STEM Extension Information Session

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN

University Immigration Services (UIS)
STEM Extension of OPT

Post-completion Optional Practical training (OPT) is a 12-month employment authorization available to F-1 students who have completed an academic degree at the Associates, Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral level. F-1 students are permitted one period of OPT after each degree level.

Students who complete degrees in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics may be eligible for a two-year STEM extension of their post-completion OPT, depending on the support and eligibility of their employers. STEM extensions do not stand alone, but can only be added on to a period of post-completion OPT.
Eligibility

To be eligible for the STEM extension, a student must

• Have completed a qualifying degree, as listed on the [DHS STEM designated program list](#), from an accredited and SEVP-certified school;
  o The CIPP code determines whether or not a program is designated by DHS. Look for the number next to the major listed in the Program section of your I-20.
• Be employed full-time (20+ hours per week) in a qualifying job that is related to your field of study; AND
• Work for a qualifying employer that is E-Verified and able to fill out an I-983.
  o The employer must participate in the STEM application process and “sponsors” the student.
Application Timeline

The STEM Extension request application must be received by USCIS before the expiration date on the EAD card and within 60 days of the date the STEM Request I-20 was issued. The earliest a student may apply for a STEM Extension is 90 days before the expiration of post-completion OPT (as per the EAD). Students who file a timely application are permitted to continue employment while the extension application is pending for 180 days beyond the EAD expiration or until a final decision is made, whichever comes first.

You need a specific I-20 with the STEM request on page two. When you have put together the necessary paperwork, including the I-983, request the I-20 from UIS using the eform. Resources, including this form are found on the University’s external website so you can access them even though your myCharger log-in credentials expired.

UIS begins to use your non-student email in SEVIS after you graduate because we don’t know how long your University credentials will remain valid.
UIS Process

Students must submit the following documents to University Immigration Services to request an I-20 reflecting a STEM Extension request:

1. STEM OPT Request Form
2. Copy of completed Form I-983
   Instructions for filling out a Form I-983 can be found on the SEVP Website. (Do not fill out the self-evaluation section on page 5.)
3. Copy of completed Form I-765 (If filing online a draft copy is OK)
4. Copy of current EAD card
5. Copy of Offer Letter (dated within the last 4 months)
6. UIS will review your submission and if acceptable, issue the STEM Request I-20. (We will contact you if there are problems with your submission.)
USCIS Application

1. With the collaboration of your supervisor complete the I-983 and submit it to UIS for the DSO to review and approve. If the I-983 is complete and addresses all program requirements, the DSO will issue the STEM Request I-20.
2. Gather all the other supporting evidence for the I-765 (same as before except you now need evidence from post-completion OPT, and your diploma and transcripts from a STEM degree)
3. Get new passport style photos
4. Look for any updated fee or mailing information (if needed) as well as the checklist of required evidence on the USCIS Website.
5. When you have the STEM Request I-20 and all the evidence ready, submit the I-765 application as instructed.
   a. Use category (c)(3)(C) and include the additional answers related to this category (E-Verify number, etc.).
   b. This is not a renewal of your previous EAD because you are requesting in a different category other than post-completion OPT.
   c. The online I-765 is recommended, but you may want to fill out the paper form first to prepare.
SECTION 1
Fill out the information about yourself and the University of New Haven.

• Name of school recommending and name of school where STEM degree earned are usually the same (UNH)
• SEVIS school code is on your I-20 in the school information block (BOS214F...)
• Request period starts the day after EAD expiry
• Qualifying major (match diploma) and CIPP code (on your I-20).

STEM-Designated Programs - University of New Haven

• No. Not based on prior degree.
• EAD number

Sign SECTION 2
SECTION 3
You and your employer fill out this section.
• Employer address (page 2) is company headquarters. Site of employment could be a separate location (page 3).
• EIN number is a different number from the E-Verify number
• NAICS code can be googled

Employer signs SECTION 4
SECTION 5

The employer fills out this section.

• The site address is where you physically work: can be a worksite you are sent out to work in, or a remote office at home.

• Training plan relates to your job description and how you are supervised.

Your supervisor signs SECTION 6
For the initial application, you leave page 5 blank.

You will be reporting participation during the STEM extension every 6 months. You will need to submit an evaluation on the top half of page 5 at 12 months, and an evaluation on the bottom half of page 5 at 24 months.

If you change jobs, you submit a final evaluation for the employer you are leaving on the bottom half of page 5.

You will submit a new I-983 for the new employer and for any substantive changes to your employment with that employer. The SEVP Website gives more information about this.

The I-983 is not included in your application packet, but it must be reviewed by the DSO before you can get the STEM Request I-20.
STEM Timeline

1. Student submits the STEM extension application to USCIS within the prescribed period (see slide 4).
2. USCIS adjudicates the application (usually about 3 months unless there are RFEs). If you get an RFE contact UIS if you need assistance.
3. When approved, student gets an approval notice and a new EAD.
4. You can report some things in your SEVP portal, but UIS needs the same information too.
5. Student continues to report to UIS any changes in employment or personal contact information using the Update OPT/STEM Information Form. Any changes to the employer/employment requires a new I-983.
6. Student reports participation every 6 months. Use the same update form to report to UIS, and UIS annotates your SEVIS record. 12- and 24-month reports require page 5 of the I-983. Reports at 6- and 18-months are sent to UIS via the update form.
7. Any time during the 24 months of the STEM extension, an employer may sponsor the student for an H1-B visa, or the student can change to another visa status for which they may be eligible.
8. When the STEM Extension ends, the student may start a new academic program at the same school or transfer to another school. If not, the student has 60 days to depart the U.S.