While You Are On 24-Month STEM OPT Extension

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General Information

Once your application for the 24-Month STEM OPT is approved, USCIS will issue you an EAD. Submit a scanned copy of your EAD card to the International Center using our online form [1].

The 24-Month STEM OPT period represents a continuation of your current F-1 status. You must stop your employment when the end date on the EAD card is reached, but may remain in the US for a 60-day grace period. Some students may be eligible for an extension of OPT and F-1 status due to the Cap Gap Relief [2] rules.

You are expected to be employed in your field of study during the 24-Month STEM OPT. The maximum period of unemployment days is 150 days, which includes any days of unemployment during the initial 12 months of Post-Completion OPT. For example, if a student finishes the 12 months Post-Completion OPT with 30 days of unemployment time accrued, then he or she would have 120 days of available unemployment days remaining during their period of STEM OPT.

To avoid collecting unemployment days during an authorized STEM OPT, a student must work at least 20 hours per week for an E-Verify employer in a position directly related to his or her DHS-approved STEM CIP. Here are additional details about STEM OPT employment requirements:

- In order to receive the STEM OPT extension, a student must pursue their practical training through an employer that is enrolled in USCIS' E-Verify employment eligibility verification program.
- Additionally, STEM OPT extension applicants must select employers that can guarantee the student will complete a minimum of 20 hours of work per week and provide the student with formal training and learning objectives.
- The student must work with their potential STEM OPT extension employer to complete the Form I-983, which must include how the training opportunity has a direct relationship to the student's qualifying STEM degree. Visit the Form I-983 page to learn how to properly complete and submit the Form I-983.
- F-1 students cannot qualify for STEM OPT extensions unless they will be bona fide employees of the employer signing the Form I-983 because F-1 students may not provide the employer attestation (i.e., signatures) on their own behalf. However, they may use a start-up business so long as all regulatory requirements are met. The employer that signs the Form I-983 must be the same entity that employs

the student and provides the practical training experience.
- Please note that a student's post-completion OPT employer does not need to be the same as the student's STEM OPT extension employer.

24-Month STEM OPT Reporting: Ongoing Requirements

ADDRESS UPDATES

At all times while on STEM OPT, please remember you must continue to update Wolverine Access with your Current U.S. address and phone number(s). The F-1 regulations mandate any change of address must be reported within 10 days of any change [3].

EAD COPY

If you have not already done so, please submit a scanned copy of your STEM OPT EAD card using our Submit EAD Card form [1].

CHANGING EMPLOYERS

Any changes of employment during your STEM OPT period, such as ending a current job and/or starting a new job, must be reported to us using our STEM Change Employer form [4].

MATERIAL CHANGES TO AN EXISTING FORM I-983

We have a STEM Material Change form [5] if you are working for the same employer but need to make changes to your I-983 form. Material changes or deviations from the original Form I-983 may include, but are not limited to:

- Any change of the employer's EIN.
- Any reduction in student compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked.
- Any significant decrease in hours per week that a student engages in a STEM training opportunity.
- Changes to the employer's commitments or student's learning objectives as documented on the Form I-983.

24-Month STEM OPT Reporting: Date-Specific Requirements

F-1 STEM OPT students are required to complete STEM employment reporting tasks after 6, 12, 18, and 24 months of STEM OPT have elapsed.

To calculate how many months of STEM OPT have elapsed, please refer to the "Valid From" date printed on your **STEM** OPT EAD card. Do not refer to your Post-Completion OPT EAD card for this.

For example, if your STEM EAD card is valid from 01/01/2018 to 12/31/2019, then you will be required to complete STEM employment reporting tasks on 07/01/2018 (6 months elapsed), 01/01/2019 (12 months elapsed), 07/01/2019 (18 months elapsed), and 12/31/2019 (24 months elapsed).

AFTER 6 MONTHS OF STEM OPT : 6-Month STEM Validation

Every six months a student must work with their DSO to confirm that the student's record in SEVIS accurately reflects their current circumstance. This is called the 6-Month STEM Validation.

[Use this online form to complete the 6-Month STEM Validation](#) [6].

AFTER 12 MONTHS OF STEM OPT: 6-Month STEM Validation and Annual STEM Evaluation

Every six months a student must work with their DSO to confirm that the student's record in SEVIS accurately reflects their current circumstance. This is called the 6-Month STEM Validation.

[Use this online form to complete the 6-Month STEM Validation](#) [6].

Each STEM OPT student must also complete and submit to their DSO an annual self-evaluation describing the progress of the training experience.

[Use this online form to complete the Annual STEM Evaluation](#) [7].

AFTER 18 MONTHS OF STEM OPT: 6-Month STEM Validation

Every six months a student must work with their DSO to confirm that the student's record in SEVIS accurately reflects their current circumstance. This is called the 6-Month STEM Validation.

[Use this online form to complete the 6-Month STEM Validation](#) [6].

AFTER 24 MONTHS OF STEM OPT: 6-Month STEM Validation and Annual STEM Evaluation

Every six months a student must work with their DSO to confirm that the student's record in SEVIS accurately reflects their current circumstance. This is called the 6-Month STEM Validation.

[Use this online form to complete the 6-Month STEM Validation](#) [6].

Each STEM OPT student must also complete and submit to their DSO an annual self-evaluation describing the progress of the training experience.

[Use this online form to complete the Annual STEM Evaluation](#) [7].

STUDY IN THE STATES: STEM OPT HUB

For more information about STEM OPT Reporting Requirements, please refer to the US Department of Homeland Security's website [Study in the States, STEM OPT Hub](#) [8].

Ending OPT early

If you decide to abandon your OPT before the end date of your EAD and leave the U.S., you must notify the International Center so we can end your SEVIS record. Please submit a [departure form](#) [9] telling us that you have decided to abandon your OPT and the date you plan to depart the United States. We will end your SEVIS record effective the date you indicate you plan to leave the U.S. or the date you notify us, whichever is later. If you do not notify us, you may continue to be billed for health insurance.

Starting a New Program — at U-M or at Another Institution

During the period you are authorized for OPT, you may decide to apply to another academic program, either at U-M or another University. Once you are admitted to another degree program, it is important to discuss the situation with an advisor at the International Center, as the issuance of a new I-20 will effect/terminate your OPT. Please call the IC to request an appointment (appointments may be in-person or by telephone). If you are admitted to a degree program at another University, the International Center must transfer your I-20 to that institution so they may issue a new I-20 for you.

- *Admission to U-M for a new degree program/change of level.* Once you have been admitted to a new degree program at U-M, the admissions office will issue a new I-20 to you. The issuance of this new I-20 does not end your OPT immediately. Your EAD is terminated as soon as you enter the U.S. with the new I-20 or you check-in for the new program, **whichever is earlier**. Either one of these events will activate your SEVIS record for the new degree and deactivate your OPT SEVIS record. This means you must immediately stop employment regardless of the card's appearance of validity if you reenter with your new I-20 or check-in at the IC.
- *Transfer to another school in the U.S.* in order to begin a new degree program. Authorization for OPT is not transferable. Your authorization for OPT ends on the transfer release date. If you wish to complete OPT, set the release date for a date after the OPT ends. You can set the transfer release date to occur during the 60-day grace period following post-completion OPT (see the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, [Transfer for F-1 Students](#) [10] (refer to section 6.7)). On your transfer release date, you must stop employment regardless of your EAD card's appearance of validity.

In order to maintain your F-1 status, a new I-20 for change of academic level, new degree program, or transfer must be issued before the end of your 60 day grace period.

Change of Status During OPT

If you change your immigration status (e.g. from F-1 to H-1B, F-2, or J-1) during the period of your OPT your OPT ends on the effective date of the USCIS action notice and any unused OPT time is lost (you cannot have both F-1 OPT status and another status at the same time, nor can you return to OPT if your new status is terminated for any reason).

The University of Michigan is required to notify SEVIS of your new status and requests that you notify the Office of the Registrar immediately. To officially record your new status, the Office of the Registrar will need a copy of the approval notice you received from USCIS. You can get this information to the Registrar's Office in one of two ways:

- Visit the Registrar's office at either of the two locations: 2200 SAB, 515 E. Jefferson St. (Central Campus) or 2202 LL North Pierpont Commons, 2101 Bonisteel Boulevard (North Campus). Bring your M-Card and your documents.
- Write a letter which includes your name, your current status, your UMID number and your signature asking for an update on your visa status. Include with the letter a copy of the documentation you received from USCIS.

Mail to:

U-M, Office of the Registrar
Student Services

2200 SAB, 515 E. Jefferson St.
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-2090 USA

Fax to:

Office of the Registrar
Student Services
734.763.9053

Links
[1] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/forms/employment-authorization-document
[2] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/cap-gap
[3] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/address-notification-requirement
[4] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/forms/opt-stem-change-employer
[5] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/forms/stem-material-change
[6] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/forms/24-month-stem-reporting
[7] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/forms/required-annual-stem-evaluation
[8] https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students-stem-opt-reporting-requirements
[9] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/forms/f1-departure
[10] https://www.ice.gov/sevis/f1-transfers