OPT STEM 24 Month Extension Application Process

F-1 students who completed a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree in a STEM field and are currently engaged in post-completion OPT may apply for the STEM extension if they have a job or job offer from an E-Verify Employer. You will need to ask your employer for their E-verify Number as well as their EIN Number!!

Applying for the STEM 24 month OPT~ **Please read everything very carefully!**

- Browse SEVP’s Study in the States STEM OPT Hub that contains resources to help students, schools, and employers. [https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub) or [https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/stem-opt](https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/stem-opt)

- The student must ensure the Form I-765, all supporting evidence, the new I-20 with extension recommendation and the fee payment reaches the proper USCIS Service Center before his or her current OPT expires.

- The student must ensure the Form I-765, all supporting evidence, the new I-20 with extension recommendation and the fee payment reaches the proper USCIS Service Center no later than 60 days after the DSO has recommended extension in SEVIS.

- USCIS recommends that a student file for the 24-month STEM extension up to 120 and no less than 90 days prior to the end of his or her post-completion OPT. Processing can take up to 90 days.

**HOW TO APPLY?**

**Step One:** Prepare the following documents AND CREATE A SCAN OR COPY TO PRESENT TO THE KSU SEVIS OFFICE:

  - [Item 11 answer YES, at Texas Service Center (or if you were in another state, the Service Center you used at that time), OPT dates as listed on your EAD Card, and Results GRANTED, and include your employer’s E-Verify information in Item 17.
  - Note: for OPT STEM Extension, enter “c 3 C” under Item 16, leave 18 blank]

- If you would like to receive a text or email from USCIS when your packet is received, please also include Form G-1145: [http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf)

- I-765 Application Fee ($410), check or money order made payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- One of the following documents must also be included and can be ordered on [iwantmytranscript.com](http://iwantmytranscript.com) or obtained in the KSU registrar’s office or thru Owl Express [include only one]: (1) official transcripts (2) unofficial transcripts or (3) Copy of the diploma showing the level and the program of study

- Copy of previously issued EAD(s) card(s) and I-20s that show approval

- Copy of passport and visa [include expired copies as well and all US Entry stamps]

- Obtain I-94 information from [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov) and include a copy

- Have two passport photos made (full-frontal face position) Write your name, birthdate and I-94 number on the BACK of each photo preferably in pencil.

- A copy of your employer’s attestation, offer letter and I-983 training form (please see instructions P.2)
**Step Two:**
- Submit copies of the above documents by email or in person at an appointment
- Request an appointment for the I-20 recommending OPT Extension from KSU’s SEVIS Office, sevis@kennesaw.edu. If you are no longer in the Atlanta area, you may scan and e-mail the above information. Please put “ATTN: 24 STEM OPT Extension” in the subject line of your e-mail.

- **In order to obtain the I-20, You will need to submit all of the following documents to KSU SEVIS:**
  1. If you want the SEVIS office to review the entire packet, please bring both Step one and Step Two to the appointment
  2. Proof of Insurance coverage
  3. Create a Document with the following information:
     - Your SEVIS ID number (**N000...** on I-20), KSU or SPSU student ID, current email, phone and home address
     - Your job title, Company’s name, Company’s address and your supervisor’s name and his/her email and phone number.
     - Your Company’s E-Verify number
     - Your Company’s Federal EIN Number (Employment Identification Number)
  9. A copy of your Company’s offer letter that shows that you have a paid job with the company and the start date or letter to extend employment
  10. A copy of your employer’s I-983 training form [https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983overview](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983overview)

**Step Three:**
- Pick up the OPT Extension I-20 from KSU or request it be sent to you via post mail along with the Extension Support letter from the SEVIS office.
- Sign the updated I-20 with extension request in BLUE ink, keep one copy, mail the other
- Obtain a large shipping envelope and write “I-765 for OPT Extension” at the bottom
- Make copies of all documents prior to mailing
- Mail using a postage tracking number as per the below instructions

**After applying for OPT, Track Your OPT Application with USCIS:** If a student does not receive a receipt notice from the USCIS within 3-4 weeks, send an email to the following address: csc.nonotice@dhs.gov

To check on the status of a pending application, access the USCIS website at: [https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp](https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp) and enter in the receipt number.

3. The National Customer Service number is 1-800-375-5283. (have paperwork ready, including I-94 number and OPT receipt number)

4. Delays are common and students may anticipate a wide range of USCIS processing times for authorizations. **If you do not receive the EAD card 91 days after the date on your I-797 Receipt Notice of Action, you can request the SEVIS Office to contact immigration on your behalf.**

*Once the EAD card is received, a copy must be given to the KSU SEVIS OFFICE.*
**Mailing instruction**

Make copies of entire packet for your records and send packet by ‘trackable’ U.S. mail. Be sure the packet is received by USCIS within **60 days** or less from issuance date of the OPT Extension I-20.

You will mail your application to the USCIS Lockbox for the state you currently live in:

If you currently live 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.

**USCIS Phoenix Lockbox:**
For regular U.S. Postal Service (USPS) or Express/Priority deliveries (You cannot send to this address by couriers such as Fed-Ex, UPS or DHL):
**USCIS ***If E-filing, mail to the address on your Receipt Confirmation***
PO Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036
You cannot send to this address by Fed-Ex, UPS or DHL.

If you currently live 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, Vermont,
Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia

**USCIS Dallas Lockbox:**
For regular U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries and USPS Priority:
**USCIS ***If E-filing, mail to the address on your Receipt Confirmation***
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

For USPS Express Mail and Courier Deliveries such as FedEx, UPS, or DHL:
**USCIS, Attn: AOS**
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067
Students pursuing a period of STEM extension OPT must:
- Work in a paid position for an E-Verify employer at least 21 hours per week
- Work in a position related to their STEM degree
- Provide a copy of their new EAD card to the KSU SEVIS Office

Students pursuing a period of STEM extension OPT must not:
- Not work in a paid position for any employer that is not an E-Verify employer or without a FEIN#
- Not have more than 150 days of unemployment time during the entire period of post-completion OPT (no more than 90 days under regular OPT, no more than 60 days unemployment under STEM)
- Not work in a volunteer, unpaid, self employed, or contract position

1. Report to sevis@kennesaw.edu with your employment information and offer letter within 10 days of job changes. A new I-983 is required.

2. If you change jobs, there may not be a gap larger than 10 days between jobs. Your new job must be E-verified as well. A new I-983 is required.

4. Report to sevis@kennesaw.edu if any of the following occur: (1) Legal name change or marriage (2) home address change (3) change in employer (4) loss of employment (5) change of Status/Marriage (6) change in email or phone number

5. While on OPT extension, students’ visas are still under the maintenance of KSU and the SEVIS office until the OPT end date or change of status occurs. Failure to comply with F-1 regulations, failure to provide updated information, failure to respond to KSU correspondence will result in termination of status and all work must cease.

6. Reporting Requirements:
   A. Send the International Student and Scholar Services Office DSOs (sevis@kennesaw.edu) a validation report every six months starting from the date the STEM extension starts and ending when the student’s F-1 status ends or the STEM extension ends, whichever is first. Windows for this six months reporting is 15 days before and 31 days after each reporting due day. Students who do not report will be contacted at the information filed in the International Student Office at KSU (or former SPSU). Student’s status will be terminated if student fails to make the six months report or cannot be contacted. Reports must be made even if no information has changed. The validation report must include the student’s:
      - Full legal name and SEVIS identification number on I-20 (N000...)
      - Current mailing and residential address, phone number and personal email address
      - Name and address of the current company and supervisor information
      - Date the student began working for the current employer
      - Job position and or title
      - Proof of Insurance Coverage
      - Employer E-verify # and Federal Employer Identification Number
   B. An annual self evaluation is mandatory from the employer and student every year.
Possible Questions:

Q: What types of employment are allowed for students during an OPT STEM extension?
A: Students authorized for an OPT STEM extension must work at least 21 hours per week for an E-Verify employer, with an FEIN# in a position directly related to each individual student’s STEM degree.

Paid employment. All employment during the STEM extension must be paid employment. Volunteer experience does not count as employment for the purpose of maintaining F-1 status during the STEM extension.

Multiple employers. Students may work for multiple (or short-term) employers but cannot work more than one full-time job, and all employment must be related to each individual student’s degree program and all employers must be enrolled in E-Verify.

It is understood at this time that the following are not allowed under the new STEM rule. This may change in the future.

Work for hire. This is also commonly referred to as 1099 employment where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. The company for whom the student is providing services must be registered with E-Verify. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods and the name and address of the contracting company. Not allowed under new STEM rule.

Self-employed business owner. Students on a STEM extension can start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, the student must register his or her business with E-Verify and work full time. The student must be able to prove that he or she has the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to his or her degree program. Not allowed under new STEM rule.

Employment through an agency or consulting firm. Students on a STEM extension may be employed by an employment agency or consulting firm. The employment agency or consulting firm must be registered with E-Verify, but the third parties contracting with the agency or firm (for which the student is providing services) need not be. Not allowed under new STEM rule.

Q: Can students count volunteer experience as employment during an OPT STEM extension?
A: Students on a STEM extension are allowed to volunteer, incidental to their status. This means that volunteer work is allowed but does not count as employment for the purpose of maintaining F-1 status. So you must volunteer in addition to your full time job.

Q: Can students work multiple jobs during an OPT STEM extension?
A: Yes, but all the employers must be enrolled in E-Verify.

Q: Can a student travel outside of the United States if his or her employment authorization document expires and the STEM extension request is pending with USCIS?
A: No. The student must wait to receive the new employment authorization document/card.

Q: Do students have to have insurance Coverage during OPT STEM? YES, you must be covered by health insurance at all times. This is the student’s responsibility. Speak to your company’s HR department.

CAUTION! You may only travel on OPT if you have received your new EAD card AND have secured E-verified employment:

If you plan to travel while on OPT Extension you will need the following:

1. Valid visa
2. I-20 (must be signed for travel by a KSU designated official within 6 months of travel)
3. Valid Passport
5. Letter from Employer authorizing you to travel and verifying you will work there before and after travel.
6. Pay Stubbs recommended