

## STEM OPT Reporting & Employment Change Requirement (s)

### **What are the limits of the unemployment period?**

Students who receive a STEM extension may have up to 150 days of unemployment counting from the starting date indicated on the EAD for initial OPT. Each day during the period of OPT when the student does not have qualified employment counts as a day of unemployment.

### **What if the period of unemployment exceeds the limit?**

A student who exceeds the unemployment period has violated the visa status unless he/she has taken one of the following steps (while the student is still in valid status):

- Applied to continue education by changing the level or transferring to another school.
- Departed the United States.
- Took action to otherwise maintain legal status.

### **What does the student have to report to the International Center during the STEM OPT period?**

**Within 10 days:** a student must report the following:

- Employment information: the date of starting or changing employment, employer's name and address, and loss of employment
- Change in any of the following: the student's legal name, the student's residential or mailing address, the student's e-mail address or phone number

**Data Validation Reports, or "Six month reports"** Every six months starting from the start date of STEM OPT. Use our STEM OPT reporting form. Must be submitted within 10 days before or after the due date. Include:

- The student's full legal name
- Current mailing and residential address
- Name and address of the current employer
- Employment start date for the current employer

**'Evaluation on Student Progress'** due after the first year of the OPT extension (see page 5 of the I-983)

**'Final Evaluation on Student Progress'** due after the second year of the OPT extension (see page 5 of the I-983)

*Reporting can be done by completing our STEM OPT Reporting Form (and the Evaluation Form, page 5 of the I-983, when required).*

**Material Changes or Modifications to I-983.** If a material change to or deviation from the training plan described in the I-983 occurs, the student and employer must sign a modified I-983 and submit it to the International Center at the earliest available opportunity. Examples of such changes are a change in Employer Identification Number, reduction in compensation not tied to a reduction in hours worked, any significant decrease in hours per week the student is working, any decrease in hours below 20 hours per week, or any deviation that renders the information on the I-983 inaccurate.

### **The employer must report the following to the International Center:**

The employer must notify the school when the student's employment is terminated. The employer must send an email or student may upload a letter to the online form (See the international center website>forms> employment authorization). The email/letter must include the student's name and the date of termination. The report must be sent within 5 business days upon termination.

***The student must inform the employer about this requirement.***

**Please see the following websites for more information:**

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub>

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/stem-opt>

**Process to Apply for STEM OPT Extension**

**List of documents that must be submitted to USCIS**

1. (Optional) Form G-1145 “E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance”. You may download this form from the USCIS website. Here is a link to the form [Form G-1145](#). ***This form is not needed if filing online.***
2. Form I-765. Here is a link to the form [Form I-765](#). Be sure to use the latest version! Eligibility category: (c) (3) (C). If a required field does not apply to you, then indicate “not applicable” or “N/A” in that field.
3. Filing Fee of \$410.00. Check or money order must be made payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Place this check/money order on the top of your packet. If you wish to pay by credit card, complete Form G-1450. Here is a link to the form, [Form G-1450](#) Authorization for Credit Card Transactions. ***To file online, pay by credit or debit card, or electronic withdrawal from savings or checking account (do not use Form G-1450 if filing online).***
4. Copy of previously issued Employment Authorization Documents (EAD) – front and back.
5. A copy of your Degree Certificate
6. A copy of transcript (unofficial copy of transcript is fine)
7. 2 recent, passport-style photographs taken no earlier than 30 days before submission of the OPT application. ***Lightly*** print your name and A-number (the USCIS number on the front of your current EAD) on the back of each photo with a pencil or a pen. ***If filing online, upload one photo.*** Follow the passport photo requirements on the U.S. Department of State website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/requirements/photos.html>.
8. Copy **of the I-20 issued for STEM OPT extension**
9. Optional: copies (excluding instructions page) of all your I-20s, since the arrival date to the USA as an F-1 student
10. A copy of your passport picture page and passport expiration date.
11. A copy of the Form I-94 admission number/record. You may download the form from the website <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94>.
12. Copy of your F-1 visa
13. Recommended: Letter from employer that includes job duties and specifies if you are a part-time or full-time employee.

The USCIS processing time is about three months, so be sure to give yourself enough time.

**You may continue working for up to 180 days beyond the end date of your current EAD provided that USCIS receives your documents**

- (1) before the expiration date of your current EAD, AND
- (2) within 60 days of the issue date of the “STEM OPT” I-20.

**Where to mail the STEM OPT packet – paper filing:**

Students should mail their STEM OPT packets to the Chicago Lockbox:

USCIS Chicago Lockbox

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

USCIS

PO Box 805373

Chicago, IL 60680

**FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:**

USCIS

Attn: I-765 C03

131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor

Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Please note: As USCIS can make unexpected changes, this link will have the most up-to-date and accurate information regarding the USCIS filing address: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses>

**Filing for STEM OPT online:**

Tips:

- You must obtain your STEM OPT I-20 before filing!
- Submit all the documents at the time of filing.
- Once payment is accepted, your application is considered filed.
- File a few days before your OPT expires, at the latest, to allow time for the payment to be processed.

USCIS Resources:

File online: [www.uscis.gov/file-online](http://www.uscis.gov/file-online)

Create online account: [www.myaccount.uscis.gov](http://www.myaccount.uscis.gov)

Form I-765: [www.uscis.gov/i-765](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765)

I-765 evidence checklist [www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/checklist-of-required-initial-evidence-for-form-i-765-for-informational-purposes-only](http://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/checklist-of-required-initial-evidence-for-form-i-765-for-informational-purposes-only)