

24-Month Extension of Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH

Summary:

The 12-month limit on OPT can be extended by 24 months, for certain STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) degree holders.

Visit <http://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/document/2016/stem-list.pdf> to determine if your field and CIP Code are included in the list.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Currently authorized for post-completion OPT and working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to your field of study.
- Completed a Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral degree in a field on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) STEM Designated Degree Program list.
- At the time of application you must be employed.
- You must have a job-offer or be employed by an employer registered with the "E-Verify" federal verification system.
- The job must be paid and be for at least 20 hours per week
- Have not received a 24-month OPT extension for the STEM degree you are basing your extension application upon.
- The STEM extension can only be granted twice per person in a lifetime.
- The STEM Extension can only be granted once per degree level and the second extension must be at a higher degree level than the first STEM Extension.
- The STEM extension must be from an SEVP-certified institution that is accredited.
- Multiple employers—students can have multiple employers, but each employer must employ the student for no less than 20 hours per week.
- Self-employment, employment through agencies/consulting firms is not possible—the employer signing the I-983 must be the same that employs you and supervises you.

When to Apply:

Apply to USCIS up to 90 days before your current EAD expires. Keep in mind, ISS needs at least five working days to process your I-20 recommending the STEM extension.

Step 1: Request OPT Recommendation from ISS

ISS must process a recommendation for your OPT request. Five working days are required to process a recommendation for OPT. Please submit the following items to an ISS adviser. ISS cannot accept your application for processing unless all these items are completed and submitted:

- Student Request Form
- Form I-765 (Use most recent version from ISS website)
- Valid Passport/ Form I-94
- Form I-983

*Instructions for completing form I-765 can be downloaded from the USCIS website at <http://www.uscis.gov> (go to "FORMS") or on page 4 of this application packet.

- If the extension is based on a previous degree, please notify ISS because you must submit additional documents

Step 2: Assemble the Application Materials

OPT applications must be received by USCIS before your current EAD card expires.

Clip the application materials together in the following order:

1. Check or money order, payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for the OPT application fee (\$380).
2. Two color photos. The instructions with the Form I-765 provide detailed photo requirement information (passport photos). Print full name and most recent Form I-94 number in pencil on the back of each photo. Place the photos in a clear plastic bag or envelope and clip it to the application.
3. Original Form I-765 (Keep a copy for your records)
4. Photocopy of all previous I-20's, including your new I-20, page 1 with your signature and page 2 with OPT recommendation.
5. Photocopy of your last EAD card.
6. Print-out of the most recent electronic I-94 at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html>. If you have a paper Form I-94, a photocopy of both sides of Form I-94 (copy the back even if it is blank). Do not mail the original paper Form I-94.

7. Photocopies of as many as possible of the following that contain your name and photo: Identity page of your passport, entry visa stamp with a photo, driver's license or state ID, student ID, and any previously issued EAD.

8. Photocopy of your diploma or final transcript

*G-1145 E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance form (optional). This form can be downloaded from the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov (go to "FORMS"). The purpose of the form is to request that you receive an e-mail or text message notification when your application reaches the USCIS lockbox.

Keep a copy of the above documents and application for your records. Paperclip G-1145 on top of the application materials. Mail the application by registered or express mail to obtain a signed receipt. Keep the receipt for your records.

Step 3: Mail the OPT Application to the USCIS Lockbox
Use the Phoenix Lockbox address if the address you indicated on Form I-765 is in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Mail:
USCIS
PO BOX 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

For Express Mail Only:
USCIS
Attn: AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

Use the Dallas Lockbox address if the address you indicated on Form I-765 is in Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Vermont, Virgin Islands, Virginia, or West Virginia.

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) mail:
USCIS
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

For Express Mail Only:

USCIS
Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

You are Responsible for Mailing your OPT application to USCIS

Wait for EAD to be Mailed from USCIS

- It takes approximately 2 to 3 months for USCIS to process your request and mail your EAD to the address listed on Form I-765.
- Several weeks after you apply, you should receive a receipt notice (Form I-797) in the mail from USCIS.
- Students who file a timely application can continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.

The EAD will reflect the dates of your employment authorization.

Travel Outside the U.S. During Your 24-month Approved OPT Extension

Travel with these items: Passport with valid visa stamp, EAD card, letter of employment, I-20 form with valid travel signature.

(Travel signatures are only valid for 6 months)

NOTE: *Per SEVP guidance*, overseas travel is not recommended when your 24-month OPT extension application is pending and your EAD has expired.

Step 4: Important Reporting Requirements While on Your 24-month OPT Extension

ISS is required to have a copy of your EAD. Upon receipt of your EAD, email a copy (front and back) to intserv@d.umn.edu, include your student ID number.

SEVIS is now requiring verification that you are actively employed along with the name and address of your current employer at 6 months and again at 12 and 18 months after the start date of your 24-month extension whether or not there has been a change to this information. Please email ISS with your employer info every 6 months, even if it does not change.

You are required to send the information to ISS at intserv@d.umn.edu at least 15 days before and no more than 31 days after the due dates. Failure to submit your current employer's name and address at these intervals will result in termination of your F-1 status.

NOTE: You are responsible for keeping track of these dates! ISS will not send you a reminder!

I-983 Reporting Requirements

- An updated form I-983 must be submitted to ISS within 10 days of starting new employment or if there are material changes to the I-983 plan, including: change of employer or EIN, reduction in compensation, significant decrease in hours per week worked or any decrease below the 20 hours per week required under the STEM rule.
- You must tell ISS within 5 business days of employment termination or departure
- Students must complete 2 self-evaluations during their STEM extension, one before the end of the first 12 months of STEM OPT - "Evaluation of student progress". The second concluding evaluation at the end of their 24 months - "Final evaluation of student progress". This must be signed by the student and their immediate supervisor, and then a copy of the document must be submitted to ISS.
- Also note that the Department of Homeland Security may conduct employer on-site reviews at worksite.

Additional Reporting Requirements:

- You are required to update your mailing address and/or name change in the University System within 10 days of any changes.
- You are required to report changes to the name and address of your employer or any interruption in your employment to ISS within 10 days of any change.
- Accumulated unemployment during the entire OPT authorization period may not exceed 150 days. Employment must be 20 hours per week or more. Volunteer work or unpaid internships in your field do not count as employment. Keep written documents of all employment. If you have accumulated more than 150 days of unemployment, you will no longer be in F-1 status. Please notify ISS several weeks before you reach 150 days of unemployment.
- **Notify ISS if you change your visa status or permanently depart the U.S. before your OPT period ends.**
- Official admission to a new degree program and transfer to a new school during OPT will void any remaining time on your EAD. This time cannot be re-captured at a later date.

- Students enrolled at UMD (Grad 999 or other courses) are required to maintain the Student Health Benefit Plan Insurance unless they qualify for a waiver.

(www.shb.umn.edu/duluth/international-students/student-health-benefit-plan.htm)

INSTRUCTIONS

Form I-765

Application for Employment Authorization

(F-1 Optional Practical Training 24 Month Extension)

0. Put an "X" in the box next to "Renewal of my permission to accept employment"
1. **Name:** Print last, first, and middle names. Write "family name" or "last name" with all capital letters. If you do not have a middle name, write "(none)."
2. **Other Names Used:** If you have not used other names, write "(N/A)."
3. **Address in the U.S.:** Use a residential address that will be valid for 3 months after submission of application. USCIS mail cannot be forwarded to a new address by the postal service. If correspondence will be "in care of" a trustworthy friend or family member in the U.S., write the person's name in block 2 (i.e., C/O John Doe) and the person's address in block 3. If an address outside Minnesota is used, the OPT application might need to be sent to a USCIS service center other than the Nebraska Service Center.
4. **Country of Citizenship/Nationality:** Block 1 of I-20
5. **Place of Birth:** See passport
6. **Date of Birth:** See passport
7. **Gender:** Check one
8. **Marital Status:** Check one
9. **Social Security Number:** See Social Security card
10. **Alien Registration Number or I-94 Number:** *F-1 Students:* Use the 11-digit number on most recent I-94
11. **Have You Ever Before Applied for Employment Authorization from USCIS?** F-1 curricular practical training (CPT) authorized by ISS is not employment authorization from USCIS. If you have previously submitted an employment authorization application to USCIS for approval, check "yes" and provide the USCIS service center that adjudicated your employment authorization as indicated by your EAD card number (e.g. LIN, CSC, WAC, etc.), the dates of your employment authorization, and if it was granted, denied, etc.
12. **Date of Last Entry into the U.S.:** See most recent stamp in passport or I-94
13. **Place of Last Entry into the U.S.:** U.S. city where applicant went through U.S. port of entry.
14. **Status of Last Entry:** See most recent stamp in passport or I-94 (i.e. F-1 student, etc.)
15. **Current Immigration Status:** F-1 student
16. **Eligibility Category:** The eligibility category for 24 month extension for S.T.E.M. students is: (c) (3) (C)
17. **Degree:** List the degree and major as they appear on your I-20. **Employers Name as Listed in E-verify:** Ask employer –it may be different than common employer's name. **Employer's E-verify Company Identification Number:** Ask employer
18. Leave this item blank.

Signature, Telephone Number, and Date: Write these items just below the words. (It is very important that you keep your signatures between the two horizontal lines)

24-Month Extension of Post-Completion OPT Student Request

Student Request

Student should complete this portion.

Student's Name: Family First Middle

UMD Student ID #: SEVIS ID #:

Email: Phone:

Academic Major (I-20): Degree Level (I-20) e.g. BA, BS, MA, MS, PhD:

Visa Expiration Date: Month/Day/Year
Passport Expiration Date: Month/Day/Year

Have you sent a copy of your current EAD to ISS? Yes No

Have you reported your employment information to ISS? Yes No

Have you updated your current mailing address on Onestop website? Yes No

Have you ever been granted employment authorization for a STEM extension of OPT? Yes No

If Yes, at what degree level? _____

Living Expenses:

Living expenses: \$ (minimum of 9,578)

Expenses of dependents: \$

1 dependent \$8,292 2 dependent \$11,652

3 dependent \$14,352 4 dependent \$17,100

Total Expenses: \$

Sources of Funding:

Personal funds/savings: \$

Funds from another source: \$

Specify source:

Total Funding: \$

On which degree are you applying for the 24-month extension

Current EAD dates from: Month/Day/Year to: Month/Day/Year

24-month extension dates from: Month/Day/Year to: Month/Day/Year

Describe your employment during the 24-month extension:

Employer Name:

Employer Address: City State Zip

STATEMENT: *I have read the attached cover pages regarding optional practical training and fully understand the implications of the authorization. The information I have provided is true and correct.*

Signature Month/Day/Year

ISS will complete this section:

- Previous OPT
- Previous STEM extension
- Completed degree
- Address checked
- Travel discussed
- Passport expiration
- Completed I-983
- Employment is paid
- Employment is not through temp agency, consulting firm, or self employment

Date submitted to ISS
Month/Day/Year

Date I-983 Received _____

Date I-765 Received _____

90 Days Prior _____

Adviser's initials _____