

STEM Extension OPT Regulations and Checklist

For International Students

Per Immigration Regulations

STEM Extension OPT

Students that are in particular majors within science, technology, engineering, or mathematics fields are eligible for a 17 month extension of Post-Completion OPT. The specific majors that are allowed are based on specific number codes. These number codes must match the number code listed on the I-20.

Students can apply at anytime once Post-Completion OPT is approved. However, the application must be submitted and received by the service center before the end-date of Post-Completion OPT.

Please note

You may submit your documents by email to Andrew Bleignier (ableignier@tntech.edu) to review.

Please email a copy of the completed I-765 form, student diploma, and letter of employment to Andrew Bleignier before submitting the originals. Please scan and email them to me.

Once you answer item #1 (in the section entitled “Items Needed Before Beginning” below), Andrew Bleignier will issue your new STEM Extension I-20. Please note, all documents must be submitted and received by USCIS no later than 30 days from the date the I-20 was created. Otherwise the I-20 will be cancelled and will have to be reissued.

Basic Rules of STEM Extension

1. You may only work with a company that is part of the E-Verify Program. You must provide their E-Verify number.
2. You may only work in job relevant towards your degree and major, and it must be paid employment (cannot be volunteer).
3. You are required to update me with all the information in “Items Needed Before Beginning” part 1 every 6 months. This starts from the date your EAD card is approved for STEM Extension. This is required by law. Failure to provide your updated information every 6 months will result in the termination of your STEM Extension OPT and F-1 immigration status.
4. You must have a diploma for your degree (the diploma for the major and degree you sought on your I-20 and applied for Post-Completion OPT). Transcripts will not suffice.
5. You may not be unemployed for a total of 120 days during any period of time of Post-Completion OPT and STEM Extension OPT.
6. While your STEM Extension I-20 is pending, you are not allowed to travel outside the US.
7. If you change employers while STEM Extension is pending, you must file a new I-765.

Items Needed Before Beginning

1. Please confirm with me (I must have all these answers. It is required to complete the I-765):
 - a. The name of the company you are with.
 - b. The address of the company.
 - c. Your current living address that I can mail you documents and the place you live.
 - d. Your job title.

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- e. Your supervisor's name.
 - f. Your email address.
 - g. The contact information of the company.
2. Have the company complete the document entitled "Employer Verify Form". This form **does not** get sent to the service center but needs to be returned to me. You can scan a copy and email it to me. You may find this form on the Office of International Education website under STEM-Extension OPT.

STEM Extension Checklist

1. Form G-1145. This form can be found at:
<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=73ddd59cb7a5d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD&vgnnextchannel=db029c7755cb9010VgnVCM10000045f3d6a1RCRD>
2. Form I-765 with part 16 marked (C)(3)(C). You can find the form at:
<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=73ddd59cb7a5d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD&vgnnextchannel=db029c7755cb9010VgnVCM10000045f3d6a1RCRD>
 - a. You will need the E-Verify number of the company to complete part 17 of the I-765. You will need to contact the company to get this number as I do not know it.
 - b. On the I-765, you will need to mark Box 1 as a "Permission to Accept Employment".
 - c. Make sure to sign I-765 (I assume all other information on the form is correct: spelling of name, birth date, etc...)
 - d. The address required on this form is the address they will mail your EAD Card to. You are required to ensure the address you put is valid. If you would like to put the International Student Affairs address you may. Our address is:
Box 5093
Cookeville, TN 38505-0001
 - e. You may see an example of a completed I-765 on the International Education immigration website under Pre- and Post-Completion OPT.
3. Provide a new I-20 requesting STEM extension (I will do this and mail it to you, please see above). You must sign at the bottom of page 1. You then make a copy of pages 1 and 3, send the copies of page 1 and 3 and you keep the originals.
4. Copies of: your passport, I-94 (both sides), current EAD Employment card.
5. Copy of your diploma.
6. An original employment letter from the company on letterhead stating what you are doing, your job title, when you started work, rate of pay (it must state it is a paid position at the very least)... It must be signed. A copy of this letter must be scanned and forwarded to me.
7. Copies of all I-20's (page 1 and 3) including the one recommending Post Completion OPT.

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8. Two passport sized photographs created within 30 days or less. You may view rules regarding this on the International Education immigration website under Pre- and Post-Completion OPT.
 - a. You will need to print your name clearly on the back in pencil only, not pen.

9. You will need to pay the application fee either through a check or money order made payable to the Department of Homeland Security. The fee can be found at:
<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnnextoid=73ddd59cb7a5d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD&vgnnextchannel=db029c7755cb9010VgnVCM10000045f3d6a1RCRD>

You can mail the required documents to: (Please verify with the DSO for the address).

- *At all times, a student is responsible to maintain their own immigration status.
- *The above information is susceptible to change.
- *The above information is not an exhaustive list pertaining to STEM extension information.
- *For additional information, students can visit: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm>
- *At all times students are responsible for properly informing the office of International Education of their immigration status and academic status (as pertaining to immigration matters).