OPT STEM Extension Information Sheet

F-1 students who are currently authorized for OPT employment based on completion of a Bachelor's degree in a Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) field, as defined by DHS, may be eligible for a 24-month extension of OPT.

In order to be eligible for this extension, students applying for this benefit must:
- already be on valid OPT based on a STEM-eligible degree: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension
- have had fewer than 90 days of unemployment while on OPT
- be employed by, or have a job offer from, an ***employer who is registered in the E-Verify employment verification system***

There is a lifetime limit of **two** periods of 24-month STEM OPT; each occurring after a higher degree level has been obtained. A STEM degree obtained at a U.S. university prior to your current degree may be the basis for a STEM extension under certain circumstances.

See detailed information on the STEM Hub: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub

Materials required for the OPT STEM extension application:
To International Advising Office:
____ Completed and signed "Request for 24 Month Extension of OPT"
____ Completed Training Plan I-983 form

To USCIS:
____ Completed and signed Form I-765 (see "Hints" below)
____ Check or money order for $410, payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"
____ 2 color, U.S. passport-style, photographs (see "Guidelines" below) – write name and SEVIS ID on back in pencil.
____ Copy of the front and back of your current OPT card
____ Copy of new I-20 from International Advising Office, with recommendation for OPT extension (keep the original I-20)
____ Copy of all previous I-20s
____ Evidence that your degree meets the STEM degree/major requirements
     ONLY ONE of the following must be submitted with your application:
     - Official transcript (Request from Registrar's Office)
     - Copy of the diploma that shows your degree level and program of study
____ Copy of your current I-94 printout from cbp.gov
____ Copy of your passport identity page (and any renewal pages) Passport must be valid at
     least 6 months into the future.
____ Copy of F-1 visa

Submitting OPT Application to USCIS

- Be sure to sign your STEM OPT I-20 form when you receive it from the International Advising Office.
- Make a copy of the entire application before you submit it to the USCIS.
- Submit the application to the USCIS Lockbox with jurisdiction over the address you list on the I-765 form. See last page for addresses.

Download I-765 form here: http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf

Hints for filling out Form I-765 –

Item #3	If you may move while this application is being processed, use a stable address such as your employer or Union's International Advising Office. Mail from USCIS is <u>not</u> forwarded by the Postal Service.
Item #9	Use your U.S. Social Security Number.
Item #10	This is the 11-digit number on your most recent I-94
Item #11 the	Includes your current OPT information. You applied for your OPT through the

USCIS OFFICE IN VERMONT. |
Item #14	USCIS wants to know what your status was the last time you entered the U.S. For most students applying for OPT, it is "F-1".
Item #15	This must be "F-1".
Item #16	**(C)(3)(C)**
Item #17	Degree = your degree level and major; Employer's name as listed in E-Verify; Employer's E-Verify Identification Number (E-Verify information can only be obtained from your employer)

Guidelines for the "Two Passport Style" photos

- Photos must measure 2 inches by 2 inches.
- Head should be positioned directly facing the camera.
- Photo should capture from slightly above top of hair to middle of chest.
- Background should be plain white or off-white.

- **Photos should be taken within the last 30 days prior to the extension application**. Photos used for obtaining a non-U.S. passport or a U.S. visa stamp are generally not acceptable, as they are often not the correct size, and rarely taken within 30 days of the OPT application.

✓ *Submit the STEM OPT application to USCIS within 90 days of your initial OPT expiration date.*

✓ *While the STEM OPT I-765 is pending with USCIS, you may continue to work for up to 180 days.*