OPT STEM Extension Application Checklist

STEP 1: Documents needed for Recommendation from OIA (new I-20)

- ❑ Completed Form I-765, "Application for Employment Authorization".
- ❑ Completed Form I-983, signed by your prospective employer
- ❑ If based on **previous** degree not granted by UChicago: proof of previous degree:
  - o I-20 from previous school showing approved post-completion OPT, or
  - o Verification of Degree Form filled out by previous school international office
- ❑ Copy of EAD for current period of post-completion OPT
- ❑ Submit these documents through the STEM OPT Application form on the OIA website

STEP 2: Documents needed for Application to USCIS

Your application to USCIS must include the following:

- ❑ Completed Form I-765, "Application for Employment Authorization"
- ❑ A check for the filing fee (see the USCIS website for the current fee) payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security. You may use a personal check or a money order.
- ❑ Two photos to the standards of the Department of State specifications. These must be new passport pictures that have not been used for any other application.
- ❑ A copy of your I-20 (the one with the STEM OPT recommendation on it) endorsed within the past 60 days by your international student adviser. Your application **must be** filed within 60 days of the DSO signature.
- ❑ A copy of your current EAD card (front and back).
- ❑ Documentation of your I-94. Visit the USCBP website to retrieve and print out a copy of your electronic Form I-94. If you entered the U.S. on or before April 29, 2013, you should copy both sides of the paper departure record.
- ❑ Photocopies of the identity page(s) of your passport.
- ❑ Proof of the completion of your studies (degree, certificate and/or transcript – copies are fine).
- ❑ If based on **previous** degree: include all I-20s from previous institutions to verify your eligibility for STEM
- ❑ Optional document: Form G-1145, "E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance

Mailing Timeline and Instructions:

- ❑ Your application must be filed within 60 days of the DSO signature on the STEM I-20
- ❑ Make sure to request delivery confirmation or another certified mailing option
- ❑ USCIS must receive your application before your current STEM OPT end date
- ❑ Visit the OIA website for the STEM application mailing address

You do NOT need to include your I-983 training plan with your application. However, you must retain a copy of the plan for your records. We recommend that you and your employer keep a copy of the most up-to-date plan at work, in case of a DHS site visit.

OPT STEM Extension Reporting Requirements

Reporting requirements (required by law):

- ❑ You are required to complete the OPT Update Form **every 6 months** to validate your STEM employment, even if there are no changes to report.
- ❑ You must submit a self-evaluation of your performance (pages 6 and 7 of Form I-983) at the mid-point of employment and at the conclusion of employment for each job you have
- ❑ You must submit a **new Form I-983** to OIA, signed by your employer, if there are any changes to the original training plan or if you get a new position. OIA must receive your new i-983 **prior** to any changes. Changes may include but are not limited to:
  - ✓ Employer name and address
  - ✓ Decrease in compensation
  - ✓ Reduction in hours (if you are working less than 20 hours a week)
  - ✓ Employer's EIN
  - ✓ Termination of employment
- ❑ You are required to report to the OIA within **10 days**, any change in the following: name, address, employer name and address, or a change in status by submitting the OPT Update Form linked above.
- ❑ Submit a new Form I-983 to the OIA when any of the following changes occur:
  - ✓ Employer name and address
  - ✓ Decrease in compensation
  - ✓ Reduction in hours (if you are working less than 20 hours a week)
  - ✓ Employer's EIN
  - ✓ Termination of employment

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY:

Although OIA is available to answer any questions you have, **it is your responsibility to maintain your immigration status and do so accurately**. You are required to stay up-to-date with all immigration requirements, including STEM OPT reporting, and submit any required information to OIA within the timelines specific by the U.S. government and described above. **OIA will not provide reporting reminders or check-ins**. Failure to comply with the regulations set by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may result in denial, revocation, or termination of your work authorization and/or F-1 status. DHS may, at its discretion conduct in-person site visits to ensure compliance. In most cases, DHS will provide notice to the employer at least 48 hours in advance of any site visit. For more information please see https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/employer-site-visits.