



## CENTER FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

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### 24 Month STEM Extension

#### Are you eligible for a STEM extension?

F-1 students with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) degrees in fields listed on the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#) are eligible for the 24-month OPT STEM Extension.

#### What are the Requirements?

- You must be currently authorized for Post-Completion OPT and working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to your field of study.
- The earliest you can apply is 90 days prior to the expiration on your EAD card
- Your application must be received before your current EAD expires
- You must be employed for at least 20 hours per week.
- You are not eligible for a 24-Month OPT STEM Extension if you are self-employed or employed as a volunteer.
- You must have successfully completed a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree in a field on the STEM Designated Degree Program list.
- A SEVIS-certified U.S. college or university with educational accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education must have conferred your degree.
- Only degrees received within 10 years of the date of your DSO recommendation for an OPT STEM Extension are eligible.
- You may use a degree received from a U.S. school other than D'Youville College, provided that you meet all of the requirements listed in this section.
- At the time of application for the 24-month OPT STEM Extension, you must have a job or a job offer from an employer registered with [the E-Verify system](#).
- Note: Each student is permitted a lifetime maximum of two OPT STEM extensions. To qualify for a second OPT STEM Extension, your second STEM eligible degree must be at a higher level than your first STEM eligible degree and you must have a valid EAD card.
- Once you've been approved for two OPT STEM Extensions, you are not eligible for another OPT STEM Extension--even if you complete another STEM eligible degree at a higher level.

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## Employer Requirements

- The employer must be registered in E-Verify and give its E-Verify number to the USCIS via the Form I-765.
- The employer must assist with the completion of, and sign off on, [Form I-983 "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students"](#).
- By signing this form, the employer is attesting to the following: They have sufficient resources and personnel available, and are prepared to provide the training outlined in the Form I-983. Note: DHS may conduct a site visit of any employer to ensure that the employer is able to meet the goals and objectives of the training program set forth in the Form I-983.
- The STEM OPT student will not replace any full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent U.S. workers, and the employment terms and conditions (including pay, hours, duties and benefits) are consistent with those offered to U.S. workers in similar situations.
- The employment opportunity will assist the student in reaching his/her training goals as outlined in Form I-983.
- The employer must agree to report the termination or departure of the student to the International Student Office within 5 days. Note: If the student has not reported to work for five consecutive business days without the employer's consent, the employer is to consider the student to have left the job.
- The employer must review and sign a 12-month and a final self-evaluation of the student's performance.

## How to apply

- Contact Laryssa Petryshyn at [petryshl@dyc.edu](mailto:petryshl@dyc.edu) to schedule an appointment
  - Complete [Form I-765](#) and print (Note that you will be utilizing the code (c)(3)(c) in #16)
  - Complete [Form G-1145](#) (E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance)
  - [Complete Form I-983](#) (along with your employer)
- Note: the I-983 must be submitted to the CGE for verification. The I-983 is not submitted when you submit the STEM application to USCIS. It will remain in your file in the CGE. The CGE will not issue your STEM OPT I-20 recommendation until the I-983 is complete.

For assistance completing Form I-983, please visit the resources and tutorial found on the [Study in the States STEM OPT HUB](#)

- "Section 1: Student Information": Name of School Recommending STEM OPT: D'Youville College (if you are applying on the basis of a degree earned at DYU). If you are applying on the basis of a degree earned at another school, you should enter that school's name as it appears on your old I-20.
- D'Youville's code is BUF214F00187000
- Your SEVIS ID Number can be found at the top of your I-20. It begins with the letter "N".
- Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information. If you are applying on the basis of a degree earned at D'Youville, you should use the following contact information:

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- **Laryssa Petryshyn**  
**Associate Vice President, Global Education**  
**D'Youville College**  
**320 Porter Ave**  
**Buffalo, NY 14201**  
[petryshl@dyc.edu](mailto:petryshl@dyc.edu)
  - Your CIP Code can be found in the Program of Study section on Page 1 of your I-20. It is the 6- digit number that appears after your major field of study.
  - If you are applying based on your most recently-completed degree from D'Youville College, you should answer "No" to the question asking if your application is based on a prior degree. If your application is based on a prior degree, you should answer "Yes".
  - Your Employment Authorization Number can be found on your EAD card. It is a nine-digit number, also known as the "A" number or "USCIS number".
  - STEM OPT Requested Period: Enter the period during which you are requesting to work on STEM OPT. This is essentially the period of time when you will be on a 24- Month OPT STEM Ext
  - "Section 3: Employer Information":
  - Start Date of Employment: This refers to the date you will begin STEM OPT training with your employer. Note: If you are continuing employment with your current employer, this date will be the first day of your OPT STEM Extension. If you are starting new employment, this date will be the start date of your new employment.
- Photocopy of your diploma. It must specify your field of study. If not, you must include a photocopy of your official transcript, which must confirm that your degree was conferred.

Note: If you are applying on the basis of a degree received from another school, you must also submit your transcript from the previous school.

- Photocopy of EAD card(s)
- Photocopy of your employment letter
- Application fee of \$410 (This should be a check (from a U.S. bank) or a money order (drawn on a US institution) payable to the "U.S. Department of Homeland Security".)
- Photocopies of all previous I-20's
- Photocopies of your current, valid passport (biographic and photo pages) and U.S. visa stamp page in your passport.
- Photocopy of the front and back of your most recent I-94 Card OR print-out of electronic I-94 (available at [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94))
- Two (2) identical natural color photographs of yourself, taken within 30 days of your application and not previously used. Note: If your photos do not meet USCIS requirements exactly, your EAD card will not be issued. (In pencil, please write your name and I-94 number lightly on the back of each photo)
- Include the new I-20 issued by the CGE with the STEM recommendation. Remember to sign the front of the I-20 in blue ink before you mail the application
- Be sure to photocopy your entire OPT application for your personal records.



### **Where do I send my STEM OPT application?**

Send your application to: Via express courier (e.g. FedEx, UPS):

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

Via U.S. Postal Service (regular mail):

USCIS  
PO Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

Note: If your mailing address in item #3 on your Form I-765 is not in New York State, please refer to the I-765 instructions webpage: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

\*Be sure to save your receipt.

### **Processing Time?**

It is estimated to be 6-12 weeks. However, processing times vary widely depending on the time of year and the workload at the USCIS Lockbox to which you send your application.

### **Responsibilities After Approval and You Receive Your EAD Card**

- E-mail a copy of your approval notice and EAD card to Laryssa Petryshyn at [petryshl@dyc.edu](mailto:petryshl@dyc.edu)
- You must notify a DSO about the following information:
- Any change in your name
- Any change in your residential address (CGE must be notified within ten days of your move.)
- Any change of employer, Employer Identification Number or employer's address plus any change or deviation from the training plan outlined on Form I-983, any reduction in compensation not tied to a reduction in work hours, any decrease in the number of hours worked per week, or any other change in your employment details.
- To report changes in employment information e-mail the OPT Employment form to either Laryssa Petryshyn or Ann Soares
- Any interruption of employment lasting longer than 10 days
- Any change in your immigration status (e.g. change to H-1B)
- Report any employer non-compliance to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). If you believe that your employer is not complying with the terms and conditions of the 24- Month

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STEM OPT regulations or the Form I-983 Training Plan, contact the Student and Exchange Visitor Program at [sevp@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:sevp@ice.dhs.gov) or the Department of Homeland Security.

- Submit the 6-Month Report. Students on the 24-Month OPT STEM Extension must also submit a report to the school every six months. When the school receives the report, it will notify SEVIS that the student has complied with this reporting requirement. Note: If students do not submit the required six-month report, their SEVIS record is supposed to automatically terminate. Therefore, it is imperative that you not only maintain employment, but that you report it to the CGE and submit the required six-month report in a timely fashion.
- Submit the 12-Month and Final Evaluations. In addition to the 6-Month Report, the student and the student's employer must complete a performance evaluation every 12 months, and at the end of the employment period. The required forms are available on the ISSS website. ISSS must receive the completed evaluations within 10 days of the 12-month period, and/or within 10 days of the end of employment. Note: If you leave an employer, you are required to submit the Final Evaluation to CGE within 10 days of your employment end date. •
- Every six months, mail your I-20 to the CGE for a new travel signature. We will mail it back to you
- the Final OPT Rule published on March 11, 2016 permits F-1 students who are authorized for the 24-Month OPT STEM Extension to be unemployed for 60 days in addition to the 90 days allotted for Post-Completion OPT. The maximum period of unemployment allowed is therefore 150 days during the entire OPT period. If you are approved for a 24-Month OPT STEM Extension and exceed 150 days of unemployment, the Department of Homeland Security will automatically terminate your SEVIS record. This means that your F-1 status and employment authorization will no longer be valid, and you will have to leave the U.S. immediately. Possible consequences to remaining in the U.S. after the 150-day deadline without a job include denial of future immigration benefits, detention and deportation, etc. Therefore, to maintain your F-1 status, you must update your employment history with ISSS and report any changes in employment to the CGE as soon as you accept a new job offer or as soon as any changes occur.
- If you change employers, you must submit a new Form I-983 to ISSS within 10 days of the change. **Other Important Reminders**
- While your 24-Month OPT STEM Extension application is pending, we strongly advise against changing the address listed on Form I-765. The USCIS does not always process change of address notifications in a timely manner. Changing your address while your application is still pending may result in your being required to file a new application with a new fee because you did not receive your EAD Card. Note: EAD cards may also not be forwarded by the U.S. Post Office to your new address. Therefore, you must be certain that the address you list in item #3 of your Form I-765 is (and will be) your address when your application is processed, which could be 3-4 months after you submit it to USCIS.
- Your application to the USCIS automatically extends your work authorization for up to 180 days while your application is pending.

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- If you transfer to another school or begin study at another educational level, then your OPT authorization will automatically be terminated.
- If you later decide not to mail your 24-Month OPT STEM Extension application to USCIS for any reason, you must notify the CGE immediately so that we can cancel your OPT recommendation in SEVIS.
- While on OPT, you are still in F-1 status.
- Self-Employment or Volunteer Employment are not permitted on a 24-Month STEM OPT

## **Travel:**

- Travel outside of the US while your 24-month application is pending and after post- completion OPT has expired is NOT allowed
- After you receive the new EAD card you should carry the following documents if you travel
  - Employment letter on employer's letterhead verifying your OPT employment •
  - Both EAD cards
  - I-20 with OPT recommendations and a valid signature on page 2 from the CGE (not more than 6 months old)
  - Originals of all previous I-20's
  - Valid F-1 visa
  - Valid passport