



OPT STEM Extension Application Checklist

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

- ☐ Completed [Form I-983](#), signed by your prospective employer
- ☐ If based on **previous** degree not granted by UChicago: proof of previous degree:
 - ✓ I-20 from previous school showing approved post-completion OPT, or
 - ✓ [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 Recommendation Request](#) on the OIA website

STEP 2: Documents needed for Application to USCIS

We recommend that you file [online](#) from within the US.

Your application to USCIS must include the following:

- ☐ 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. The deadline to apply for STEM OPT is your OPT end date.
- ☐ A copy of your current EAD card (front and back).
- ☐ Your most recent I-94 record (visit the [CBP website](#) to retrieve a copy)
- ☐ Photocopies of the biographical page(s) of your passport.
- ☐ Proof of the completion of your STEM-eligible degree (degree and/or transcript).
- ☐ If based on **previous** degree: include all I-20s from previous institutions to verify your eligibility for STEM
- ☐ Payment (please see [USCIS website](#) for current filing fee)

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 [STEM 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 5 of Form I-983) at the mid-point of employment (due 12 months from the start of STEM OPT) and at the conclusion of employment for each job you have (known as the final evaluation).
- ☐ 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 (final evaluation due)
- ☐ In addition, you are required to report to the OIA within **10 days**, any change in the following via the STEM OPT Update Form linked above:
 - ✓ Name
 - ✓ Residential address (can also be updated via the SEVP portal)
 - ✓ Change of status
 - ✓ Early Departure (if you are departing the US with no plans to return in F-1 status)

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>.

Questions or comments? Contact: international-affairs@uchicago.edu