### STEM OPT Extension

#### Policy

F-1 students approved for standard post-completion optional practical training based on a degree in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) field that appears on the [STEM-Designated Degree Program List](#) can apply to USCIS for a 24-month extension of post-completion OPT. A student who has applied for a STEM extension can continue working for up to 180 days beyond the expiration of the prior post-completion OPT EAD while the STEM extension application is pending. A student may change employers during the 24-month period, but all employers that a student will work for during the STEM extension period must be registered in the DHS E-Verify program, and the student must report the change in employment to his or her DSO. For more information on the STEM OPT Extension, please go to the [Study in the States STEM OPT Hub](#).

A student authorized for a 24-month extension must work at least 20 hours per week for an E-Verify employer in a position directly related to his or her DHS-approved STEM CIP.

For a student who is on a 24-month extension, this employment may include:

- Multiple employers. A student may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to his or her degree program and all employers must be enrolled in E-Verify.
- Work for hire. This is also commonly referred to as 1099 employment where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than...
Reporting: In addition to reporting any change of address, STEM OPT recipients must also make a "validation report" to the DSO every six months starting from the date the extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status ends, the student changes educational levels at the same school, the student transfers to another school, or the STEM OPT extension ends, whichever is first. This report must be made by the student, and SEVIS updated by the DSO, even if the student's employment has not changed.

The validation report must include the student's:

- Full legal name
- SEVIS identification number (if requested by the school)
- Current mailing and residential address
- Name and address of the current employer
- Date the student began working for the current employer
- Baylor ID Number

Travel outside the U.S. during the STEM extension application process is at the student's own risk. In some cases, students have been denied re-entry to the United States even with proper documentation. If a student on a STEM OPT Extension wants to travel outside of the U.S., he or she should speak with a Baylor DSO before making plans.

The following eligibility rules apply:

1. The student has a degree in an eligible STEM field from a Student and Exchange Visitor Program-certified school that is accredited when the student submits their STEM OPT extension application to USCIS.

2. The degree that was the basis for the student's current period of OPT is a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in one of the degree programs on the current STEM Designated Degree Program List, published on the SEVP Web site at http://www.ice.gov/sevis. A minor field of study cannot serve as the basis for a STEM OPT extension. If a student has a double major and obtained regular post-completion OPT on the non-STEM CIP or a STEM CIP that is not approved by DHS, the student is ineligible for the extension.

3. The student and his or her employer must complete and submit the Form I-983 which indicates how the student's training will be conducted and evaluated. The formal 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.

4. The student's employer must be registered in E-Verify and must agree to report to the DSO when the student is terminated or leaves employment.

5. The student must apply for the STEM OPT extension before their standard period of post-completion OPT expires, and must also agree to make periodic reports to the DSO.

Procedure
1. The student submits a STEM OPT Request Form to a Baylor DSO with the Form I-983.
2. After determining eligibility, the DSO updates SEVIS with an STEM OPT Extension recommendation.
3. The DSO prepares a new Form I-20 with the recommendation letter and I-765.
4. The student files documents before his or her current OPT expires. Documents sent to USCIS should include:
   - I-20 with a DSO signature that is not older than 30 days
   - Copy of student’s degree: transcripts or copies of diplomas that indicate the educational level and the field of study would be acceptable
   - Check or money order for the Form I-765 filing fee, made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security."
   - Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, marked with the proper code in Part 2 Number 27 for STEM OPT Extension. The code is C3C.
   - Student must submit the Form I-765 and all materials BEFORE the expiration of the student’s current post-completion OPT (standard or cap-gap), but no sooner than 90 days before that date; AND no later than 60 days from the date the DSO recommended the STEM OPT in SEVIS.
5. USCIS reviews and approves or denies OPT request.
6. If approved, USCIS sends an EAD (Employment Authorization Document) card to the address that the student requested on the Form I-765.