STEM OPT Extension

Required Workshop for All Applicants

September 2020
F-1 Students with degrees in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) may be eligible for an extension of their Post-Completion OPT work permission. See list of eligible majors here: Eligible CIP codes

Extension is granted for 24 months.

Students may be eligible to have two STEM OPT Extensions during their time in the United States, based on two degrees.

Students currently in a non-STEM degree can be eligible for a STEM OPT extension based on a previous STEM degree obtained in the U.S. from an accredited institution.
The student and employer are required to use the Form I-983 Training Plan and follow all reporting requirements.

Employers must provide a 9 digit Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)

Department of Homeland Security may conduct employer site visits to confirm that training plan goals are being met

Volunteering is not permitted on the STEM OPT extension
STEM OPT EXTENSION

Students’ compensation must be commensurate to similarly situated U.S. workers

Self-employment is not permitted

Small start-up companies: There appear to be ways for some to qualify as long as the employer has an FEIN, student is considered an “employee” and a supervisor can complete the Form I-983

Most temporary agency and contract work will not be eligible

During the STEM OPT extension you could have up to 150 days of unemployment time (90 used during post OPT and 60 for STEM OPT)
Submit the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, up to 90 days before your current OPT employment authorization expires, and within 60 days of the date your designated school official (DSO) enters the recommendation for OPT into your SEVIS record.

If you file your STEM OPT extension application on time and your OPT period expires while your extension application is pending, your employment authorization automatically extends for up to 180 days. This automatic 180-day extension ceases once USCIS adjudicates your STEM OPT extension application.
All STEM extension applications must be received by USCIS before your current Post-Completion OPT expires.

STEM OPT extension applicants are required to complete a Form I-983 with their employer. The form I-983 can be found here: Form I-983

An I-20 with the STEM OPT recommendation will be provided by Immigration Services and you will mail this to USCIS with your other application materials.
3 STEPS TO TAKE

1. Complete I-983 Form with Employer
2. Log into compass.uga.edu & complete STEM OPT Extension e-forms
3. Prepare materials for application
COMPLETING THE I–983 FORM

VISIT STEM HELP HUB

Click on the Icon to the right to access step-by-step instructions or completing the I–983 form.

It may be helpful to have the following documents close by when viewing

Form I–983 Training Plan
COMPLETING THE I–983 FORM

When preparing the Form I–983, you will be asked to include UGA’s school code and the Designated School Official (DSO) recommending your STEM OPT

UGA School Code: ATL214F00222000

Using the last number of your UGA ID (8IX Number), find your DSO; Example: 8IXXXXXX?

Jennifer Beasley- 0, 1
Jordan Rollins- 2, 3, 4
Ashley Johnson- 5, 6
Linnea Tighe- 7, 8, 9

Contact Information for all advisors is below:
1324 S. Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30602

Phone: (706) 542-2900
Email: immigration@uga.edu
When all materials are complete, Immigration Services will create the required I-20 recommending the STEM OPT extension.

An email notification will be sent when the documents have been processed with options for collecting the items needed for the application.

NOTE: Your I-20s will not be issued without submitting the Form I-983 in Compass.

Click Here for more I-983 information.
COLLECT THE ITEMS BELOW

- Completed and signed I-765 application (Form I-765)
- Completed G-1145 form (Form G-1145)
- Include I-20 signed by both your immigration advisor and yourself
- Copy of current EAD card (front and back)
- $410.00, payable to The Department of Homeland Security by check or money order OR use a completed G-1450 Form to pay by credit card (Form G-1450). Increasing to $550 on 10/2/2020.
- Two identical passport-style color photos of yourself taken within 30 days of filing application.
- Copy of official UGA or Previous School’s transcript showing conferred degree
- Copy of Passport ID page
- Copy of I-94 card, both front and back, or copy of I-94 print out from CBP I-94 Website
- If you are applying using a previous degree, submit transcripts and previous I-20

Only print the form I-765 found on the USCIS website. The USCIS will NOT accept outdated forms.
The filing fee will increase for I-765 applications on October 2, 2020.

All applications postmarked on October 2, 2020 or after will require a fee of $550.00.

Applications postmarked before October 2, 2020 will require the current fee of $410.00.
IMMIGRATION SERVICES ENCOURAGES YOU TO COMPLETE THE I-765 FORM WHILE REVIEWING THE NEXT FEW SLIDES. THE FORM CAN BE FOUND HERE:

Form I-765

Only print the form I-765 found on the USCIS website. The USCIS will NOT accept outdated forms. COMPLETING THIS FORM IS THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSIBILITY.

IMMIGRATION SERVICES CANNOT OFFER LEGAL ADVICE REGARDING USCIS APPLICATIONS.
Using the Correct I-765 Form:


The current edition of Forms I-765 and I-765WS, dated 12/26/19
• Will be accepted if the application is postmarked before Aug. 25, 2020
• Will not be accepted if the application is postmarked on or after Aug. 25, 2020

The updated edition of Forms I-765 and I-765WS, dated 08/25/20
• Will be accepted if the application is postmarked on or after Aug. 25, 2020
• Will not be accepted if the application is postmarked before Aug. 25, 2020
Check the Edition!

USCIS will deny an application if the correct edition is not used. You must ONLY use the edition dated 8/25/2020. You can check the edition date at the bottom of the first page of the I-765 as shown here:
PART 1: REASON FOR APPLYING
1.a. Select “Initial permission to accept employment”

PART 2: INFORMATION ABOUT YOU
2.a-c: Your Full Legal Name: Enter your full legal name as it is shown in your passport.

2.a-4.c: Other Names Used: Enter other names you have used, if any.

NOTE: The name on your I-20 should also be the same as the name written on the passport biographical page. If your name is different, inform an advisor at time of application.
PART 2: OTHER INFORMATION

5.a-f: Your U.S. Mailing Address: We recommend using OGE’s address for the mailing address:

5.a. Office of Global Engagement
5.b. 1324 S. Lumpkin Street
5.d. Athens
5.e. GA
5.f. 30602

NOTE: You may need to fill in portions of the address by hand due to limitations of the fillable PDF. If you provide an address that is not OGE’s address, please be aware that if you move residences while your application is pending, the US Postal Service cannot forward government mail to a new address. If your mailing address changes while the application is pending, follow the instructions on the USCIS Change of Address Information website.

6. Your U.S. Mailing Address:
If the address you provided is where you physically reside, select “Yes”. If you do not physically reside at the address provided (i.e. you used the OGE address), select “No” and complete 7.a-e.

7.a-e: U.S. Physical Address: Enter your address where you physically reside.
PART 2: OTHER INFORMATION

8. Alien Registration Number (if applicable)

9. USCIS Online Account Number (if applicable)

10. Gender: Select the appropriate box.

11. Marital Status: Select the appropriate box of your marital status at the time of filing your application.

12. If you have applied for employment authorization through USCIS in the past, select “Yes” and provide copies of previously issued EAD cards.

13.a-b: If you have a Social Security Number (SSN), select “Yes” and provide the SSN number in 13.b. If you do not have a Social Security card, select “No”.

14-17.b: If you have not already been issued a SSN and would like to apply for a SSN with your OPT application answer “Yes” and answer questions 15-17.b.

If you do not wish to apply for a SSN, select “No” and skip to question 18. You are not required to request an SSN using this application. Completing Item Numbers 14-17.b is optional. However, you must have an SSN properly assigned in your name to work in the United States.
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER REQUEST

APPLY FOR THE SSN WITH OPT

The form I-765 includes additional question that allow applicants to apply for an SSN or replacement card without visiting the Social Security Administration. USCIS will transmit the additional data collected on the form.

Applicants should receive the Social Security card within two weeks of the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is received.
PART 2: YOUR COUNTRY & PLACE OF BIRTH

18.a-b: List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national.

19.a-c.: Place of Birth: Prove information about city, state and country of birth. Enter the name that your country held at the time of your birth (in case the name of your country has since changed).

20: Date of Birth: Use MM/DD/YYYY format.

PART 2: LAST ARRIVAL IN THE U.S.

21.a: Enter your most recent I-94 number here

21.b – 25: Enter travel history information & history here (last entry, last status granted upon entry)

26: Enter your current SEVIS number. You can find this number on the top left side of your I-20. If you have had more than one SEVIS number, use Part 6 on Page 7 to list all previously used SEVIS numbers (see instructions below).
PART 2: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY

27: "(C)(3)(C)" should be used if you are applying for a STEM extension to your OPT.

28.a: STEM OPT Extension applicants only: Enter degree level (example: Bachelor’s)

28.b: STEM OPT Extension applicants only: Employer’s Name as Listed in E-Verify: Ask your company’s HR department to confirm the company’s EVerify name.

28.c: STEM OPT Extension applicants only: Employer’s E-verify Company Identification Number is a 4-7 digit number issued by the Federal government. Ask your company’s HR department to confirm the number. *This is NOT the same as the Employer Identification Number or EIN Number.*

29–31.b: Enter NA
1-2: Applicant’s Statement: If you have filled the I-765 out yourself, select 1.a. You do not have to answer Part 4 or 5 if you did not used an interpreter or preparer to fill out the I-765.

3-6: Applicant’s Contact Information: Provide your contact information.

7.a-b: Applicant’s Signature: Sign by hand in black ink inside the box and enter the date you completed the application.

Failure to sign the form could cause your application to be rejected. USCIS policy does not allow digitally-signed documents, so if the signature fail to match the signature on other documents and/or is clearly digitally-inserted, USCIS can deny your application!
PART 6: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have been previously authorized for OPT, provide the SEVIS ID and academic level at which it was authorized. You will also need to provide copies of previously issued EAD cards. Reference Page 2, Part Number 2, Item Number 12.

If you have been authorized for CPT, provide the SEVIS ID, start and end date, part-time/full-time, and academic level at which it was authorized. Reference Page 3, Part Number 2, Item Number 27.

If you were previously in F-1 status, but had a different SEVIS number, provide all of the previously used SEVIS numbers and the academic level. Reference Page 3, Part Number 2, Item Number 26.

PARTS 4 & 5:

Enter NA if you completed the form yourself without the use of an interpreter or someone filling out the form on your behalf.
STEM OPT LIMITATIONS

EMPLOYMENT

Employment must be paid.

Employment must be a minimum of 20 hours per week.

Employment must be directly related to your course of study.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Students approved for the 24-month STEM OPT extension may not accrue more than a total of 150 days of unemployment throughout their entire 36 months on OPT.
STEM OPT REPORTING

STUDENTS & EMPLOYERS MUST REPORT

Any change to the following information on the I-983 must be reported to Immigration Services:

- Employer Name & Address
- Decrease or Increase in student’s compensation
- Reduction in hours worked to less than 20 hours a week
- Employer’s EIN
- Termination of Employment

STUDENTS REPORT

Any change to the following information must be reported to Immigration Services:

- Legal Name
- Residential address
- Employer name and address
- Change in status of current employment, including loss of employment, change of status to H-1B, transfer to another F-1 program, or change employers.
The U.S. Department of Homeland Security may conduct site visits of employers that train STEM OPT students.

How to Prepare:
1. Make sure employer information and home addresses are up-to-date in the SEVP Portal or reporting employment in iStart.
2. The employer’s address should be the address reported for work
3. Keep all records of employment and report ANY change in employment history, pay, etc. in the SEVP Portal or in iStart.

For more information, please visit: Employer Site Visits
EMPLOYMENT VISA OPTIONS AFTER OPT

The H-1B visa is the most common employment option & is sponsored by employers.

There are two types of H-1B Visas: (1) Cap-Subject and (2) Cap-exempt. For more detailed information on H-1B visas, please see the USCIS Website.

Additional options for visa sponsorship may be possible. Please consult with a reputable immigration attorney for options.
Cap-gap benefits are available to F-1 students only when properly files a cap-subject H-1B petition with USCIS. To trigger cap-gap benefits, the H-1B petition must:

• Request an H-1B employment start date of October 1;
• Request a change of status from F-1 to H-1B; and
• Be timely filed with USCIS- AND accepted for processing

There are two aspects of cap-gap benefits:
• An extension of OPT employment authorization, if USCIS receives the H-1B petition prior to the expiration of the student's approved post-completion OPT (standard or STEM)
• An extension of duration of status (D/S), if USCIS receives the H-1B petition before the expiration of the student’s grace period following completion of studies or practical training

Immigration Services will assist qualified students at the appropriate time.
For the upcoming Fiscal Year 2021 H-1B cap season, employers wanting to file a cap-subject H-1B petition must first submit registrations during a March 1 to March 20, 2020 registration period, naming each individual they hope to file for.

USCIS will then conduct a lottery of all registrations received, and petitioners may not file a cap-subject H-1B petition for any beneficiary whose registration was not selected in the registration lottery.

Registration Requirements for Petitioners Seeking To File H-1B Petitions on Behalf of Cap-Subject Aliens

PLEASE CONSULT EMPLOYER, IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY WITH QUESTIONS IF YOU PLAN TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CAP-GAP EXTENSION.
STEM OPT WORKSHOP COMPLETED

IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT IMMIGRATION@UGA.EDU OR VISIT IS.UGA.EDU