

How to Apply for the STEM OPT Extension

Please review the information below to learn how to apply for the STEM Optional Practical Training (OPT) Extension.

- **You may submit your request for the STEM OPT Extension I-20 to International Enrollment up to 90 days before your current OPT end date.**
- **The final deadline to submit your I-765 to USCIS is your current EAD end date.** Please request the STEM OPT I-20 at least 30 days before that date.


Application Process

Step 1: Submit a request to International Enrollment for a STEM OPT request I-20 by completing the 'F-1 STEM OPT Extension Request' e-form at <https://internationalforms.hofstra.edu/>. You must upload:

- Your fully completed I-983 signed by you and your employer.
- Copies of the front and back of your current EAD card.

Form I-983: Training Plan for STEM OPT Students

- Download the form at: <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983.pdf>
- I-983 Instructions: <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983Instructions.pdf>
- See page 3 of this guide for instructions on how to fill in the I-983.


 **Do not submit your I-765 to USCIS until you receive the STEM OPT request I-20 from our office.**
Please allow up to 5 business days for us to review and process your STEM OPT request.

Step 2: We will email your STEM OPT request I-20 to your Hofstra email address with more instructions.

Step 3: Prepare the required documents for the STEM OPT application using the checklist on the next page.

- For help on how to fill in the I-765, use the I-765 guide on our website at hofstra.edu/international-enrollment; go to 'Student Resources' and under 'Immigration Resources', click 'Forms'.

Step 4: File Form I-765 online using your USCIS Account (https://myaccount.uscis.gov/users/sign_up).

 **Note:** You must be physically located in the U.S. when you file the I-765 to USCIS.

Things You Need to Know for STEM OPT:

- **Type of Employment** – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) says that you cannot qualify for STEM OPT extensions unless you are bona fide employee of the employer signing the I-983 Training Plan. The employer that signs the Training Plan must be the same organization that employs you and provides the practical training experience. DHS says you are not allowed to use a volunteer opportunity, contract work, or staffing agency as a basis for the STEM OPT extension.
- **E-Verify** – Your employer must enroll in E-Verify <https://www.e-verify.gov/> for you to file STEM OPT extension.
- **Working Hours** – must be a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- **Unemployment** – You have up to 90 days of unemployment allowed during post-completion OPT. If approved for the STEM OPT extension, you will get an additional 60 days (for a total of 150 days) of unemployment.
- **Expiration of current OPT** – If your post-completion OPT expires while your timely filed STEM OPT application is pending in USCIS, you will receive an automatic extension of employment authorization of up to 180 days upon the expiration of your current employment authorization.
- **Travel** – If your current EAD has expired, do not travel while your STEM OPT extension is pending. You will not be able to return in F-1 status to resume employment.

STEM OPT Checklist

Below is a checklist of all the materials you should gather to prepare your STEM OPT application.

- Incomplete or incorrect applications can cause processing delays.
 - Review the checklist carefully and make sure you have included everything.
 - This information is meant to help you follow best practices. Please remember, this is not legal advice. Depending on your immigration history, you can choose to hire an immigration lawyer to help you with this process.
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- ☐ STEM OPT Request I-20: You will receive the STEM OPT I-20 signed by a DSO (immigration advisor).
 - Print it out and sign your signature by hand at the bottom of the first page, then scan all 3 pages.
 - Upload the scanned copy with both the DSO and your signature with your application.
 - ☐ Online I-765 Form (Instructions available at: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>)
 - ☐ Copies of your valid passport and your F-1 visa
 - ☐ I-94: you can print out the most recent I-94 from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/>
 - ☐ Copy of all previous EAD cards (front and back)
 - ☐ Copy of all previous Form I-20s (including all schools you have ever attended)
 - ☐ Copy of your diploma
 - ☐ Official transcript
 - ☐ U.S. style passport photo taken within 3 months – size must be 2" x 2" (check requirements at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos/photo-examples.html>)
 - ☐ I-765 online filing fee: \$470

Optional Forms:

- ☐ I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-907>
 - You can file the I-907 together with the I-765 for OPT, or separately after you submit the I-765.
 - The fee is \$1,685 (in addition to the I-765 filing fee).
 - If USCIS accepts the request, they will take action on your case within 30 calendar days.

Online Filing

You can file the I-765 online by creating a USCIS account at <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/>. More information about filing online is available at <https://uscis.gov/file-online>. When filling in the online form and uploading documents, please note:

- Be sure to select the correct eligibility category. For STEM Extension, choose (c)(3)(C).
- These file formats are accepted: JPG, JPEG, PNG, PDF, TIF, TIFF.
- These file formats are NOT allowed: DOC, BMP, XLSX
- Maximum file size is 6 MB per file. Foreign and special characters are not allowed. The only characters allowed in document file names are: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, parentheses.
- Please be careful to upload everything correctly! The system will let you submit the I-765 even without all required evidence. This can lead to requests for evidence and delays if you forget to upload documents.
- You can use this website to check your digital passport photo: <https://tsg.phototool.state.gov/photo>
- Review your entries carefully before you pay the filing fee. After you pay, you cannot make corrections.
- Print or download a draft snapshot of your I-765 to save for your records.
- To pay the filing fee you will be directed to the Pay.gov website. After you pay the fee, your I-765 will be submitted to USCIS. You will get confirmation the form was submitted and immediately get a receipt notice.
- All notices will also be mailed to the mailing address you put in the I-765 form.

Mailing a Physical Application

It is possible to mail a physical I-765 application, but we do not recommend it. If you want to mail a physical application to USCIS, please tell International Enrollment before you request the STEM OPT I-20. You must make an appointment to talk about the requirements with us because the procedure is very different.

How to Fill in the I-983: Training Plan

See the I-983 instructions for a full guide about this form: <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983Instructions.pdf>

- The form is a fillable PDF. Please type your information directly into the form.
- Do not use Word or other apps that will change the format of the form.
- The I-983 is a 5-page form. All 5 pages should always be included, even if some pages are left blank. Do not leave out any pages when submitting this form to International Enrollment or saving the form for your records.
- Just typing your or your employer's name is not a valid signature. Signatures must be either signed by hand, signed electronically (using digital pen), or officially signed using software like Adobe or DocuSign.

Page 1, Section 1: Student Information

- Name of School Recommending STEM OPT: Enter 'Hofstra University'
- SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT: Enter Hofstra's school code as listed on the 1st page of your I-20 in the 'School Information' section.
- Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information: Enter all the contact information below. If your computer does not allow you to type it all in, then you may neatly hand write it into the box in black ink.
Michelle Cheung
110 Weller Hall, Hempstead, NY 11549
international@hofstra.edu; (516) 463-6796
- STEM OPT Requested Period: For start date, enter the day after your current EAD end date. For end date, enter 24 months after the start date.
- Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: Enter the major and the CIP code listed on the 1st page of your I-20 in the 'Program of Study' section.
- Based on Prior Degree?: Check "No" if your STEM OPT extension is based on your most recently obtained STEM degree from Hofstra (the degree upon which your current post-completion OPT is based).

Only check "Yes" if your STEM OPT extension is based on a previously obtained STEM degree, not the same Hofstra degree upon which your current post-completion OPT was granted. If you are not sure about your situation, please contact our office to consult with an advisor.

Pages 2 - 4

- Work with your employer to fill in these pages. Consult your supervisor and Human Resources department about who would be most appropriate to complete these sections.
- Whoever completes and signs sections 3 - 6 should be whoever is most suited to attest regarding the content in those sections. It could be the same person, or a different people, depending on the structure of your company and who is filling in the form. For example, the person who signs Section 4 must be familiar with the student's goals and performance.

Page 5

- Please leave the last page (page 5) blank. This evaluation page will be completed during your STEM OPT time.

For more information about STEM OPT visit:

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