



Applying for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Eligibility:

- You must currently be on Post-Completion OPT
- You must have received your diploma before you apply for STEM OPT.
- You must have an E-verify employer to apply for STEM Extension

Frequently asked questions:

Do I need a job offer to apply for STEM OPT? Yes, you need a job where you have a direct supervisor and your employer is E-verified.

Which majors are eligible for STEM OPT? Currently, all Graduate courses offered at HU are STEM OPT eligible.

How long is OPT? STEM OPT Extension authorization is for 2 years (24 months),.

When should I apply for OPT? You can apply up to 90 days before your OPT end date. USCIS must receive your documents before your OPT end date or you will be denied.

What is my program completion date? Your program completion date is the last day of the semester in which you complete degree requirements, not your graduation or degree awarded date.

When can I start working? As long as you file your STEM OPT extension application on time, if your OPT period expires while your extension application is pending, USCIS will automatically extend your employment authorization for 180 days. This automatic 180-day extension ceases once USCIS adjudicates your STEM OPT extension application.

Can I be unemployed while on OPT? Yes, DHS allows STEM OPT students an additional 60 days of unemployment during the 24-month STEM OPT extension period (on top of the initial 90 days allowed on Post-Completion OPT).

Can I travel while on STEM OPT? Yes. However, it is not recommended to travel outside of the U.S. if you have not found a job or are unemployed.

What are the additional requirements for STEM OPT? You must submit an I-983 form to a DSO before applying for STEM OPT AND anytime you change an employer. You will also be required to submit 6-month STEM validation reports. A DSO will send you a reminder of when these are due.

Form I-765 questions:

5. Address: This is the place where USCIS will send your EAD card. Write in the address where you will receive mail in 3 months. USPS cannot forward this letter.

8. What is my alien registration number? Your alien registration number is listed on your EAD card (9 digits)

27. What is my eligibility category? 24-month STEM Extension OPT is (c) (3) (C). Please be sure to also answer all of Question #28

Requirements:

- Your employment while on STEM OPT must relate to your major or program of study.
 - You may change jobs, but must remain employed. In order to change jobs, you MUST inform a DSO. You will need to submit your last date of employment, final self-evaluation on page 5 of your I-983 form, and your new I-983 form for your new employer.
1. Notify the International Student Office that you are applying for STEM OPT and inform a DSO if you will be changing employers. We will issue a new I- 20 recommending you for STEM OPT.
 2. **Within 60 days of the International Student Office issuing you an I-20 for STEM OPT and before your OPT expires, you must submit your application for OPT to the United States Citizenship & Immigration Service (USCIS).** All OPT applications are approved by USCIS and the International Student Office has no ability to influence the process.

Your application must include:

- G-1145 Form goes on top. USCIS will email you when your package is received.
- Completed I-765 form (www.uscis.gov/i-765)
- Personal check or money order for \$410, made out to the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security.**
- Your I-94 form. If you entered the U.S. after May 2013, you can print your I-94 by going to the U.S. Customs & Border Protection website (i94.cbp.dhs.gov). If you received an I-94 when you entered the U.S., photocopy the front and back of the card stapled in your passport.
- Photocopy of your last EAD card, front and back when applying for an OPT Extension.
- Copy of your diploma OR **original** transcripts
- Photocopy of the ID page and visa page of your passport.
- Two, 2" x 2", passport photos taken no more than 30 days before you submit your application. You can get passport photos at WalMart, RiteAid, and CVS, and elsewhere. Gently write your name and I-94 number on the back of both photos.
- An OPT I-20 from university recommending STEM OPT. Previous I-20s are not needed.

3. Once you have all your documents for the application:

- Photocopy or scan your I-765 form (recommended).
- Send your application within 60 days of your STEM OPT I-20 issuance date to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) using private courier service. If USCIS receives your application more than 60 days after your I-20 has been issued OR after your OPT has expired, it WILL be DENIED.**
- Mailing address: Keep a copy of your mail receipt and money order receipt, if you get one.

<p>If you 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 Northern Mariana Islands</p>	<p>USCIS Phoenix Lockbox</p> <p>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) First-Class and Priority Mail Express deliveries:</p> <p>USCIS P.O. Box 21281 Phoenix, AZ 85036</p> <p>For overnight/courier deliveries (non-USPS):</p> <p>USCIS Attn: AOS 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034</p>
<p>If you 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</p>	<p>USCIS Dallas Lockbox</p> <p>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) First-Class and Priority Mail Express deliveries:</p> <p>USCIS P.O. Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266</p> <p>For overnight/courier deliveries (non-USPS):</p> <p>USCIS Attn: AOS 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</p>

- Keep a copy of your mail receipt and money order receipt, if you get one.

4. Once you have submitted the OPT application:
 - You should receive a receipt within 4 weeks of mailing. Make sure there are no errors in your name and address.
 - You can check the status of your application at uscis.gov with your receipt number.
 - It is recommended that you do not travel while your application is pending as it may jeopardize your ability to re-enter the United States.

5. Once you have been authorized for STEM OPT:
 - Send a scan or photocopy of your EAD card to the Office of International Student Services.
 - Notify ISO if you change employers. There are additional steps to change your employer while on STEM OPT that you must contact a DSO for.
 - If you travel outside of the U.S., to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status, you will need:
 - An unexpired passport
 - A valid F-1 visa
 - An I-20 that has been signed for travel by a P/DSO within the last six months
 - The EAD card
 - A letter from your employer stating your job title, job description, begin and end dates, and verifying that your employer knows you are traveling and expects you to return to complete your job. If you do not have job, do not travel as you may not be permitted to re-enter the U.S.