What is STEM OPT Extension

The STEM program allows for 17 month OPT extension for students who qualify. An F-1 student must have successfully completed a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree in a field on the Department of Homeland Security’s STEM list, http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm as specified on the student’s current I-20.

The student must be employed by an employer who is enrolled in the E-Verify program. Companies enroll in this program at their discretion and there is no available list of employers enrolled in this program.

When should you apply for STEM OPT Extension?

Qualified student can apply for the STEM extension up to 120 days of the current OPT end date. It is important to note however that the STEM application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date on which the International Student Services office issues a STEM extension I-20. Processing time for STEM applications can be found on the USCIS web site at http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis. In most instances OPT applications take around three months to be approved. However, a student’s work authorization is extended for up to 180 days while the STEM extension application is pending.

What is required while on STEM OPT?

- Students are required to make a validation report to the ISS office every six months starting from the date the extension begins. The validation should include the student's name and address, employer name and address, and/or loss of employment are current and accurate. This six-month validation report is due to ISS within 10 business days of each reporting date.
- Students may not accrue more than 120 days of unemployment during the 29-month OPT period.
- Report all address changes to ISS within 5 days of moving to your new residence.
- Report any change of name.
- Report any changes in name and address of employer or any interruption of employment within 5 days.
- Make sure ISS has a photocopy of the front and back of your Employment Authorization card on file.

Changes and validation reports should be made via email to iss@marymount.edu.

**APPLYING FOR STEM EXTENSION**

**Application Procedure:**
Make an appointment with an ISS advisor. Your ISS advisor will help explain all OPT procedures and how they apply to your individual case.
Bring the following documents:

- A letter from applicant addressed to the ISS office that includes the following information:
  Current address, E-mail address, phone number, employer's full name, position/title, employer's address, employer’s E-verify number, employer's phone number, supervisor's name, supervisor's phone number or E-mail.

- Completed Immigration Form I-765.
  Be sure to check that you are applying for renewal of permission to accept employment.
  **Line 1:** Last name should be spelled out in all capital letters. Your first name should be spelled with only the first letter capitalized. For example: SMITH, Jane
  **Line 10:** This number (I-94 number) can be found on the white card in your passport. Please include all 11 digits.
  **Line 11:** This should only be completed if you have applied for OPT before (or TN visas or a previous H-1B visas). You can check NO if you have only done CPT and on-campus employment.
  **Line 12 & 13:** Please see your I-94 card for this information.
  **Line 16:** Code for the 17-month extension for STEM students (C) (3) (C)
  **Line 17:** Complete with Degree information, name of employer and company E-Verify Identification number
  “Degree” should be your level, the CIP code, and a short name for your degree, e.g., “MS, Computer Sci, CIP 11.0701.”

- 2 passport photos. Please see the attached example. Print your name and birth date on the back of each photo.

- Copy of Diploma
- Or copy of Official Academic Transcript (showing degree awarded and major)
- Photocopy of current OPT/EAD card (front and back)
- Photocopy of Passport IS page
- Photocopy of current Visa (if applicable)
- Photocopy of I-94 card (front and back)
- Photocopy of all I-20s, even if for a previous F-1 status (We may not send them all, but need for application.)
- Form G-1145 (Not required, but recommended)
- Check or money order for the amount of $380 made payable to: USCIS.

- If you timely file a non-frivolous application for the 17-month OPT extension, you will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.

**USCIS Dallas Lockbox**

**For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries:**

USCIS  
PO Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

**For Express mail & courier deliveries:**

USCIS  
Attn: AOS  
2501 S. State Hwy.  
121 Business  
Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067

Write on bottom right hand corner of envelope “Form I-765”