



Office of International Programs

400 South Orange Ave.,

South Orange, NJ 07079

Phone: (973) 761-9072; Fax: (973) 275-2383

Email: oip@shu.edu

**STEM Extension of
Optional Practical Training Application Packet**

Students applying for the 24-month STEM Optional Practical Training (OPT) may use this packet in order to understand the application procedure and length of time needed to maximize your working benefit.

The following items are included in this packet:

- 1) Application Procedure and Checklist
- 2) Declaration of STEM OPT Reporting Requirements
- 3) Important information to Remember While on STEM OPT
- 4) Instructions for Completing Document Checklist
- 5) Tips for Completing Form I-765

These are general guidelines and not legal advice. For specific questions about the application, please contact an immigration lawyer.

Government guidelines are subject to change at any time. It is the students' responsibility to check the USCIS website for the most updated information.



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Declaration of STEM OPT Reporting Requirements

Please sign below to acknowledge that you have the following responsibilities during the application and employment authorization period for STEM OPT:

- 1) It is my responsibility to check the USCIS website for the most updated information regarding the application process (fee, mailing address, I-765 form version, etc.)
- 2) I understand that guidance from OIP does not constitute as legal advice.
- 3) I am aware that it is my obligation to report changes in employment information (including periods of unemployment) and changes in my address via the SEVP student portal account.
- 4) I understand that F-1 students on the STEM OPT extension are required to report to their DSO **every six months** according to the information from the following government link. Some reporting requirements require submission of a I-983 form:

DHS Study in the States – STEM OPT Help Hub

- <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub>

USCIS STEM OPT Extension

- <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-extension-for-stem-students-stem-opt>

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date (Month/Day/Year): _____



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Procedures and Checklist **STEM Optional Practical Training**

Step One

- **Read through the entire application packet** before filling it out to understand the application procedure and length of time needed to maximize your working benefit.
- **Consider the timing of your application:** The STEM OPT start date will be the day after your OPT end date. You can submit your STEM OPT application to USCIS as early as 90 days before your current OPT ends and no later than your OPT end date.

Step Two

- **Complete I-983 Form** - <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub/additional-resources/form-i-983-overview> OIP keeps this on file, it's not mailed to USCIS. Please complete all fields. An E-verify employer must complete a section of this form.

Step Three

- **Request your STEM OPT I-20 from OIP:** Submit the I-983 Form and Declaration of Reporting Requirements to OIP. Once we receive these, we will generate a STEM OPT Requested I-20 in 5-7 business days. We will contact you when it is ready.
- **DO NOT SEND IN YOUR APPLICATION TO USCIS WITHOUT THE STEM OPT REQUESTED I-20 – YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE DENIED/VERY DELAYED**

Step Four

- **Collect the items needed for your package to USCIS** (see checklist below)
- ***Once you are recommended for STEM OPT in SEVIS, you have 60 days for USCIS to receive your application***

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST- these items are for you to mail to USCIS once you receive the STEM OPT I-20 from OIP

1. Form G-1145 (available at <http://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>)
2. Form I-765 (available at <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>) *Be sure to use correct version according to USCIS site/alerts
** Question 27, OPT Codes: STEM Extension – (C)(3)(C) (only for students extending their OPT whose degrees fall under the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.)*
3. I-94 Admission number (can be retrieved at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>)
4. Copy of Passport with Visa page (if you have F1 student visa in your passport)
5. Copy of current EAD Card (Employment Authorization Document for OPT)
6. Copy of diploma or official transcript showing completion of a degree in a STEM field
7. If you changed your status to F1 in the U.S., submit a copy of the approval notice - Form I-797 Notice of Action
8. Filing Fee: 3 options: Check, Money order, or Credit/Debit Card (for card, must complete G-1450, found here: <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450>) **If you will pay by Check or Money Order, you must write exactly "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" – **Funds must be drawn from a US bank and be in USD; ***Application fee is subject to change*
9. Two passport photos
Carefully read the required measurements for the pictures below; if too large USCIS will return the application
10. Copy of new I-20 with STEM OPT request and signed by student. (OIP will create this I-20)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

APPLICATION	ITEM DESCRIPTION	HOW TO COMPLETE
1. G-1145 Form	When submitted with your OPT packet, this form allows USCIS to contact you with your EAC number by either email or text to let you know that your application has been received and the process started. If you need another one of these forms please go to http://www.uscis.gov/g-1145	Please fill out this form with your personal email address and a phone number that can receive texts.
2. I-765 Form	This is the actual application from USCIS. Go to: http://www.uscis.gov/i-765 Be sure to read any updates at top of page, often about updated versions, change in fee, etc.	Please type/write clearly, do not cross out or white out. Fill out this form completely and don't forget to sign! Make sure to send in all 7 pages to USCIS.
3. I-94 Admission Record	Tells USCIS your travel history and the last time you entered the United States.	Please go to https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov and enter your passport information and print out the most recent I-94. Students that changed to F1 status in the U.S. should attach a copy of the I-797 Approval Notice with I-94 section at bottom.
4. Passport and Visa Page	USCIS requires this information for the OPT process. It tells them that you have a valid passport and you are on the F-1 Visa.	Make copies of these and include them in your packet. Students that changed to F1 status in the U.S. should attach a copy of the visa they used to enter the U.S. and a copy of the I-797 Approval Notice to F1
5. Check, Money Order, or Credit/Debit Card	Please always check the latest fee amount on the USCIS page for the I-765 form.	<i>For Check/Money Order:</i> Must be written exactly like this: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. When writing the written amount on the check: Five Hundred and Fifty Dollars and 00/100. Funds must be in USD. <i>For Credit/Debit:</i> Please complete the G-1450 found at https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450
6. Two passport photos	These photos will be used to create your EAD card.	You must submit identical photos of yourself within 30 days of filing this application. The photos must have a white or off-white background, be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish and be unmounted and unretouched. The passport-style photos must be 2" by 2". The photos must be in color with full face frontal view. Head height should measure 1" to 1 3/8" from top to bottom of chin, and eye height between 1 1/8" and 1 3/8" from bottom of photo. Your head must be bare unless you are wearing a headdress as required by a religious order of which you are a member. Using pencil or pen, lightly print your name and I-94 number on back of photos.



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Important Information to Remember while on OPT

Mailing Instructions

- Mail your package as soon as possible after you pick up your OPT I-20 packet from OIP. **USCIS must receive it within 60 days of the date that your OPT I-20 was issued.** You may only use the **U.S. Postal Service (USPS)** to mail your package. The closest place to mail your package is on-campus at the mailroom in the basement of Mooney Hall. Please keep in mind that they only accept “Pirates Gold” or a personal check.

Receipt Number

- When USCIS receives your packet, they inform you by either text, email or both. Included in that email/text will be your EAC number, which you can use to check the status of your application on www.uscis.gov. Once they receive your package, allow up to 45 days for the receipt number to be able to check the status of your case.

Continue to Update Your SEVIS Portal Account during STEM OPT

- It is **mandatory** that you update your SEVIS Portal account with your employment information and address changes with **10 days of any change**. If you don't have any employer listed in your SEVP Portal account, you will accrue days of unemployment. SEVP has begun terminating students with more than the allowable unemployment time. If you cannot access your account, please contact the OIP.
- You can continue to notify our office of any changes within **10 days** that are not updated through the portal, for example:
 1. Phone Number
 2. Personal Email Address
 3. Name change
 4. Visa status
 5. Leaving U.S. before the end of OPT

Unemployment and Travel Considerations

- Whether or not you are working, the **2-year** STEM OPT work benefit continues.
- According to F1 regulations, you may only be unemployed for more than **150 days total** throughout your 3-year period of OPT and STEM OPT combined. These 150 days are continuous, and do not reset if you change jobs or lose employment.
- Please keep in mind that any travel is a risk. If your visa is no longer valid, then you will have to renew your visa before traveling back to the United States. There is a chance you could still be denied this visa, so please keep that in mind when traveling.
- If you decide to travel after applying for OPT and **it is after your I-20's program end date**, carry the following:
 1. EAD Card
 2. Job offer letter and pay stub
 3. Post OPT I-20, signed in the “travel authorization” section within 6 months of the date of departure.
 4. Valid Passport
 5. Valid visa
- If you decide to leave the country and end your OPT early, please email oiip@shu.edu to inform us.