



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

University Center for International Studies
University of Pittsburgh

STEM OPT Information

STEM OPT Extension

Former students working on OPT may be eligible to apply for an additional 24 months of OPT if they fulfill both of the following criteria:

- You must have graduated with a STEM degree that is listed on the US Department of Homeland Security's [STEM Designated Degree program list](#). The CIP code on the list must match the CIP code on your Form I-20 exactly. It is your responsibility to make sure you are eligible, based on your CIP code.
- You must be working for an [E-Verify](#) employer for at least 20 hours per week. This means the employer uses the E-Verify system to determine employee's work eligibility. The Human Resources department of the employer can let you know if they use E-Verify.

Applications for a STEM OPT extension must be received by USCIS (either through online or paper mail submission) no later than the end date of the current 12-month post-completion OPT period. The process is very similar to the OPT application process, so be sure you allow plenty of time to collect the appropriate documents.

OIS recommends that students begin the STEM OPT application process about 3 to 3.5 months before their post-completion OPT end date.

How to Apply for the STEM OPT Extension

- Review OIS' online STEM OPT [tutorials](#).
- Complete [Form I-983](#) with your STEM OPT qualifying employer.
 - The federal government provides [guidance and instructions](#) about the Form I-983.
 - OIS offers a Sample [I-983](#).
- Prepare digital materials for OIS:
 - completed Form I-983
 - current Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
 - [diploma or transcripts](#)
- Submit the "STEM OPT Extension Request" e-form via the "Limited Services Login" link on the [My OIS](#) homepage:
 - OIS will review your request within about 5 to 7 business days.
 - You will receive a new I-20 after OIS approves your request.
- Submit your STEM OPT application materials to USCIS:
 - Information about the [online Form I-765](#)
 - STEM OPT Application [Checklist](#)
- Your STEM OPT application must be received by USCIS before your post-completion OPT end date.
 - You can continue to work for up to 180 days after your post-completion OPT end date if your STEM OPT application is still "pending" final adjudication from USCIS.

After you review the STEM OPT [tutorials](#), please contact your [Immigration Specialist](#) with any follow-up questions as you prepare for the STEM OPT extension.

You can refer to OIS' [STEM OPT Reporting Requirements](#) Fact Sheet for more information about how to submit the government's required 6 month STEM OPT reports, along with mandatory reporting requirements.