

STEM OPT Extension

What you need to know



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

Agenda

- STEM OPT Extension
- Application Process & Timeline
- STEM OPT Reminders
- Reporting Requirements



Office of International Students, Scholars
& Programs (ISSP)

What is STEM OPT?

Adds 24
months to
current OPT

Certain STEM
majors only

Apply while
working on
OPT

Previously
earned STEM
degree



Who is Eligible?

Received STEM
degree from U.S.
institution

Apply while
working on OPT

Working for an E-
Verified U.S.
company

Paid Employment
Only

Work must be
related to STEM
degree

Did not accrue
more than 90 days
of unemployment

Did not use two
periods of STEM
OPT at other
degree levels

No self-
employment

Working at least 20
hours/week

Applying for STEM OPT

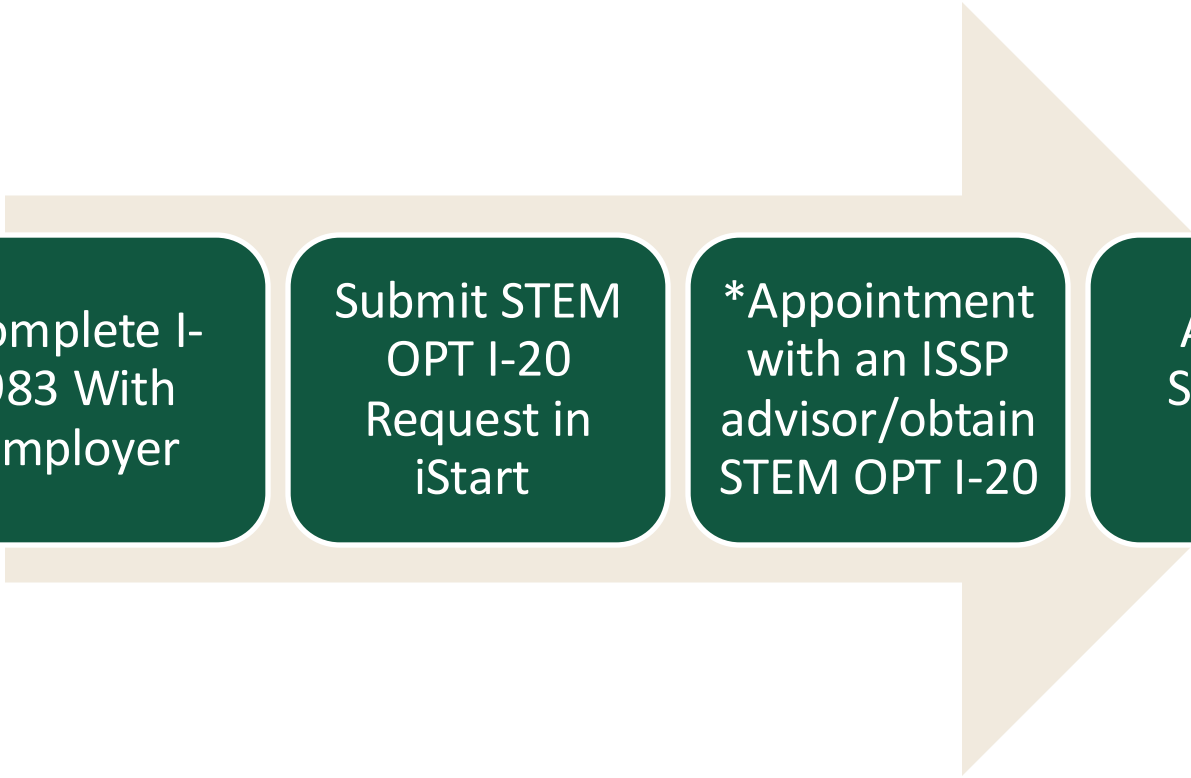
What does the application look like?



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STEM OPT Application Process



Complete I-983 With Employer

Submit STEM OPT I-20 Request in iStart

*Appointment with an ISSP advisor/obtain STEM OPT I-20

Apply for STEM OPT online

STEM OPT Application Timeline

Earliest that you can
request a STEM OPT I-20
+ apply for STEM OPT

Continue working up to **180 days** while
STEM application is pending OR
Stop working and begin 60-day grace
period (if not applying for STEM OPT)

OPT End Date

STEM OPT Approved

90 Days before OPT
Ends

Day after OPT End
Date

Deadline to Apply for
STEM OPT

2-5 months for STEM
application processing

Case Processing Time

- Current listed wait time is 3.5 months
- Check wait times at <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>
 - Form I-765
 - Based on a request by a qualified F-1 academic student
- Expedited processing is available for an additional fee (\$1,780)
- Shortens processing time to 30 business days (about 6 weeks)
- [USCIS Request for Premium Processing](#)

Preparing STEM OPT Application

Required Materials

- STEM OPT I-20
- Most recent I-94
- Copy of passport
- Passport-style photo
- OPT EAD card
- Official transcript for STEM degree
- Application fee

Optional Practical Training Application Checklist

OPT is a work authorization granted to F-1 students for employment in their field of study (their major). Most students use it for post-graduation employment.

Learn About OPT

- Attend an [OPT Session](#) for the current semester, or watch a session recording.
- [Schedule an appointment](#) with an ISSP advisor (optional). Ask application questions during your appointment.

Prepare Your Documents

To make the process of submitting your online application easy, please have the **electronic files** for these documents ready before you begin.

Acceptable file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF or TIFF.

- OPT I-20. Request this in [iStart](#), using the *OPT I-20 Request* form. Your OPT dates will be listed on page 2 of your I-20. Print, sign and scan your OPT I-20. **Your OPT application will be denied without this!**
- [I-94 record](#) ("Get Most Recent I-94"). If you last traveled to the US by land, this will be in your passport instead, and you should scan a copy **front and back**, even if blank. You do not need to upload your travel history.
- Copy of passport identity page(s) showing your biographical info and expiration, valid 6 months in future.
- Copy of 1 color passport style photo, sized 2 inches by 2 inches. Review [photo requirements](#).

Supporting documents summarized in the [OPT Packet!](#)

Form I-983 Training Plan

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

OMB APPROVAL NO. 1653-0054
EXPIRATION DATE: 5/31/2025

TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS

Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Optional Practical Training (OPT)

SECTION 1: STUDENT INFORMATION (Completed by Student)			
Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name):		Student Email Address:	
Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:	Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned:	SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT (including 3-digit suffix):	
Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information:		Student SEVIS ID No.:	STEM OPT Requested Period (mm-dd-yyyy): From: _____ To: _____
Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: _____			
Level/Type of Qualifying Degree: _____			
Date Awarded (mm-dd-yyyy): _____			
Based on Prior Degree? ☐ Yes ☐ No			
Employment Authorization Number: _____			
SECTION 2: STUDENT CERTIFICATION			
I declare and affirm under penalty of perjury that the statements and information made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that the law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willfully falsifying or concealing a material fact, or using any false document in the submission of this form.			
I certify that:			
1. I have reviewed, understand, and will adhere to this Training Plan for STEM OPT Students ("Plan");			
2. I will notify the DSO at the earliest available opportunity if I believe that my employer is not providing me with appropriate training as delineated on this Plan;			
3. I understand that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may deny, revoke, or terminate the STEM OPT of students whom DHS determines are not engaging in OPT in compliance with the law, including the STEM OPT of students who are not, or whose employers are not, complying with this Plan;			
4. My practical training opportunity is directly related to the STEM degree that qualifies me for the STEM OPT extension; and			
5. I will notify the DSO at the earliest available opportunity regarding any material changes to or deviations from this Plan, including but not limited to, any change of Employer Identification Number resulting from a corporate restructuring, any nontrivial reduction in compensation from the amount previously submitted on the Plan that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked, any significant decrease in hours per week that I engage in a STEM training opportunity, and any decrease in hours below the 20-hours-per-week minimum required under this rule.			
Signature of Student (Sign in ink): _____			
Printed Name of Student: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____			

- Completed/signed by you and your company
- Required **before** ISSP can issue your STEM OPT I-20

Tips for Completing the Form I-983

ISSP STEM OPT Request Form



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Home

Admission

F-1 Practical Training

F-1 Student Services

H-1B Employee Services

Immigration Check-In

Insurance and Finances

International Office

Pre-Arrival

Scholarships

Special Programs

F-1 Practical Training

Tasks



OPT I-20 Request



CPT-Curricular Practical Training



OPT STEM Extension I-20 Request



OPT Employment Update



OPT STEM Updates and Evaluations

Your STEM OPT I-20

REMARKS

OPT recommended for employment in the field of study.

SCHOOL ATTESTATION

I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.

X _____ DATE ISSUED _____ PLACE ISSUED _____

SIGNATURE OF:

STUDENT ATTESTATION

I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. **Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.**

SIGNATURE OF:

DATE

NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN

SIGNATURE

ADDRESS (city/state or province/country)

DATE

Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status

OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID:

NAME:

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS

TYPE	FULL/PART-TIME	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
POST-COMPLETION OPT	FULL TIME	APPROVED	20 JUNE 2022	19 JUNE 2023
STEM OPT	FULL TIME	REQUESTED	20 JUNE 2023	19 JUNE 2025

EMPLOYER INFORMATION

TYPE	AUTHORIZATION DATES		
POST-COMPLETION OPT	20 JUNE 2022 - 19 JUNE 2023		
EMPLOYER NAME	START DATE	END DATE	CITY & STATE
	20 JUNE 2022		

TYPE	AUTHORIZATION DATES		
STEM OPT	20 JUNE 2023 - 19 JUNE 2025		
EMPLOYER NAME	START DATE	END DATE	CITY & STATE
	20 JUNE 2023	19 JUNE 2025	

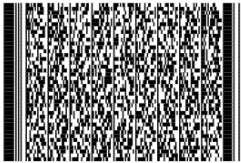
STEM OPT Appointment with ISSP

- STEM OPT appointment is **optional**
- Schedule appointment online
- Review OPT Packet & online application before your appointment
- Ask questions!



USCIS Biometrics Appointment

- Attend your biometrics appointment to have your photo taken after submitting your OPT application
- If you do not receive an appointment notice 2 weeks after submitting your OPT application, contact globe@wm.edu for assistance

ASC Appointment Notice		CASE TYPE	NOTICE DATE
		1765 - APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION	02/28/2026
		USCIS A#	CODE
		Z300 126 356	2
ACCOUNT NUMBER	TCR	SERVICE CENTER	PAGE
090918082504		YSC	1 of 2
			
READ THIS ENTIRE NOTICE CAREFULLY. To process your application, petition, or request, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) must collect your biometrics. Please appear at the Application Support Center (ASC) at the date and time specified. TO REQUEST THAT USCIS RESCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT, SEE THE INSTRUCTIONS AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS NOTICE. IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR AS SCHEDULED, USCIS WILL CONSIDER YOUR BENEFIT REQUEST ABANDONED AND IT MAY BE DENIED.			
APPLICATION SUPPORT CENTER USCIS NORFOLK 5678 E Virginia Beach Blvd Norfolk VA 23502		DATE AND TIME OF APPOINTMENT 03/16/2026 12:00PM	
WHEN YOU APPEAR AT THE ASC FOR BIOMETRICS SUBMISSION, YOU MUST BRING: 1. THIS APPOINTMENT NOTICE. If you received multiple ASC notices, bring all notices to your first appointment, and 2. PHOTO IDENTIFICATION. You must bring a valid government-issued photo identification. If the name on your identification is different than the name on your ASC notice, bring supporting documents. If you filed an Application for Naturalization (Form N-400) or Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (Form I-90), you must bring your Permanent Resident Card (also known as a Green Card).			

Common Reasons for Denials

1. Not including a **STEM OPT I-20** in the application
2. Applying **after** your Post-Completion OPT end date
3. STEM Employer is not E-Verified
4. Using a credit/debit card that doesn't work or an international credit/debit card
5. Submitting your **diploma instead of your transcript** as evidence of your STEM degree

ISSP is here to help, but what you submit is ultimately your responsibility

STEM OPT Regulations

What to know while working on STEM OPT



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Unemployment Limit

- Cannot have more than **150 days of unemployment** during total OPT period
 - This includes the 12 months of **Post-Completion OPT** and the 24 months of **STEM OPT**
- Work on STEM OPT must be **paid** to count as “employment”
- Unpaid internships, volunteering, and self-employment **do not** qualify for STEM OPT employment

See **STEM OPT & Unemployment** webpage for more information

Unemployment Limit



Reporting Requirements

Complete all STEM OPT reporting, updates, and evaluations in **iStart**:

1. Login to iStart using your W&M ID & Password
2. Click on F-1 Practical Training tab in the menu
3. Select **STEM OPT Updates and Evaluations**

Details can be found on ISSP's [STEM OPT Reporting Webpage](#)



6, 12, 18, & 24-Month Reporting



Relationship Between Work & Degree

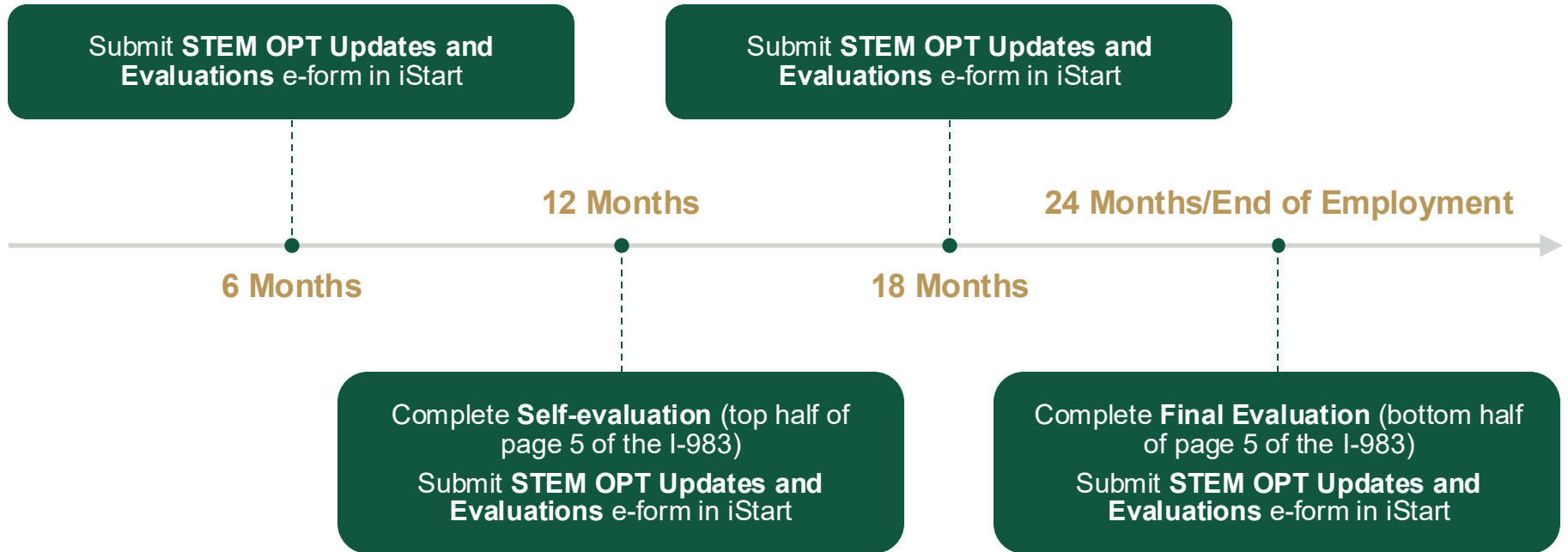


Address/Phone Change



Ending STEM OPT Early

When Do I Need to Report?



When Do I Need to Report?



Changes in Current Employment

- New job position in the same company, change in duties/responsibilities, etc.
- Submit new I-983



New Employer

- Submit Final Evaluation (for old employer)
- Submit new I-983 (for new employer)

STEM Self-Evaluations

12-Month Self-Evaluation

EVALUATION ON STUDENT PROGRESS

Provide a self-evaluation of your performance, using the measures previously identified, in applying and acquiring new knowledge, skills, and competencies identified in the Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. Discuss accomplishments, successful projects, overall contributions, etc., during this review period. Address whether there are any modifications to the objectives and goals for projects, or new areas for skill and competency development.

Range of Evaluation Dates: From (mm-dd-yyyy): _____ To (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

Signature of Student (Sign in ink): _____

Printed Name of Student: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority (Sign in ink): _____

Printed Name of Employer Official with Signatory Authority: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

24-Month/Final Self-Evaluation

FINAL EVALUATION ON STUDENT PROGRESS

Provide a self-evaluation of your performance, using the measures previously identified, in applying and acquiring new knowledge, skills, and competencies identified in the Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. Discuss accomplishments, successful projects, overall contributions, etc., during this review period. Address whether there are any modifications to the objectives and goals for projects, or new areas for skill and competency development.

Range of Evaluation Dates: From (mm-dd-yyyy): _____ To (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

Signature of Student (Sign in ink): _____

Printed Name of Student: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority (Sign in ink): _____

Printed Name of Employer Official with Signatory Authority: _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

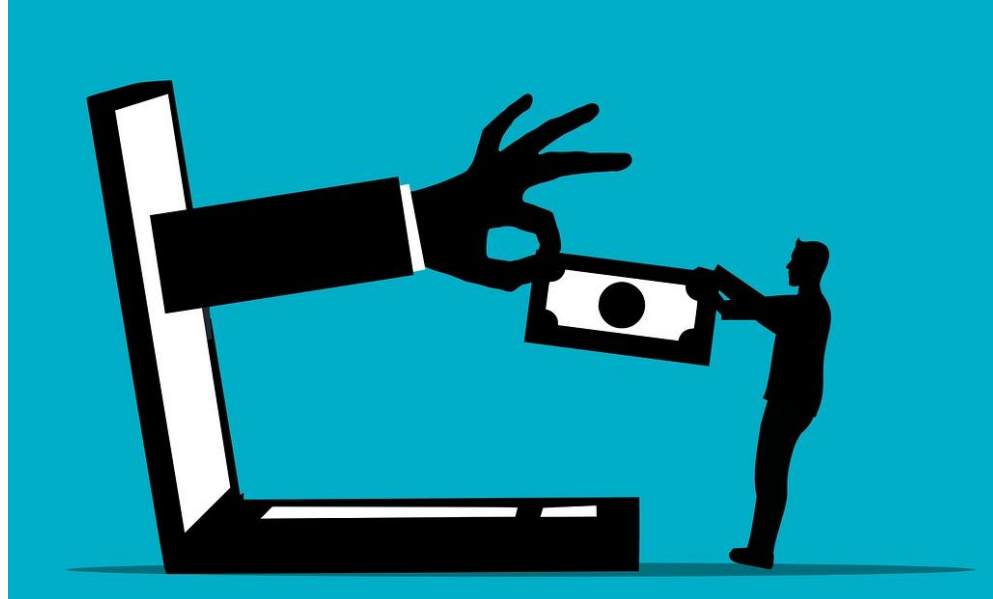
Travel on STEM OPT

- Unexpired Passport
- Valid F-1 Visa
- OPT/EAD Card
- I-20 with Travel Signature within 6 months



See [Traveling Abroad on OPT](#) webpage for more information

Be Aware of Immigration Scams



See [ISSP website](#) for more information

Final Reminders

Do not apply until you have a STEM OPT I-20

Check your materials **carefully**

Attend your **biometrics appointment**

Follow [STEM OPT Reporting Requirements](#)

Do not exceed **150 days** of unemployment

Avoid using AI for questions related to STEM OPT

Resources



- [STEM Extension Home](#)
- [OPT Packet](#)
- [STEM OPT & Unemployment](#)
- [STEM OPT Reporting](#)