

Office of International Programs

5500 N. St. Louis Avenue
Chicago, IL 60625-4699
773.442.4796
international-programs@neiu.edu

STEM EXTENSION REQUIREMENTS For applicants after May 10, 2016

Students who completed degrees in the STEM Field in: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math are eligible to extend their current OPT for another 24 months. **If you did not graduate in the STEM field you do not qualify for this extension.** To qualify you must be currently authorized under the 12-month period of OPT and working for a US employer in a job directly related to your field of study. You must have successfully completed a Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral Degree in a field from the [STEM Designated Degree Program list](#), at a SEVIS-certified US college or university. At the time of application for the 17-month extension, you must have a job offer or be employed by an employer registered with the "E-Verify" federal employment verification system. You must not have previously received a 17-month OPT extension after earning a STEM degree. You must apply for the 17-month extension through their school's international student office. *The school's Designated School Official (DSO) must recommend the extension and issue a new I-20 with the recommendation noted.* You must file the extension application in a timely manner, generally 90 days before the current period of OPT expires. A student who files the application timely may continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision is made, or for 180 days, whichever occurs first.

OPT STEM CHECKLIST

Please submit a copy of all documents for review in order for the DSO to recommend Extension on your I-20. We will not review your application if we do not receive all the items on the checklist.

- 1. STEM Application** (last page from this package)
- 2. I-765 Form :**
 - Downloadable Form <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf>
 - Question #15. Got to <https://citizenpath.com/faq/which-uscis-office-form-i-765/>
 - Question #20, Needs to be filled out at **(c)(3)(c)**
 - For FAQ's go to https://www.uscis.gov/system/files_force/files/form/i-765instr.pdf?download=1
- 3. Form I-983**
 - Downloadable form <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students-and-the-form-i-983>
 - You must work with your employer to complete this form.
 - Employer MUST be E-Verified. Go <https://www.uscis.gov/e-verify>
 - See Requirements of Employer Section on page 2
 - You will need to complete the top portion on Student evaluation on Page 5
- 4. \$410.00* personal check or money order made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
(Please write your date of birth and SEVIS ID number on front of the check)
**this amount may change at any time and check on USCIS for accurate fees.*
- 5. Copy of your I-94 Arrival/Departure Card** (front & Back) or (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>)
- 6. 2x U.S. passport style photos** (write your name and SEVIS ID number on back of each photo)
- 7. Copy of EAD card front and back**
- 8. Copy of your Degree: Diploma, Official/Unofficial Transcripts.**
- 9. Copy of Employer Offer Letter**
- 10. Submit copies of steps 1-9 to DSO C-gonzalez2@neiu.edu for new I-20**
- 11. New I-20:** Once you have submitted all documents for review you will receive a new I-20.
- 12. Mail everything to USCIS.** Depending where you live you will need to send it to the appropriate address. For more info: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-information/uscis-phoenix-and-dallas-lockbox-facilities>

What are the requirements of the employer?

For employers:

1. Participate in e-verify.

2. Work with student to prepare and sign a written training program (to be completed on Form I-983), or use an existing training program that includes:

- The specific goals of the STEM OPT period
- How the specific goals will be achieved
- Explain how the specific skills, techniques, and knowledge will be imparted to student
- Explain how the training is related to the STEM degree
- Explain how the student will be supervised and evaluated
- Lists details of compensation

3. Certify that the training program:

- is commensurate with the terms, conditions, and compensation provided to similarly-situated U.S. workers
- does not cause the replacement of a full- or part-time, temporary or permanent U.S. worker
- that the employer has sufficient resources and personnel to train the student
- is directly related to the STEM degree and that the offered position will achieve the objectives of the training program

4. Notify the university's DSO of any *material* changes or deviations in the training program at the earliest opportunity.

***Material* changes include:**

- Decrease in compensation
- Decrease in hour worked to below 20 per week (excluding leave policy)
- Change in employer identification number (EIN) due to corporate restructuring
- Any change that renders the employer's attestations invalid
- Any changes that renders the training program inaccurate

5. Undergo possible work site inspections conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

6. Notify the DSO within five business days if the F-1 student's employment is terminated or departs from STEM OPT job.

7. Submit I-983 and Offer letter from new employer to your DSO.

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You may apply 90 Days before your OPT End Date or 60 Days after your OPT End Date. Consider factors such as USCIS processing time. Make sure you submit copies from checklist to the Office of International Programs. If the documents are not received you will not be given an I-20.

Student Information			
Last Name			
First Name			
Student ID #			
Current Address:			
Phone Number:			
Email Address:			
Degree Completed:			
STEM Designated Degree Program:			
Employer Information:			
E-Verified #		EIN#	
Name of Employer			
Supervisor Name			
Supervisor Phone Number			
Supervisor Email Address			
Attach copy of Offer Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>		
STEM Start Date			
STEM End Date			

I have read the STEM Extension Package and I know that I am responsible for submitting all required documents to be recommended for STEM Extension on my I-20.

Signature: _____

Date: _____