WHAT IS A 24-MONTH EXTENSION OF OPT?
Practical work experience authorization that extends OPT for another 24 months for those who have earned a degree in a field included on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) list of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE 24-MONTH STEM EXTENSION?
- An F-1 student who has been approved for and is currently engaged in post-completion OPT, and
- Has earned a degree in a field included on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) list of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, and
- Are employed in a job directly related to his/her field of study, and
- Have had fewer than 90 days of unemployment while on OPT, and
- Are working for an employer that is enrolled in the U.S. Government’s E-Verify program, and
- Complete the training plan for STEM OPT students

NOTE: All six above criteria must be met for a student to be eligible for the 24-Month Extension OPT

IS MY DEGREE IN A STEM FIELD?
The list of eligible STEM degrees may be viewed here: [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm). The CIP code related to majors is located on the 2nd page of the I-20 record.

WHAT IS E-VERIFY?
E-Verify is a database system administered by DHS in partnership with the Social Security Administration. It allows participating employers to electronically verify the employment eligibility of newly-hired employees. For more information visit: [www.dhs.gov/e-verify](http://www.dhs.gov/e-verify).

WHEN SHOULD STUDENTS APPLY FOR THE 24-MONTH STEM EXTENSION?
Students must apply for the 24-month STEM extension OPT; prior to the expiration of 12 months of “regular” OPT. We recommend filing of extension four months prior to the initial 12 month OPT expiration. The application must be received by USCIS prior to the expiration date of the first OPT period in order to be properly (timely) filed.

WHAT HAPPENS WHILE THE APPLICATION IS PENDING?
If the application for the 24-month extension is successfully received prior to the expiration of the first OPT’s period, students may continue employment until the application is processed or until 180 days have passed, whichever is sooner.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS DURING THE 24-MONTH STEM EXTENSION
Students approved for the 24-month extension have additional reporting requirements in order to maintain their status and work authorization.
- Students must report to the IC within 10 days if there is any change of:
  - Legal name
  - Residential or mailing address
  - Employer name
  - Employer address, and/or
  - Loss of employment
F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)
Request Form for STEM Extension OPT

- Students must make a validation report to the IC every six months (regardless of whether or not there have been any changes) to confirm name and address, employer name and address, and continuation of employment. The report is due within 10 days of the six-month reporting date.

LIMITATIONS ON UNEMPLOYMENT
Students approved for the 24-month extension may not accrue more than 120 days of unemployment during the total 36-month period of OPT. Employment must be related to the field of study in order to qualify. Employment can be paid or unpaid.

NOTE: Self-employment and volunteer positions will not qualify as valid employment for OPT purposes during the 24-month extension.

24-MONTH STEM EXTENSION LIFETIME LIMIT OF TWO PERIODS
There is a lifetime limit of two periods of 24-month STEM OPT; each occurring after a higher degree level has been obtained. A STEM degree obtained at a U.S. university prior to your current degree may be the basis for a STEM extension under certain circumstances.

See detailed information on the STEM Hub: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub

CHANGING EMPLOYER DURING 24-MONTH EXTENSION
Changing employer during the 24-month extension is permitted as long as it is an E-Verified employer and employer information must be updated in iService within 10 days of new employment start date.

STARTING AND ENDING DATES
The start date of the 24-month extension will be automatically set to the day after the expiration of the current 12-month OPT authorization. The end date will be 24 months later. It is not possible to request smaller increments of time for the OPT extension.

ENDING YOUR 24-MONTH EXTENSION:
Your F-1 status remains valid until 60 days after the expiration of your EAD card. During this 60-day grace period, you are no longer authorized to work, however you may legally stay in the U.S. If you depart the U.S. during the 60-day grace period, you are no longer eligible to re-enter under your previous F-1 visa status.

- If you plan to return home after the end of your 24-month extension, please make sure that you depart the U.S. before the end of your 60-day grace period.
- If you plan to change your visa status, we recommend you begin this process before your 24-month extension is expired.
- If you plan to start a new degree program at another college or university, please make sure to contact the IC regarding the transfer of your SEVIS record. Transfers must be done before the end of the 60-day grace period.
APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS

Assemble the following documents. If you are located within a reasonable distance of UM-Flint, please bring the documents to the office. If you are located far away from UM-Flint, please send copies of ALL of the following documents either via email attachment to ic@umflint.edu, or in the mail to: University of Michigan-Flint, International Center, 219 UCEN; 303 E. Kearsley Street; Flint, MI 48502. All documents must be received in-order to process the application.

  ○ At the top make sure to indicate “Renewal of my permission to accept employment”
  ○ #11: Review your initial OPT receipt notice to find the location of the USCIS office and date of approval
  ○ #16: (C) (3) (C)
  ○ #17: Degree: is the “Major Code” located under “Program of Study” on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} page of your I-20. Please obtain the E-Verify number from your employer.

☐ G-1145 form: (http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf)

☐ I-20 form(s): Copies of ALL your CURRENT and PREVIOUS I-20s (only pages with signatures)

☐ Passport: Photocopy of the picture page/expiration date of your passport

☐ I-94: Printout of the electronic I-94 screen at from CBP website (www.cbp.gov/I94) or photocopy of both

☐ U.S. Visa: Photocopy of your most recent U.S. Visa page


☐ Copy of your Diploma or official transcripts with your degree conferred

  ○ Information and instructions for the I-983 Training Plan: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub

☐ Two Passport Photos: Photos must be taken within 30 days of OPT application. Gently print your full name and SEVIS number (SEVIS number is located on top left of your I-20 and starts with N) on the back of each photo with a pencil.

☐ Personal Check, Cashier’s Check, or Money Order for $380.00 made payable to: Department of Homeland Security. If the address on your check in not current, please cross out the old address and write your present address.

1. Provide all the above documents to the IC approximately 90-120 days before your program completion date.
2. The IC will prepare a required OPT I-20, minimum 3-5 business days, but it could take longer at high peak times.
3. The IC will mail the packet back to the student once the new OPT STEM I-20 has been created.
4. The student will be responsible to mail the packet to USCIS.
5. USCIS must receive your completed OPT application within 30 days of OPT I-20 creation. Failure to submit the OPT packer within 30 days of DSO recommending students for OPT in SEVIS will result in a denied OPT.

PASSPORT PHOTOGRAPH REQUIREMENTS

- Photos must be less than 30 days old from OPT I-20 processing.
- Photos must be 2 inches in height by 2 inches in width (see figure below).
- The photos must be in color with full face, frontal view on a white to off-white background.
- Head height should measure 1 inch to 1 3/8 inches from top to bottom of chin.
- Eye height is between 1 1/8 inch to 1 3/8 inch from bottom of photo (see figure below).
- Head must be bare unless a headdress is required by religious order of which you are a member.
- **DO NOT USE OLD PHOTOS OR THE SAME PHOTOS YOU USED FOR YOUR VISA STAMP OR PASSPORT.**
OPT STEM I-20:
In approximately 3-5 business days, you will receive an email from IC notifying you that your new OPT I-20 is ready for pick up, or we will mail it to the address you have specified. This OPT I-20 is required as part of your OPT packet.

FINAL PREPARATIONS
Pick up your new I-20 as soon as you receive an email from the IC and do the following:

- Sign and date the OPT I-20
- Photocopy all pages of the signed OPT I-20.
- Add your photocopied OPT I-20 (not the original!) to your application packet.
- Mail your OPT application to USCIS.

NOTE: Your OPT application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date the OPT I-20 was created.

CHECKLIST FOR MAILING OUT YOUR APPLICATION TO USCIS

- I-765 form
- G-1145 form
- I-20 form(s) INCLUDING SIGNED, PHOTOCOPIED OPT STEM I-20
- Passport: Photocopy of the picture page/expiration date of your passport
- Copy of your Diploma or official transcripts with your degree conferred
- Two Passport Photos: Photos must be taken within 30 days of OPT application. Gently print your full name and SEVIS number (SEVIS number is located on top left of your I-20 and starts with N) on the back of each photo with a pencil.
- Personal Check, Cashier’s Check, or Money Order for $380.00 made payable to: Department of Homeland Security. If the address on your check is not current, please cross out the old address and write your present address.

HOW TO MAIL
We recommend using either USPS Certified Mail or a courier service (FedEx, DHL, UPS etc.) to mail your OPT application to USCIS. These options have different mailing addresses.
RECEIPT NOTICE
With submission of G-1145 form, USCIS will email/text you a receipt number for your OPT application. The message will provide a receipt number as information, but will not constitute official notice of acceptance. The email notice will also provide a brief statement on how to get additional information about the status of your case. USCIS will also mail you a paper copy Receipt Notice. This is your proof of application. It will state when your application was received and give you an application number. You can use the application number to check your application status at www.uscis.gov.

OPT STEM APPROVAL
Approximately 90 days after your application is received, you will receive your new EAD. This is your approval. Once you have your EAD and the start date has arrived, you may begin employment.
NOTE: You must provide IC with a photocopy of your EAD by uploading it into iServive.

If you successfully file the application for your 24-month extension prior to the expiration of your current 12-month OPT period, you may continue employment even if your previous EAD card is expired until your OPT extension is processed or until 180 days has passed, whichever is sooner.

OPT REQUIREMENTS
- You must be employed for a minimum of 20 hours per week
- All employment must be in your field of study
- Employment can be paid or unpaid
- You must not exceed a total of 120 days of unemployment time for the entire OPT period – including both initial and STEM OPT

EMPLOYMENT REPORTING
It is MANDATORY for all students on OPT to report their employment information to the IC. The IC reports student employments to The Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Report your employments and/or any changes to your employment to the IC in iService with the “Employer Update” E-form.

ADDRESS REPORTING
You must report address changes of your local residence within 10 days of moving to a new address. The address cannot be a P.O. Box or an office address. Please make any address changes in SIS.

TRAVELING OUTSIDE THE U.S.
If you leave the U.S. after applying for OPT, then you must show the following documents when reentering the U.S.:
- If your OPT is not yet approved, you will need the following:
  - Unexpired passport
  - Unexpired F-1 visa stamp
  - OPT I-20 with recent travel signature (within past 6 months)
  - OPT Receipt Notice; Form I-797 (proof of application)
- If your OPT is approved, you will need the following:
  - Unexpired passport
  - Unexpired F-1 visa stamp
  - OPT I-20 with recent travel signature (within past 6 months)
  - Unexpired EAD
□ Proof of employment (offer letter or employment confirmation letter from employer stating the reason for travel, how long you will be gone, when you are returning, what your position is within the organization, etc.)

If you have an expired F-1 visa stamp and you plan to make a short trip (less than 30 days) to Canada, Mexico, or adjacent (Caribbean Sea) islands, consult an IC advisor or visit the U.S. Department of State website and read about Automatic Revalidation: [https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/automatic-revalidation.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/automatic-revalidation.html)

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

OPT students may be able to get health insurance:

- Through an employer: If you will be working at a job that offers health insurance coverage, you’ll simply transition to your employer’s health plan. Make sure to complete the health insurance waiver form in iService if you are currently enrolled in the UM Aetna insurance plan.
- Through UM Aetna insurance. If you do not waive your Aetna insurance, the IC will continue to bill you for health insurance while on OPT.

**NOTE:** *Make sure you know when your current health insurance ends.* If you are currently enrolled as a student through the Aetna plan, contact the IC to clarify the end date of your coverage, if necessary. If you are enrolled in the Aetna insurance and leave the U.S. BEFORE your OPT ends, make sure to cancel your health insurance before leaving, or the IC will continue to bill your student account.
Check this box to verify that you have read the information about STEM Extension OPT that is provided in this packet and understand the rules and regulations that are related to students on STEM Extension OPT.

FIRST NAME: _______________________________  LAST NAME: _______________________________

UMID: _______________________________  DATE OF BIRTH: _______________________________

TELEPHONE: ___________________________  EMAIL: _______________________________

CURRENT EAD START DATE (MM/DD/YYYY): __________  CURRENT EAD END DATE (MM/DD/YYYY): __________

LEVEL OF EDUCATION: _______________________________  MAJOR: _______________________________

CURRENT EMPLOYER INFORMATION:

EMPLOYER NAME: _______________________________  STREET ADDRESS: _______________________________

CITY: _______________________________  STATE: __________  ZIP CODE: _______________________________

EMPLOYER E-VERIFY NUMBER: _______________________________  CIP CODE: _______________________________

START DATE: __________  END DATE: __________

JOB TITLE: _______________________________

HOW IS THIS POSITION RELATED TO YOUR DEGREE: _______________________________
PREVIOUS EMPLOYER INFORMATION, IF APPLICABLE:

EMPLOYER NAME:_________________________________ STREET ADDRESS:______________________________________
CITY:_________________________________ STATE:________________ ZIP CODE:____________________________
EMPLOYER E-VERIFY NUMBER__________________________ CIP CODE:_________________________________
START DATE:_______________________________ END DATE:_______________________________
JOB TITLE:____________________________________
HOW IS THIS POSITION RELATED TO YOUR DEGREE:_____________________________________________________________

EMPLOYER NAME:_________________________________ STREET ADDRESS:______________________________________
CITY:_________________________________ STATE:________________ ZIP CODE:____________________________
EMPLOYER E-VERIFY NUMBER__________________________ CIP CODE:_________________________________
START DATE:_______________________________ END DATE:_______________________________
JOB TITLE:____________________________________
HOW IS THIS POSITION RELATED TO YOUR DEGREE:_____________________________________________________________

I, the student, certify that I have read the OPT information in this packet and have met with an IC advisor or attended an OPT workshop. I understand that I must have health insurance coverage for the duration of my F-1 immigration status and that if I have any dependents, they too must have health insurance. I understand that I must report address changes in SIS within 10 days of any change in my current address. I also understand that I must report employer information within 10 days of any changes.

SIGNATURE:________________________________________ DATE:________________________________________