# STEM Extension Optional Practical Training (OPT)

## Eligibility

* STEM OPT Extension grants up to 24 additional months of OPT
* You should have earned a STEM eligible degree, as defined by this list: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension>
* You must hold a job in your degree field and
* You must work at least 20 hours per week.
* Your employer must be enrolled in E-verify and have an EIN (tax identification number).
* You may not be self-employed or work on a volunteer basis.
* You and your employer must complete a form I-983 Training Plan and submit it to the ISSS office.
* USCIS must receive your application before your current post-completion OPT ends, and no more than 60 days after the ISSS office issues your STEM OPT recommendation I-20.

## Documents needed to apply (Email these documents to ISSS@geneseo.edu)

* Completed OPT Information Form
* Form I-983 Training Plan, completed and signed by you and your employer
* Completed form I-765 (You will complete and submit the form online, but a paper version is available at [www.uscis.gov/forms](http://www.uscis.gov/forms) if you would like to review before completing your online form).
* Two passport-sized color photos (2 inches x 2 inches)
* A credit or debit card application fee payment of $410. You will pay by credit card via pay.gov as part of your online application.
* Photocopy of your diploma and your final transcript with your **degree name**.
* Photocopy of your updated I-20 with OPT endorsement from ISSS. **You will receive this after meeting with an ISSS adviser (see Part 1).**
* Photocopy of previous EAD Card(s)
* Photocopy of the **ID page of your passport** and your **F1 Visa**
* Photocopy of your current I-94

## Part 1: Submit your application materials to ISSS for OPT Recommendation

1. **Submit your I-983 and OPT Information Form to ISSS**: Email your application documents to the ISSS office (isss@geneseo.edu). We will review them and notify you if any changes. You do not need to submit your fee payment or photos to ISSS, although we are happy to help you with a final review before your application packet to USCIS.
2. **Receive your I-20 with STEM OPT Recommendation from ISSS:** Once we have reviewed your documents, we will recommend you for STEM OPT Extension in SEVIS and will issue an update I-20. You will receive a copy by email and a hard copy in the mail a few days later.

## Part 2: File Your Application Online

Submit your application to USCIS for adjudication. \*Note\* If you would like assistance filing your OPT application online please schedule an appointment (in person or virtually) with the ISSS Office. We will be happy to walk you through the application process.

1. <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
2. Click “File Online”
3. Click “Create an Account” or “Sign In”. To Create an Account: Enter your email address. You will receive an email to verify your email address, after which you can enter your information to create your account.
4. After creating your account, click “My USCIS”
5. Account type: Click “I am an applicant, petitioner, or requestor”
6. Select “File a form online” and choose “I-765, Application for Employment Authorization” and click “Start Form”
7. Basis of Eligibility: Select c (3) (C) - STEM Extension
8. What is your degree: Enter your full degree name; for example: Bachelor of Science in Biology or Bachelor of Science in Physics.
9. What is your employer’s name as listed in E-Verify? You will need to ask your employer (most likely the HR office) exactly how the company’s name is listed in E-Verify. Note: Your employer MUST be registered in E-Verify to be an eligible STEM OPT employer.
10. What is your employer's E-Verify company identification number or a valid E-Verify client company identification number? Your employer should provide you with the E-Verify number.
11. Reason for Applying: Select Renewal of Permission to Accept Employment
12. Have you previously filed Form I-765? Select Yes
13. Complete the About You section with your personal information
14. In the Evidence section, you will upload your supporting documents:
    1. 2 x 2 photo: You must upload a recent passport-sized photo of yourself. You can obtain a passport-sized photo that meets the requirements in the photo section at WalMart, CVS, Walgreens, or Kinkos. The photo upload requires a JPG, JPEG, or PNG. You can take a photo of your 2 x 2 photo and upload the file.
    2. Form I-94: You can get your most recent I-94 here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>
    3. Employment Authorization Document: Upload a copy of the **front and back** your current EAD Card (OPT Card) here. We also strongly recommend that you also upload a copy of the **ID page of your passport** and your **visa** in this section.
    4. Form I-20: Upload the newly updated, most recent copy of your I-20 including the STEM Extension OPT endorsement from the ISSS Office.
    5. Institutional Accreditation: If your STEM OPT Extension application is based on your degree earned at SUNY Geneseo you do not need to upload anything to this section. It is only necessary if your application is based on a previously earned degree at a different institution.
15. Carefully review your application, electronically sign, and follow the instructions to pay the $410 application fee by credit card through pay.gov
16. Print a copy of your completed I-765 form for your records. Please email a copy of your I-765 to [isss@geneseo.edu](mailto:isss@geneseo.edu) .

# OPT Information Form

This form is for ISSS instruction only. It will not be sent to USCIS.

## Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ G#:

Major(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Graduation:

Dates of OPT authorization:

Current Employer:

Name of Supervisor: Supervisor Email:

Employer address: Street address:

City: State: Zip Code:

Employer EIN: Employer E-Verify #:

## Contact Information

Street address:

City: State: Zip Code:

Geneseo Email Address: @geneseo.edu

Non-Geneseo Email Address (required):

Phone Number:

## OPT Card Instructions

* I would like my STEM OPT card to be mailed to ISSS and for ISSS to contact me when my card arrives

**\*\*\*\*\*\*OR\*\*\*\*\*\***

* I prefer that my OPT card be mailed to me directly

## Acknowledgement

Signature Date

# Reporting Requirements

## Basic Reporting

During the 24-month STEM OPT extension, the student must report within 10 days of any change of the following:

1. legal name
2. residential or mailing address
3. employer name
4. employer address, and/or
5. loss of employment

You can use your SEVIS Portal Account to update your information. If you have difficulty accessing your Portal Account, contact the ISSS Office.

## 6 Month Validation Requirement

During the 24-month STEM OPT Extension, you must complete the 6 Month Validation every 6 months during your OPT period. An employment validation form is attached for this purpose. You should complete the validation form and email it to the ISSS Office ([isss@geneseo.edu](mailto:isss@geneseo.edu)). The ISSS Office most receive this validation report within 10 days of your 6 month validation due date.

We will do our best to remind you when a 6-month validation is required; however, **it is your responsibility to track and submit validations on time.**

## Required Self Evaluations

A student must complete self-evaluations of his or her progress during the course of each "STEM practical training opportunity" his or her STEM OPT period:

1. An initial evaluation within 12 months of the STEM OPT start recorded on Form I-983; and
2. A final evaluation "no later than 10 days following the conclusion of the reporting period or conclusion of his or her practical training opportunity."
3. The SEVIS Help Hub also indicates that a student should submit self-evaluations "at the end of any employment," in addition to "the 12 and 24 month marks from the start date of the STEM extension."

To complete these self-evaluations, the student needs to specify the evaluation date range (i.e., the timeline considered during the evaluation) and:

1. Assess their overall performance using the measures identified in the agreed upon training plan.
2. Evaluate their success in applying and acquiring the new knowledge, skills and competencies that were previously identified in the plan.
3. Discuss accomplishments, successful projects, overall contributions, etc., that occurred during the specified review period.
4. Address whether there are any modifications to the objectives and goals for projects or new areas for skill and competency development.

Once the evaluations are complete, the student must collect signatures from their employer and return the form to the ISSS Office who will also sign the report and will keep a copy on file.

## A modified Form I-983

When there has been a material change to the training plan described on the Form I-983 on file with the DSO, a modified form I-983 should be submitted to the ISSS office "at the earliest available opportunity".

Please contact the ISSS Office if you believe a modified I-983 is required.

## Mandatory Employer Reporting

The employer must report to the DSO (ISSS Office):

1. When a student is terminated or leaves employment, within 5 business days of the termination or departure.
2. A shared obligation with the student to submit a modified Form I-983 when there has been a material change to the training plan described on the Form I-983 on file with the DSO, by submitting a modified Form I-983 to the DSO, "at the earliest available opportunity"

## Maximum Period of Unemployment

During the 24-month STEM OPT Extension, the limit on unemployment is raised from 90 days (during the initial 12 month OPT period) to an aggregate of no more than 150 days, applied to the entire period of standard post-completion and STEM OPT.

This means that you are allowed a maximum of 90 days of unemployment during your initial 12 months of OPT, and an additional maximum of 60 days during the 24-month STEM OPT Extension period for a total of 150 days over 36 months.