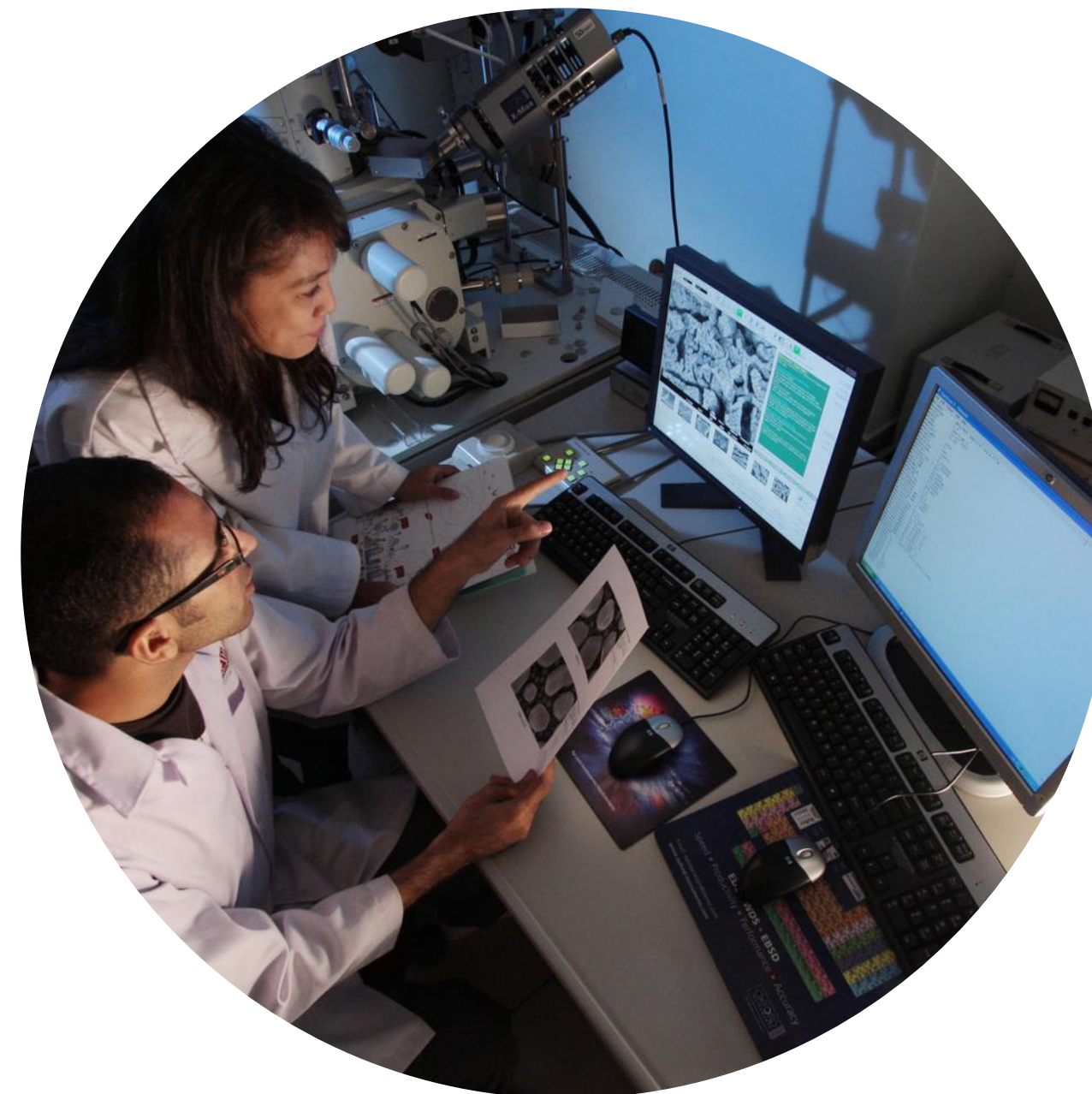




Immigration Services
Office of Global Engagement
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

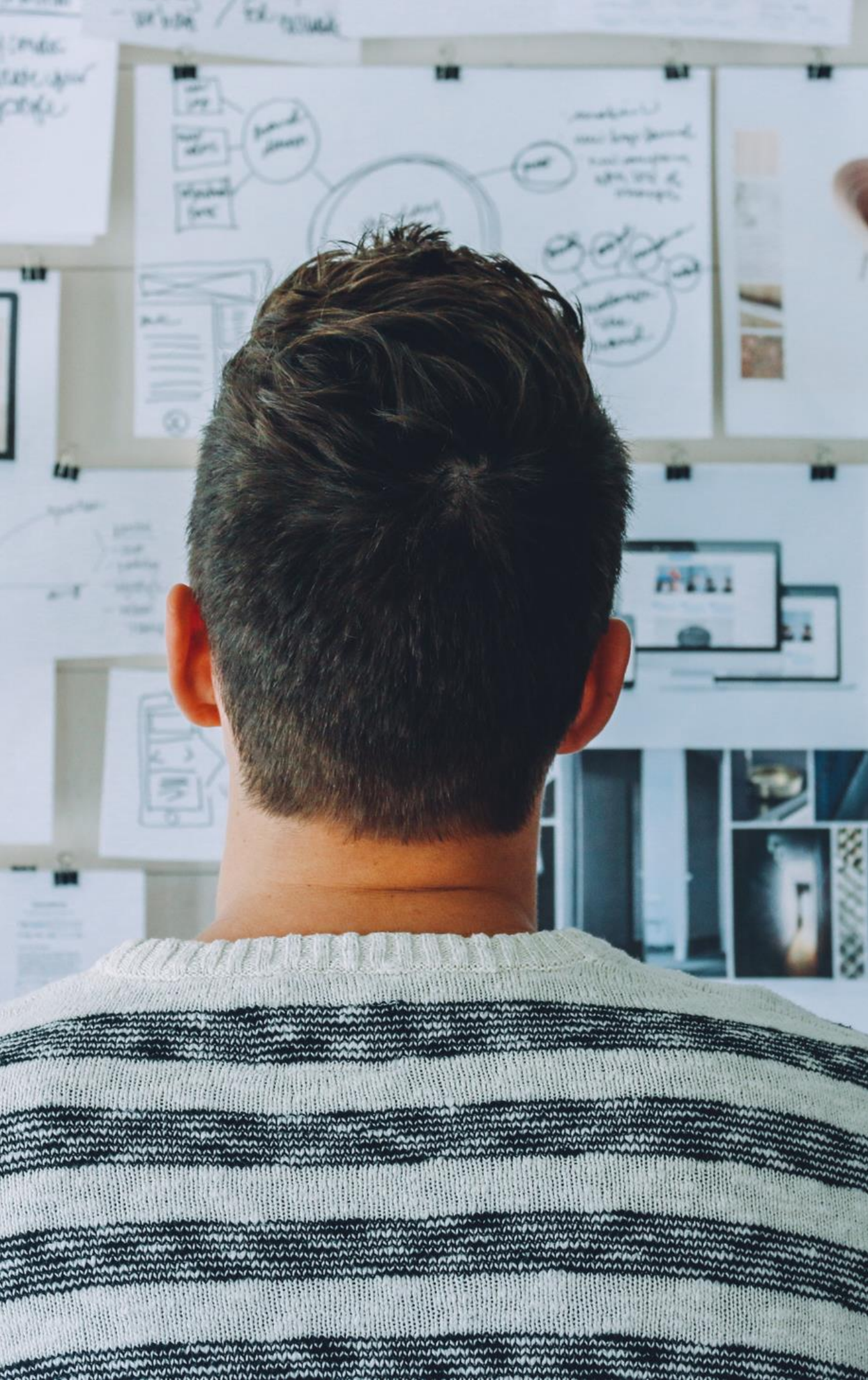
STEM Extension Workshop



Employment Authorization for STEM Majors



Spring 2024



About the Workshop

This workshop is required for all STEM Extension Optional Practical Training (OPT) applicants.

Unless specified otherwise, all information in this presentation refers to the STEM Extension OPT.

After viewing this presentation, you must visit compass.uga.edu to request the OPT recommendation I-20 form. This is required for your OPT application to the government.

Overview of STEM Workshop

PART 1

INTRODUCTION TO STEM OPT

PART 2

ELIGIBILITY

PART 3

UGA APPLICATION PROCESS

PART 4

USCIS APPLICATION OPTIONS

PART 5

LIFE ON STEM OPT

PART 6

IMPORTANT REMINDERS



INTRODUCTION

USE THESE SLIDES TO LEARN THE BASICS OF THE STEM
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EXTENSION

Introduction to STEM OPT

F-1 Students with degrees in the following fields may be eligible for an extension of their Post-Completion OPT work permission:

- Science
- Technology
- Engineering
- Math

The STEM Extension is granted for 24 months.



Introduction to STEM OPT

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.





ELIGIBILITY

USE THESE SLIDES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OPT
ELIGIBILITY

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

F-1 Students with degrees in STEM fields may be eligible for the extension. See list of eligible majors here:

[Eligible CIP Codes](#)

If a student's major is not listed on the Eligible CIP Code list, they may not be eligible for the STEM OPT Extension.

Students may be eligible to have two separate 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.



Types of Jobs on STEM OPT

Volunteering is not permitted on the STEM OPT extension

Students' compensation must be similar to current U.S. workers in the position

Self-employment is not permitted

Small start-up companies: Some may 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)



STEM OPT PROCESS

BEGIN THE OPT APPLICATION PROCESS BY FOLLOWING THE STEPS BELOW



A horizontal timeline with five colored dots: red, light blue, green, light blue, and red. Below each dot is a step in the STEM OPT process.

VIEW THIS ONLINE WORKSHOP

FULLY Review this
Workshop

COMPLETE I-983 WITH EMPLOYER

Work with your
employer to complete
the form I-983

COMPLETE STEM OPT REQUEST FORMS IN COMPASS

Complete STEM OPT
Request forms in
COMPASS.UGA.EDU

RECEIVE & PRINT STEM OPT I-20

Receive your NEW
STEM OPT I-20 from
Immigration Services

PREPARE MATERIALS AND SUBMIT APPLICATION TO USCIS

Review application assembly
guide and submit OPT
application by mail or online

The Form I-983: Training Plan for STEM OPT

Click Here for the
[Form I -983 Training Plan](#)

View the detailed [guide](#) provided by the
Student and Exchange Visitor Program.



Hyperlinked image – SEVP Help Hub

The Form I-983: Training Plan for STEM OPT

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

Use the [Student Caseload Division](#) to find your DSO

Contact Information for all advisors is below:

1324 S. Lumpkin Street

Athens, GA 30602

Phone: (706) 542-2900

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Important Reminders about the timeline for applying for the STEM OPT Extension.

90 DAYS BEFORE

Applications can be submitted NO EARLIER than 90 days before the current OPT end date.

AFTER OPT END DATE

ALL STEM OPT Applications must be received by the USCIS BEFORE the Post-Completion OPT End Date. There is no option to file after this date.

PROCESSING TIMES

On average, USCIS may require 3 months to process and issue the STEM OPT Employment Authorization



USCIS APPLICATION PROCESS

**USE THESE SLIDES TO REVIEW THE NECESSARY
MATERIALS AND OPTIONS WHEN APPLYING FOR THE
STEM OPT EXTENSION WITH THE USCIS**

USCIS APPLICATION: 2 METHODS



The USCIS provides two ways to submit the OPT application.

Online:

Applicants who wish to submit the OPT application online, may do so by creating an online account on the USCIS website. All materials and payment will be uploaded to the online e-form.

By Mail:

Applicants who wish to submit the OPT application by mail may do so by preparing the required paper forms, printed materials, and necessary fees.

Instructions:

Complete, step-by-step instructions on applying to USCIS by mail or through the online application system will be sent to students when their immigration advisor processes their OPT request.

Address updating with USCIS for STEM OPT

The USCIS Online Account stores the mailing address used in the most recent application.

If you used OGE's address, please use this again. If you did not use OGE's address for the Post-Completion OPT application, and have moved, please ensure that you have updated your address through the [AR-11 form](#).

It is recommended that you update this at least 30 days prior to submitting your STEM OPT extension application.

Application Materials for OPT: **ONLINE SUBMISSION**

- [USCIS Online account](#) creation and online I-765 submission

- \$470.00 paid by Credit Card on Pay.gov.

New: [Premium Processing](#) for quicker adjudication

- Scanned copy of I-20 with OPT recommendation on 2nd page, signed by Immigration Services advisor and student applicant on the 1st page. This is issued after an advisor reviews your OPT request.

- Scanned copy of a passport-style, color photo of yourself taken within 30 days of filing application

- Scanned copy of official UGA or Previous School's transcript showing conferred degree

- Scanned copy of passport biographical information page (showing passport expiration date & photo)

- Scanned copy of your F-1 visa

- Scanned copy of your I-94 record from cbp.gov/194 OR copy of I-94 card—front and back (dark enough to show the red stamp on the front of it)

- Scanned copy of I-797 Approval Notice if you changed status in the U.S. (if applicable)

- Scanned copies of all old I-20s for Full-Time CPT (if applicable)

- Scanned copies of all previous EAD cards (if applicable)

Application Materials for OPT: MAIL SUBMISSION

- [G-1145](#) Electronic Notification Form, Paper App Only
- Completed and signed [I-765](#). Only print the form I-765 found on the USCIS website. The USCIS will NOT accept outdated forms.
- \$520.00, payable to The U.S. Department of Homeland Security by check or money order OR use a completed [G-1450](#) Form to pay by credit card.
- I-20 with OPT recommendation on 2nd page, signed by Immigration Services advisor and student applicant on the 1st page. This is issued after an advisor reviews your OPT Request in compass.uga.edu.
- 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
- Photocopy of passport biographical information page (showing passport expiration date & photo)
- Photocopy of your F-1 visa
- Print-out of your I-94 record from cbp.gov/194 OR photocopy of I-94 card—front and back (dark enough to show the red stamp on the front of it)
- Photocopy of I-797 Approval Notice if you changed status in the U.S. (if applicable)
- Photocopies of all old I-20s for Full-Time CPT (if applicable)
- Photocopies of all previous EAD cards (if applicable)



LIFE ON STEM-OPT

USE THESE SLIDES TO REVIEW THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES WHILE ON STEM OPT.

Employment Requirements

Employment must be within the student's field for which OPT was authorized.

Employees should engage in a minimum of 20 hours/week of work.

Employment must be paid.

The Employer must be enrolled in [E-Verify](#).





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 STEM



OPT REPORTING 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 of employers.



STEM OPT REPORTING

In addition to changes in employment, students on the STEM OPT Extension must confirm their employment every 6 months to Immigration Services.




Students will be required to upload an evaluation at the 12 and 24 month points of their extension period.

Reporting will be submitted through compass.uga.edu.

[STEM OPT Reporting Requirements Resource](#)



ADDRESS REPORTING

- STEM OPT applicants with *pending* or *approved* applications to the USCIS must report changes to their residential or mailing address to UGA Immigration Services AND USCIS using the E-COA.
 - When reporting your address changes to **UGA Immigration Services**, please visit compass.uga.edu. Select F-1 Employment – Practical Training. Submit the OPT Personal Information Update.
 - When reporting your address changes to **USCIS** using the E-COA, follow the instructions linked below:
<https://www.uscis.gov/addresschange>
- 



USCIS Site Visits

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security may conduct site visits of employers that train STEM OPT students.

How to Prepare:

- Make sure employer information and home addresses are up-to-date in the SEVP Portal or reporting employment in Compass.
- The employer's address should be the address reported for work
- Keep all records of employment and report ANY change in employment history, pay, etc. in the SEVP Portal or in Compass.

For more information, please visit: [Employer Site Visits](#)

Cap-Gap Information

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- USCIS.gov.

Cap-gap benefits are available to F-1 students only with a properly filed cap-subject H-1B petition with USCIS.

[Click here for more information.](#)



Unemployment on STEM OPT

LIMITS

Students who obtain a 24-month STEM OPT extension are allowed a maximum of 150 days of unemployment. This includes the 90 days of unemployment from the Post-Completion authorization.

REMEMBER TO REPORT

If you change employers or if details of your employment change - you must report this update in compass.uga.edu.

UPDATE THE I-983

If your employment ends, please submit an I-983 with the evaluation page completed. A new I-983 will be required if you begin a new position.

STEM OPT WORKSHOP

A few reminders
before you apply.

REMINDER:

You may apply for OPT with USCIS for up to 90 days prior to your Post-Completion OPT end date. If you do not file your application within this timeframe, your application will be rejected or denied.

REMINDER:

There are 2 ways to file the OPT application- By Mail or Online. You must choose only one method to apply for OPT. You **must** have the I-20 issued by Immigration Services BEFORE applying.

REMINDER:

Visit compass.uga.edu to request the OPT recommendation I-20s needed for the application. Detailed Filing Instructions will be provided after this step.

STEM OPT PROCESS

BEGIN THE OPT APPLICATION PROCESS BY FOLLOWING THE STEPS BELOW



VIEW THIS ONLINE WORKSHOP

FULLY Review this
Workshop

COMPLETE I-983 WITH EMPLOYER

Work with your
employer to complete
the form I-983

COMPLETE STEM OPT REQUEST FORMS IN COMPASS

Complete STEM OPT
Request forms in
COMPASS.UGA.EDU

RECEIVE STEM OPT I-20

Receive your NEW
STEM OPT I-20 from
Immigration Services

PREPARE MATERIALS AND SUBMIT APPLICATION TO USCIS

Review application assembly
guide and submit OPT
application by mail or online



International Student Compliance Fee

As the Immigration Services Office is a cost recovery program, we are funded in large part through fees. The ISCF revenue is used to assist staff in compliance with Student and Exchange Visitor Program regulations, and in supporting our international student and scholar populations. During your time at UGA, this fee was paid through your student account.

Immigration Services will continue to assist and advise you during your OPT application process and your time on OPT. UGA-sponsored F-1 or J-1 students who are applying for work authorization through the Immigration Services office continue to pay the ISCF fee.

You will pay the fee when you apply for your OPT I-20 in Compass.

Visit **compass.uga.edu**

Questions: Contact your [immigration advisor](#)