

# OPT 24-month STEM OPT Extension

International Office, 601 University Dr., San Marcos, TX 78666

Ph: (512) 245-7966 - Fax: (512) 245-8264 – Email: [International@txstate.edu](mailto:International@txstate.edu)

F-1 students approved for post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) based on a bachelor's, master or Doctorate degree in a certain STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) field may be eligible for a 7-month extension of their current 17-month STEM extension or may be eligible for the new 24-month STEM extension. The new 24-month STEM OPT rule is **effective Tuesday, May 10, 2016**

## Additional Resources

- ❖ [Study in the States STEM Hub](#)

## Required documents for OPT Extension I-20

You will need to submit the following documents to the International Office for initial processing of your OPT Stem Extension I-20.

- ❖ Attestation Letter ( Instructions on Page 2)
- ❖ Statement of Responsibility (Page 3)

## Application Packet Checklist to USCIS

- ❖ Completed Form I-765 signed with original signature
- ❖ [Form I-983](#), Training Plan for STEM OPT Students ([Instructions on how to complete](#))
- ❖ Copy of OPT Extension I-20 with proper signatures from PDSO/ DSO and student
- ❖ Copy of your diploma in one of the STEM fields on the [DHS STEM-designated program list](#)
- ❖ Copy of your job offer or employment verification letter
- ❖ Employer Affidavit and Agreement letter
- ❖ Copies of the following:
  - Passport identity page including its expiration date,
  - Visa,
  - I-94 entry/departure record;
  - OPT I-20 forms (page 1 and 3) issued to you during the initial OPT period
  - Current OPT EAD
- ❖ Check or money order for \$380 Application Fee made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”: Write “USCIS I-765” in the memo line of the check or money order.
- ❖ 2 passport-style photos on white background taken within 30 days of application:
  - Your name and I-94 number must be printed in pencil or felt pen on the back of the photos. For an example photo, see <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/photos/photo-page.html>
- ❖ Original I-20 form reflecting 17-month OPT extension recommendation by International Student Services (if applicable)
- ❖ Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance (OPTIONAL)

## Processing

If you are approved for the extension, your application should then be mailed to the appropriate USCIS Service Center.

**If you live in Texas**, mail your application packet to one of the following according to your delivery method:

### For U. S. Postal Service deliveries:

USCIS Dallas Lockbox  
USCIS P O Box 660867  
Dallas, TX, 75266

### For express mail & commercial courier service:

USCIS, Attn: AOS  
2501 S. State Hwy 121, Business  
Lewisville, TX, 75067

If you live in a different state during the 24-month OPT extension, refer to the page 1 of I-765 Instructions

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**Attestation Letter** on letterhead that certifies that you are currently or will be employed and includes the statement below.

## **\*Employer Responsibilities & Instructions**

- A. The employer must be enrolled in E-Verify (<http://www.dhs.gov/e-verify>)
- B. The government regulations pertaining to F-1 students state that to be eligible for a STEM Extension, the employer has the following responsibility: *“The employer agrees to report the termination or departure of an OPT employee to the DSO at the student's school or through any other means or process identified by DHS if the termination or departure is prior to end of the authorized period of OPT. Such reporting must be made within 48 hours of the event. An employer shall consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left the employment or if the student has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the consent of the employer, whichever occurs earlier.”* -8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C)(4)

**To meet the requirements, the employer should provide an employment letter, which includes the Employer’s name and address, employee’s name, employment start-date, and a statement of agreement for the International Office as outlined below:**

*I/We agree to report within 48 hours the termination or departure of this employee to the International Office at Texas State University or to the Department of Homeland Security, if the termination or departure is prior to end of the authorized period of Optional Practical Training.*

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## **Instructions on I-765:**

You may [download](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf) an electronic version of the I-765 (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf>)

Instructions for completing the I-765:

- DO NOT leave any questions blank, write “None” or “N/A” (Not Applicable) as needed,
- Item 3: Use your own address Submit copies of your OPT Extension EAD card to our office **OR** (if you are moving) you may use the International Office address for the return address:
  - o Written as: 601 University Dr., Thornton Hs. | San Marcos| TX | 78666
- Item 16 should be: “(c)(3)(C)” which is the code for requesting Stem-Extension OPT Authorizations
- Item 17a: “list the major”: We recommend typing the CIP code listed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> page of your I-20 or hand-writing your degree name as it appears on the I-20.
- Make sure your signature fits between the two lines because it will be transcribed on the OPT card

*You must complete the I-765 yourself, however if you would like the International Office advisors to review the I-765 for accuracy prior to you sending it to USCIS, please e-mail a copy of it to the International Office: [international@txstate.edu](mailto:international@txstate.edu) and wait at least 5 business days for a reply.*

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## Statement of Understanding and Reporting Responsibilities for OPT STEM Extension

1. An F-1 student who has properly filed Form I-765 prior to the end date of his or her 12 month post completion OPT is allowed to maintain continuous employment for up to 180 days while USCIS adjudicates the request for the extension.
2. USCIS will notify the applicant of the decision and, if the application is denied, of the reason or reasons for the denial. The applicant may not appeal the decision.
3. The employment authorization period for the 17-month OPT extension begins on the day after the expiration of the initial post-completion OPT employment authorization and ends 17 months thereafter, regardless of the date the actual extension is approved.
4. For the 17-month STEM extension, employment must be traditional paid employment for at least 20 hours per week 5. During your 17-month STEM extension, you may work in a paid position for only an employer that is an E-Verified.
6. F-1 students may not accrue more than 120 days of unemployment during the total period of employment authorization or 29 months. 7. If the student mails the OPT STEM application themselves, the student is responsible for filing form AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card in order to notify Department of Homeland Security of any address change, especially if one occurs while the OPT-17 application is pending. Failure to do so may result in a delay in receiving the OPT-17 Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
8. Reporting Requirements While on the 17-Month OPT. Compliance is mandatory in order to maintain lawful F-1 status.

**10-Day Reporting Requirements** Within 10 days of the change, the student must report (using an OPT Personal Information Update Form in Email or person) to the student's DSO a change in:

- Full legal name, Current mailing and Residential address, Phone number and Email
- Employer name, Employer address, Loss of employment, Date you began working for the current employer

**6-Month Reporting Requirements** Every 6 months you will receive an automatic e-mail from the International Office requiring a validation report regarding your employment. The validation report requires the same information that is required on a OPT Personal Update form. Regardless of when you last updated your employment information, you are required to reply to the e-mail from the International Office. The report is due within 10 business days of when it is requested.

- Name and address of the current employer, Date you began working for the current employer (company)
- Your full legal name, current mailing and residential address, phone number and email

### **What should students report to ensure that their status does not expire due to excessive unemployment time?**

Students are encouraged to report changes in employment to their DSO as soon as possible through the *OPT Change of Personal Data* form on the International Office website. SEVP recommends that students report changes within 10 business days of the change to avoid situations where a DHS official may determine the student is out of status.

- I have read and understand the statements above and certify that I will take full responsibility for execution of the above mentioned reporting requirements and that I will not rely on the International Office at Texas State to remind me of my responsibility.
- I have been informed by this Statement of Understanding provided by the Designated School Official at the International Office at Texas State University-San Marcos of my responsibilities for maintaining status while on OPT.
- I also understand that I am responsible to monitor the International Office website at Texas State University and the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) website (<https://www.ice.gov/sevis>) for subsequent updates to any reporting requirements and that I will be responsible for complying with those requirements.
- I have read all statements contained in this Statement of Understanding and by signing below indicate that I understand the statements and will comply with the reporting requirements outlined therein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date