

SEWANEE

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH

OPT STEM EXTENSION

On March 11, 2016, the Department of Homeland Security published a final rule allowing certain F-1 students who receive science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees, and who meet other specified requirements, to apply for a 24-month extension of their post-completion OPT. The 24-month extension will replace the 17-month STEM OPT extension previously available to STEM students. The STEM extension of the OPT period gives U.S. employers two chances to recruit these highly desirable graduates through the H-1B process, as the extension is long enough to allow for H-1B petitions to be filed in two successive fiscal years.

For more information, please visit the Department of Homeland Security's Website:
<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub>

Student Eligibility

- Students must be in F-1 status.
- Students must be currently working in a period of post-completion OPT
- Students must have a bachelor's degree or higher degree in an [eligible STEM field](#). You *may* be eligible to use a prior STEM degree earned in the U.S. for this requirement; to use a prior STEM degree, you must:
 - Have received your most recent degree (which does not need to be STEM-related) from a currently accredited Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified school in the U.S.
 - Have received your prior, qualifying STEM degree in the U.S. within 10 years of applying for the STEM OPT extension.
 - The qualifying STEM degree must be on the Department of Homeland Security's STEM Designated Degree Program List at the time you submit your STEM OPT extension application (rather than at the time you received the degree).
- Students must have a job offer that meets the following requirements:
 - The job is with an employer enrolled in the USCIS E-Verify program
 - The job offers at least 20 hours of work per week
 - The job will provide formal training and learning objectives directly related to your qualifying STEM degree
- Students must be able to complete the [I-983 Training Plan](#) with their employer

Note: Before applying for STEM Extension OPT, you must have previously reported your employment to your DSO/PDSO at Sewanee.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR OPT STEM EXTENSION

1. Email the information below to the Sewanee PDSO/DSO to request a new I-20 with STEM OPT Extension:

- Personal address and phone number
- Employer's name, address, phone number, and EIN
- Direct supervisor's name, address, phone number, and email
- Job title
- The start date of your STEM extension employment
- Copy of your completed Sewanee transcript OR diploma.
If the STEM OPT extension is based on a previous U.S. STEM degree that is NOT from Sewanee, you must submit a copy of the previous STEM degree and a copy of the I-20 issued for the STEM degree when contacting the DSO.
- [I-983 training plan](#), which is completed with your employer. Keep a copy for your records.

2. Mail the following documents in one application packet to USCIS.

The mailing address depends on your state of residence. **Mailing addresses can be found [here](#).** Make a copy of the application packet and mail the original so that USCIS receives it before the application deadlines.

- **Copy of your new I-20 with STEM OPT Extension, issued by the DSO**
The DSO will mail you an original copy, and you must sign the original I-20 before making a copy to mail to USCIS. You have **60 days** to submit the I-20 to USCIS after it has been issued to you by the PDSO/DSO.
- **Form I-765:** <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
Complete the form online and print a copy. Include your employer's name as listed in E-Verify and E-Verify Company Identification Number or valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number.
Use this code for Question 16: (c)(3)(C), 24 Month Extension STEM extension
- **Copies of the following documents: F-1 visa, I-94, current passport (biographical page), all previous I-20s, and current EAD card (front and back)**
- **Proof of degree.** Official transcript is recommended. Alternatively, the applicant may choose to provide a copy of the diploma showing the level and program of study.
- **Two (2) passport pictures with name and I-94 number written on back.**
- **Completed [G-1145 Form](#).** (Optional; it notifies you of your application's arrival at USCIS)
- **Check or money order for \$410**, made out to Department of Homeland Security.
- **Cover letter/checklist.** This should explain that you are applying for the 24-month OPT extension and should list the contents of the mailing.