
- Every 8 months: Must submit a STEM OPT Reporting Form (please contact ISS office for this form)
- 24-month Evaluation of Student Progress Self-evaluation: (sign the form by you and your employer). Read section 6 of page 2 in form I-485
- 24-month Final Evaluation (final self-evaluation, signed by you and your employer) - second half of page 5 in form I-485
- Information changes or employment changes (within 10 days of change)
  - Change of Employment: Must submit I-485 Final Evaluation of Previous employer and I-485 of new employer
  - Change of Address or Contact Information Update Through STEM OPT Portal

UCR STEM OPT Application Checklist

This is a SAMPLE

To request a copy, please email internationalstudents@ucr.edu
Required STEM OPT Application Documents
Internal Process: Submitting Docs to ISS

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)
☑️ Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization
☑️ Form G-1145 (for email updates)
☑️ Copy of current EAD card (front & back)
☑️ (Recommended) Employee Offer Letter
  - Company Letterhead
  - You are currently employed
  - E-Verified company
  - Brief description of training plan

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.*

Download the most updated version through the USCIS website - [Form I-983](https://www.uscis.gov/i-983) (click on link)

Download [I-983 Instructions](https://www.uscis.gov/i-983-instructions) (click on link)
Form I-983 (pg. 1 of 5)

Section 1-2
Completed by Student

*Required for ISS office only
*Not for USCIS

Name of School Recommending STEM OPT
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
- Heidi Nam
- heidi.nam@ucr.edu
- (951)827-6148

Email Address
Enter your preferred email. 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 “A” number listed on your current EAD card
Section 2
Completed by Student

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 the law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willingly falsifying 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");

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;

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;

4. My practical training opportunity is directly related to the STEM degree that qualifies me for the STEM OPT extension; and

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.

Signature of Student (Sign in ink): ___________________________

Printed Name of Student: ___________________________ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): ___________________________
### Form I-983 (pg. 2 of 5)

**Section 3**  
**Completed by Employer**

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

**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
Section 4
Completed by Employer

<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): __________ Printed Name of Employing Organization: ________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signature of Employer Official**
- Signature must be handwritten
- 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
### Section 5

**Completed by Student and Employer**

#### 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**
Section 6
Completed by Employer

Form I-983 (pg. 4 of 5)

Employer Certification
- Must be handwritten
- Employer must sign this section
- Should review above information and affirm by signature
- Does not need to be same official who signed Section 4
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 Application

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.

Download the most updated version through the USCIS website - Form I-765 (click on link)

- Typed, not handwritten
- Signed with black ink
Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):

1.a. [X] 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.

NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to Replacement for Card Error in the What is the Filing Fee section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.

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

Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in Part 6.

Additional Information

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

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

4.a. Family Name (Last Name)
4.b. Given Name (First Name)
4.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)](https://www.uscis.gov) to USCIS through the USCIS website**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Physical Address</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.a. Street Number and Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.c. City or Town</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.d. State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.e. ZIP Code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information About Your Eligibility Category

27. Eligibility Category. Refer to the Who May File Form I-765 section of the Form I-765 Instructions to determine the appropriate eligibility category for this application. Enter the appropriate letter and number for your eligibility category below (for example, (a)(5), (c)(6)(H)(3)).

28. (c)(3)(C) STEM OPT Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(3)(C) in Item Number 27, provide the information requested in Item Numbers 28a - 28c.

28a. Degree

28b. Employer's Name as Listed in E-Verify

28c. Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number

29. (c)(16) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(16) in Item Number 27, provide the receipt number of your Form I-797 Notice for Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker.

30. (c)(8) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(8) in Item Number 27, have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime?
   □ Yes □ No

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 30a, refer to Special Filing Instructions for Those With Pending Asylum Applications (c)(6) in the Required Documentation section of the Form I-765 Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.

31a. (c)(35) and (c)(36) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) in Item Number 27, please provide the receipt number of your Form I-797 Notice for Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(36) to Item Number 27, please provide the receipt number of your spouse’s or parent’s Form I-797 Notice for Form I-140.

31b. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) or (c)(36) in Item Number 27, have you EVER been arrested for

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
Part 3. Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, 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

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.
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”**
Form G-1145

- 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 (click on link)
Recent Form I-94

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)
Provide a copy of your passport and most recent visa. The photocopies should not be too large or too small.

**Passport**
- Copy should not be enlarged or minimized

**Visa**
- Copy of most recent visa
- Does not have to be valid
- Copy should not be enlarged or minimized
USCIS Application Filing Fee

$410 USCIS Application Filing Fee

Payable to:
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Acceptable payment methods:
- Personal Check
- Money Order - Recommended
- Cashier’s Check
- Credit Card (Form G-1450)

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

- Prepare 2 passport-style photos
- 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

Where can you take passport photos?
- Costco (most 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

U.S. Department of State Criteria

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)
ISS issues STEM OPT I-20

After review of your STEM OPT documents, the DSO will issue the following documents:

**STEM OPT I-20**

**STEM OPT Materials Checklist**

Name: ________________________

**OPT Materials Checklist**

- **I-765 ok?**
  - Yes
  - No

- **G-1145 ok?**
  - Yes
  - No

- **Passport ok?**
  - Yes
  - No

- **You ok?**
  - Yes
  - No

- **I-539 ok?**
  - Yes
  - No

- **Passport photos ok?**
  - Yes
  - No

- **Check or money order ok?**
  - Yes
  - No

**STEM OPT Application Checklist**

- **24-Month STEM OPT Extension Application Checklist**
- **24-Month STEM OPT Application Documents to Review**
  - **Application Forms**
  - **Supporting Documents**
  - **Reimbursement Agreement**
  - **Employment Agreement**
  - **Letter from Employer**
  - **Statement from Employer**
  - **Employer Letter on company letterhead indicating that:**
  - **30 days or more after approval date**
  - **Copy of current EAD and social security number**

**STEM OPT Application Documents to Mail to ISS**

- **24-Month STEM OPT Application Documents to Mail to ISS**
  - **Application Forms**
  - **Supporting Documents**
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  - **Letter from Employer**
  - **Statement from Employer**
  - **Employer Letter on company letterhead indicating that:**
  - **30 days or more after approval date**
  - **Copy of current EAD and social security number**

**STEM OPT Application Documents to Mail to ISS**

- **Application Forms**
  - **Supporting Documents**
  - **Reimbursement Agreement**
  - **Employment Agreement**
  - **Letter from Employer**
  - **Statement from Employer**
  - **Employer Letter on company letterhead indicating that:**
  - **30 days or more after approval date**
  - **Copy of current EAD and social security number**
ISS issues STEM OPT I-20

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 can choose to:
- Pick up your I-20 from the ISS office
- 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
Assemble your STEM OPT packet

Once you have picked up 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.

✅ $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)
✅ 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
✅ Copy of recent visa
✅ Copy of current Post-Completion OPT I-20

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 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 [USCIS Website (click here)](https://www.uscis.gov) for updated address.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you live in...</th>
<th>Mail your application to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands</td>
<td>USCIS Phoenix Lockbox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS): USCIS P.O. Box 21281 Phoenix, AZ 85036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries: USCIS Attn: NFB AOS 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia</td>
<td>USCIS Dallas Lockbox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS): USCIS P.O. Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries: USCIS Attn: NFB AOS 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once USCIS receives your application, your filing fee will be cashed and USCIS will send you a receipt notice with your case number within 1-2 weeks.
While STEM OPT Application is pending
Track your Application

I-797C Notice of Action
- Within 2-4 weeks, USCIS will send you a receipt notice, Form I-797C

Case Inquiries
- Use the Case Inquiry tool if you don’t receipt your receipt notice within 4 weeks
Track your Application

**USCIS Case Status Online**
- Track your application by entering the receipt number
- Link for [USCIS Case Status Online](https://www.uscis.gov)

**USCIS Email Updates**
- 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](https://www.uscis.gov/case-status)
While your application is pending...

- **You have a change of address**
  - You must update your address by filing [Form AR-11](https://example.com) (click here) directly with USCIS.

- **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 during STEM 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 (within 6 months)
- Valid F-1 Visa stamp
- STEM OPT I-20 w/ travel signature (within 6 months)
- I-797 Receipt Notice

Required Travel Documents for Approved STEM OPT
- Valid Passport (within 6 months)
- Valid F-1 Visa stamp
- STEM OPT I-20 w/ travel signature (within 6 months)
- Valid STEM OPT EAD Card
- Employee offer Letter or letter of employment verification
Requesting for a Travel Signature from ISS

If you are planning on traveling abroad, you can request for an updated travel signature on your STEM OPT I-20. Travel signatures for STEM OPT are only valid for 6 months. Please plan ahead as you may have to consider shipping time if you are living in a different area.

To request for a Travel Signature, please submit:

- **Document Request Form**
  - You can pick up a form at the ISS office or email internationalstudents@ucr.edu
- **STEM OPT I-20 (Original Copy)**
  - If you are unable to send it to us, you can request a new I-20.

Retrieving your I-20:

- Allow 3-5 business days for travel signature to be issued
- ISS office will notify you when it is ready for pick up
- Office pick up or eShip Global options are available
Scams

How to Avoid Scams
● Government entities (USCIS or SEVP) will rarely call you regarding your application
● Most notices are sent via email or paper mail

If someone calls you, here are some warning signs:
● They will know some (but, not all) personal information about you
● Asks you to share personal information (i.e. passport number, SSN, credit card information, etc.)
● Speaks to you in an aggressive manner
● Asks you for money or personal information

USCIS Website- How to Avoid Scams, Report Fraud, Legal Services
● Report Scams
● How to Avoid Scams
USCIS Final Decision
USCIS STEM OPT Approval

● 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

● Automatic Extension of your F-1 status & employment

Submit a copy to the ISS office: internationalstudents@ucr.edu
USCIS Request for Evidence (RFEs)

If USCIS needs more information/evidence, they will send a Request for Evidence (RFE).

- This is not a rejection/denial
- Contact ISS office and work with an International Student Advisor
- RFE must be received by deadline date
- Check OPT I-20 recommendation date before mailing RFE
  - If outside 60 day window, request for a new OPT recommendation I-20.

Please contact ISS office to review required RFE documents
USCIS 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
SEVP OPT Portal on STEM OPT

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

NOTE
- SEVP OPT Portal will remind you with alerts
- Recommended to add schedule alerts on your calendar

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every 6 months</th>
<th>Validation Report is due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12-Month of STEM OPT</th>
<th>Evaluation on Student Progress is due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit first portion of page 5 of I-983 Training Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Signed by student and employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24-Month of STEM OPT</th>
<th>Final Evaluation on Student Progress is due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit second portion of page 5 of I-983 Training Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Signed by student and employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Personal Information</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Update through SEVP OPT Portal or STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Update within 10 days of change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Employer (new employer, new position title, end of job, etc.)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit Final Evaluation of I-983 Training Plan of previous employer (pg 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit new I-983 Training for new employer (pg 1–4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Update within 10 days of change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEM OPT Reporting Form

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
Updating your Personal Information

- Changes to your personal information include:
  - Name
  - Address
  - Phone Number

- Changes must be updated within 10 days

- Please update information through:
  - SEVP OPT Portal (click here)
  - STEM OPT Reporting Form
Updates in Employer Information

- Updates/Changes in employment must be done through the ISS office.

- Must submit a new Form I-983 Training Plan if you get a:
  - New position/job title
  - New employer
  - New job description

- If you end your employment, you will need to submit a Final Evaluation (last page of Form I-983) for your old position.

- Changes must be updated within 10 days

- Allowed an additional 60 days of unemployment (including Post-Completion OPT it will be a total of 150 days)
If you change STEM OPT employers,

Please submit the following:

1. STEM OPT Reporting Form

2. Final Evaluation of I-983 with previous employer (last section of page 5)

3. I-983 Training Plan for your new employer (pages 1~4)
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
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
Helpful Resources

Forms/Handouts from ISS Office *(Request via email - internationalstudents@ucr.edu)*

- STEM OPT Application Checklist
- STEM OPT Reporting Form

Government Forms

- [Form I-983](#)
  - [Instructions for I-983](#)
- [Form I-765](#)
- [Form G-1145](#)

Government Resources

- [Study in the States - STEM OPT](#)
- [Study in the States - I-983 Overview](#)
- [USCIS - STEM OPT](#)
- [USCIS - Practical Training](#)
Additional Questions?

Where we are located:

Skye Hall 321
Riverside, CA 92521

Phone: 951-827-4113

Office Hours:
Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Walk-in Hours: 10 AM – 12 PM
1 PM - 4 PM

Who to contact:

General Email
internationalstudents@ucr.edu

Heidi Nam
International Student Advisor, Career Empowerment
heidi.nam@ucr.edu

Kelly Hinosawa
Associate Director, International Students
kelly.hinosawa@ucr.edu