STEM OPT EXTENSION TUTORIAL

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STEM Extension Tutorial

- It is your responsibility to understand all of the details and requirements of your immigration status. Only you are responsible for maintaining your status.
- Read this entire tutorial carefully in order to completely understand the timelines, eligibility, procedures, and requirements for seeking STEM extension authorization.
- If, after reading this tutorial, you have questions, ask an international student and scholar advisor by emailing isss@kent.edu
STEM Extension Eligibility

• You may apply for STEM Extension if you are currently on Optional Practical Training (OPT) and your major is an approved STEM major by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). You can find the list of eligible majors [here](#). Search by the CIP code on page 1 of your I-20.

• You can apply up to 90 days before your OPT expires. You **cannot** apply after your OPT expires (during your grace period).

• You must be employed by an employer who is enrolled in [E-Verify](#).
STEM Extension Eligibility Dates

- The STEM extension of OPT is for 24 additional months. If your OPT ends on 07/31, you will apply for your STEM extension to begin 08/01.

- Processing times for the STEM Extension is the same for OPT, which is normally between 60-90 days.

- You are permitted to continue working for up to 180 days past the end of your OPT, as long as you have a pending STEM extension application. If it passes 180 you may no longer work, but you may remain in the country until your application is processed.
Unemployment

• Once your STEM extension application is approved, you get an additional 60 days of unemployment time.

• This 60 days is in addition to the 90 days of employment you get on OPT, so you receive a total of 150 unemployment days for the period of OPT + STEM Extension.
A Summary of Required Documents

You must submit all of these documents before we create your OPT I-20:

1. A copy of your passport biographical page
2. A copy of your most recent U.S. visa
3. A printout of your Form I-94 found at [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94)
4. An original check or money order, made out to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for $410
5. Two recent 2" x 2" passport-style photos, cut in 2” x 2” squares. Write your I-94 number in PENCIL on the back. Do not use pen.
A Summary of Required Documents

You must submit all of these documents before we create your OPT I-20:

7. Copy of your current EAD
8. Copy of your diploma AND copy of official transcripts
9. Copy of your current job offer that includes: employer’s name, job title, position, employer’s email, supervisor’s name and email, address of physical work location
10. Completed Form I-983. This is a formal training plan to be completed by the student and employer. You can find instructions here.
Sample Check

- This is the correct way to fill out a check to USCIS:

   \begin{itemize}
   \item \textbf{PAY TO THE ORDER OF:} US Department of Homeland Security
   \item \textbf{DATE:} 12/20/2016
   \item \textbf{DOLLARS:} $410.00
   \item \textbf{MEMO:} 1-765
   \item \textbf{Joe Peterson}
   \item Four hundred ten dollars and 00/100
   \end{itemize}
Guide to Selected Form I-765 Questions

Check the box marked “Renewal of my permission to accept…” above Question 1.

**Question 1.** Write your family name first, in CAPS, followed by your given name (not in all CAPS). **Do not write your given name in CAPS.**

**Question 3.** You must write the address where you would like your EAD card mailed. Make sure that you can safely receive mail at this address.

**Question 5.** You must write the name of the city where you were born, followed by the state or province, if any, and lastly the name of your birth country.

**Question 10.** Write your entire I-94 number, including the last two digits.

**Question 11.** Select “Yes.” The office that processed your application will be on your I-797 approval notice and receipt notice. Use the date of your receipt notice.

**Question 12.** This is the date on your Form I-94 – the date you last entered the United States.
Guide to Selected Form I-765 Questions

**Question 13.** This is the U.S. city where your plane first landed in the United States, even if you had another connecting flight afterward. If you drove across the U.S. border, list the appropriate U.S. port of entry.

**Question 14.** If you entered the U.S. in F-1 status, write “Student.” If not, write the appropriate status in which you entered the country.

**Question 15.** If you are in valid F-1 status, write “Student.”

**Question 16.** For STEM OPT Extension, the eligibility code is (c)(3)(C).

**Question 17.** Enter the degree you earned, your employer’s name as listed in the e-verify system, and your employer’s e-verify number. **This is not the same as the EIN.**

**Question 18 & 19:** Leave blank

Sign your name in the “Certification” area and type your telephone number and the date you completed the form. If you prepared your own form, do not write anything in the area marked “Preparer’s signature.”
How to Apply

• Once your materials are prepared, submit them through the STEM Extension I-20 Request form [here](#).

• You must also submit the STEM Extension Employment Information Form with your I-983 [here](#).

• Your new I-20 will not be created until both forms are completed.

• When you receive your new I-20, you need to mail it to USCIS. You can find the correct address based on your state [here](#).
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I change employers while my STEM extension application is pending?

A: ISSS does not recommend changing employers, because it can delay the processing of your application or create further complications. However, if you cannot avoid it, then you need to email an updated I-983 and I-765 with your new employers’ information, along with a letter (written by you) explaining the changes in employment, dates, and receipt number to ISSS@kent.edu so that we can send it to USCIS.
Q: Can I get a new driver’s license while my STEM extension application is pending?

A: In many states, the BMV/DMV will not give you a new driver’s license until you receive your new EAD.
Q: Can I travel while my STEM Extension application is pending?

A: If your current EAD is still valid, then you may travel using your current EAD, I-20, and visa.

If your EAD has expired and your STEM extension application is still pending, you should not travel. Wait until you receive your new EAD.
Q: What do I need to report when I change employers?

A: Every time your employer changes, you must report it to us within 10 days using this form. This also requires a new I-983.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I am a doctoral student/PhD candidate and I applied for OPT before finishing my dissertation. I have not yet graduated. Can I apply for the STEM extension?

A: Applying for the STEM extension requires a copy of your official final transcripts and diploma. If you have not yet graduated, you will not be able to apply.
Thank you for completing the STEM Extension Tutorial!

If you are confused about any of the material presented, you may ask an international student and scholar advisor by emailing isss@kent.edu