



STEM OPT Extension Processing Timeline

GLC INITIATES STEM OPT
EXTENSION PROCESS



EMPLOYER & STUDENT REVIEW
STEM OPT REPORTING
REQUIREMENTS & FAQs



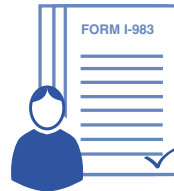
GLC SENDS QUESTIONNAIRES
TO EMPLOYER & STUDENT



UPON COMPLETION OF
QUESTIONNAIRES, GLC
DRAFTS FORM I-983
TRAINING PLAN



EMPLOYER APPROVES FORM
I-983 TRAINING PLAN



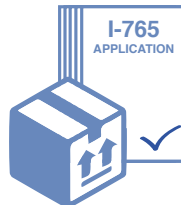
STUDENT SUBMITS TRAINING
PLAN & SUPPORTING MATERIALS
TO DESIGNATED SCHOOL
OFFICIAL (DSO)



DSO ISSUES NEW FORM I-20
RECOMMENDING STEM
OPT EXTENSION



STUDENT OR GLC FILES FORM I-765,
APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT
AUTHORIZATION TO USCIS



USCIS ISSUES RECEIPT NOTICE
CONFIRMING EAD APPLICATION
IS IN PROCESS



EAD APPLICATION
APPROVED BY USCIS



USCIS ISSUES AND MAILS
NEW STEM OPT EXTENSION EAD



STUDENT SENDS GLC
COPY OF NEW EAD





STEM OPT Extension FAQs for Students



1) What is the total duration of STEM OPT that I can be granted?

As of May 10, 2016, eligible students may apply for 24-month STEM OPT extensions. In combination with the 12-month post-completion OPT that must take place before an application may be made for STEM OPT, qualifying students may be authorized for up to 36 months of post-completion OPT.

1.1) Are there filing deadlines for STEM OPT extensions?

Generally, a student must file a STEM OPT extension request:

- ▶ Before the expiration of his or her 12-month OPT period; and
- ▶ No later than 60 days from the date of the Designated School Official (DSO)'s extension endorsement.



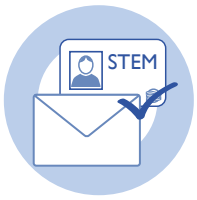
2) If I have multiple qualifying STEM degrees at a higher degree level, am I entitled to multiple STEM extensions?

As of May 10, 2016, students are entitled to a total of no more than two STEM OPT extensions. A second period of STEM OPT cannot take place immediately after the first of STEM OPT period. A second application for a 24-month STEM OPT extension must be based on a higher level degree than the degree that was the basis for the student's first STEM OPT extension. The extension must also follow 12 months of post-completion OPT.

2.1) If I received a qualifying STEM degree prior to my more recent degree (e.g. I received a B.S. in Computer Science and recently completed an MBA), can I apply for a STEM OPT extension based on the prior degree under the new rule?

Yes, so long as the following conditions are met:

- ▶ The prior degree was conferred no more than 10 years before a DSO recommendation for a STEM OPT extension is issued based on that degree;
- ▶ The degree was conferred by an accredited U.S. educational institution;
- ▶ The practical training opportunity that is currently offered is directly related to the prior STEM degree; and
- ▶ The prior degree was actually conferred. "All but thesis or dissertation" will not qualify.



STEM OPT Extension FAQs for Students



3) Do I have reporting obligations?

Yes. Students are required to confirm the following information with the DSO every six months:

- ▶ Legal name;
- ▶ Address;
- ▶ Employer name and address;
- ▶ Report of current employment/practical training experience.

Students are further required to complete two self-evaluations during the 24-month STEM OPT extension period. The first self-evaluation must be completed within the first 12 months, and the second must be completed upon the conclusion of the STEM OPT period. Evaluation forms are part of Form I-983, and they must be signed by the student and his or her immediate supervisor. The evaluations must then be submitted to the DSO no later than 10 days following the conclusion of the reporting period or conclusion of the practical training opportunity.



4) Can I travel during STEM OPT?

Students on STEM OPT extensions (including those whose application for a STEM OPT extension is pending) may travel abroad and seek reentry in F-1 status during the STEM OPT extension period if they have a valid F-1 visa that permits multiple entries and a current Form I-20 endorsed for reentry by the DSO within the last 6 months.



5) Can I apply for a STEM OPT extension if I have a degree from any U.S. educational institution?

No. The new rule requires that the degree be from a U.S. educational institution accredited by an accrediting agency and recognized by the Department of Education at the time of application. The institution must be located domestically. Degrees granted by a U.S. institution's overseas campus will not qualify.

5.1) How do I know if my degree is a qualifying STEM degree?

As of May 10, 2016, a [new list](#) will govern which degrees are within the qualifying CIP code that appears on the DHS STEM OPT Degree Program list.



STEM OPT Extension FAQs for Students

5.2) Can I apply for a STEM OPT extension if I have not yet completed my thesis or dissertation?

Yes. So long as a student has completed the degree, or has completed all course requirements but is still completing his or her thesis or dissertation, a student may apply for a STEM OPT extension if all other requirements are met.



6) If I change employers, become unemployed, or my company faces corporate restructuring, do I need to notify anyone?

Yes. You must notify the DSO within 10 days of any material change to your employment. If there are any material changes or deviations from the training plan described in the Form I-983 or successor form occurs, the student employer must sign a modified Form I-983 or successor form reflecting the material change(s) or deviation(s). Material changes further include any decrease in hours, any change that renders an employer attestation inaccurate, or any information on Form I-983 or successor form inaccurate. You and your employer must ensure that the modified Form I-983 or successor form is submitted to the student's DSO at the earliest available opportunity.

Employers are required to report the termination or departure of a student to the DSO during the authorized period of OPT within 5 business days.

6.1) How many days am I permitted to be unemployed?

Students are permitted a 90-day maximum period of unemployment during the initial period of post-completion OPT. An additional 60 days (for a total of 150 days) of unemployment is allowed for a student who obtains a 24-month STEM OPT extension.