OPT STEM Extension Application Instructions

Before beginning the application process:

- Find the code by your major in the Program of Study section of your most recent I-20
  - If your code is on the list, continue reading
  - If your code is not on the list, but you are currently on OPT and previously completed a bachelor or higher degree in a major (as stated on your I-20 for that degree) on the list, continue reading and contact your GaSoU Designated School Official (DSO/international student adviser) for information on how to apply for a STEM extension based on the prior major
  - If neither of the above apply, you are not eligible for an OPT STEM extension; you may stop reading
- Carefully review the STEM OPT Hub on the Study in the States website: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub

Time frame for CIS to receive your OPT STEM extension application:

- less than 90 days before your current OPT employment authorization card (document/EAD) expires
  - Communicate with your DSO 3 ½ to 4 months prior to your EAD expiration to allow plenty of processing time – you’ll need the new EAD to renew your driver’s license
- before the ending date on your current OPT EAD
- within 60 days of the date the OPT STEM extension recommendation I-20 was prepared

Students in an OPT Cap-Gap extension are eligible to apply for an OPT STEM extension if otherwise qualified.

Send the following information to DSO:

- name of your employer as listed in E-verify
- employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number
- Completed I-983
- copies of remaining documentation for review - recommended

Once these are provided, the DSO will prepare your I-20 and I-765. As long as CIS receives your application before your current EAD expires, you are automatically eligible to continue your STEM eligible employment for 180 days without CIS issued documentation. I can provide a letter for your employer to explain this – please ask for it if it is needed.

Arranging the OPT Application Packet (single-sided copies only; attach materials with a paperclip. Do not staple.)

- 2 Passport photos
  - Place a small piece of tape on the back of each photo and, using pencil, lightly write the following information:
    - FAMILY NAME (ALL CAPS), Give Name (Upper/lower case), I-94 number
  - Put the photos back to back to make sure they don’t stick together.
  - Place them in the small paper envelope.
- Payment (money order, official bank check, or personal check with preprinted name and address – NO CASH)
  - Pay to the order of: Dept. of Homeland Security
  - $410 (New Fee Effective 12/23/2016)
  - On the memo/or for line or in a blank space write I-765 fee and add your I-94 number
- G-1145 (to receive messages as action is taken on your application; see OPT PowerPoint for details)
- Original I-765 (DSO will prepare)
  - Sign beside “Applicant’s Signature” making sure your signature doesn’t touch the lines. CIS scans your signature to be added to your employment authorization card. Crossing/touching the lines with your signature creates problems.
- Employer’s letter explaining how the job relates to your STEM major and acknowledging employer responsibilities
  - DSO will provide a Word document with a template for your employer to use.
- Copy of prior CIS employment authorization card(s) and denial notice(s) if any
- Transcript or copy of your diploma showing your educational level and field of study
- Photocopy of I-20 (pages 1 and 2)
  - Verify that you and the DSO signed page 1.
- Photocopies of your remaining immigration documents:
  - Passport (unexpired!)
  - Visa stamp (even expired. If not an F-1 visa, include change of status documentation.)
- I-94 information downloaded from [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94) or copy of front and back of paper I-94 as long as it shows your most recent entry to the U.S.

**Mailing/Shipping Instructions**

Make sure you use the appropriate address for the type of mail service you are using. *Use a mailing/shipping option with a tracking number* so you can verify the application was received by CIS. USPS priority mail is acceptable though it is not guaranteed to arrive faster than first class mail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you live in:</th>
<th>Mail your application to: USCIS Phoenix Lockbox</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa,</td>
<td>If sending by DHL, FedEx, or UPS:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota,</td>
<td>USCIS Attn: AOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the</td>
<td>1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Mariana Islands.</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ 85034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If mailing U.S. Postal Service (USPS):</td>
<td>USCIS PO Box 21281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ 85036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you live in:</th>
<th>Mail your application to: USCIS Dallas Lockbox</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia,</td>
<td>If sending by DHL, FedEx, or UPS:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire,</td>
<td>USCIS Attn: AOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico,</td>
<td>2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business, Suite 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia,</td>
<td>Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If mailing U.S. Postal Service (USPS):</td>
<td>USCIS PO Box 660867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dallas, TX 75266</td>
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