



SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY
Optional Practical Training STEM Instructions and Information

The STEM extension is an opportunity for an additional 24 months of work experience in your field of study effective May 10, 2016. If eligible and approved, this special OPT extension is available to each student. To be eligible, a student must already be approved for the regular 12-month OPT and have earned a degree in a field on the U.S. government's STEM major list (Science, Engineering, Technology, or Mathematics). In addition, you must be employed in a job directly related to your field of study and work for an employer who is enrolled in the U.S. government's E-Verify program. You must apply for the 24-month STEM extension prior to the expiration date of the first OPT period. USCIS will not accept the I-765 application any earlier than 90 days before the current EAD expiration date.

The start date of the 24-month OPT extension will be automatically set to the day after the expiration of the current 12-month OPT authorization. The end date will be 24 months later. It is not possible to request smaller increments of time for the OPT extension. You continue to be in F1 status while on the STEM extension and Southeastern is responsible for reporting your status and updating SEVIS with any changes in your name, address, employment or if you terminate your STEM extension employment. Information on when and how to report can be found below.

How to Apply

1. Go to www.selu.edu/international, Forms and Information, select and print the Form I-983 with Instructions. You and your employer must complete pages 1-5 only. Instructions for pages 6-7 will be made available below. The I-983 must be completed in its entirety before you may continue to step 2 below and request the extension.

Submit the I-983 to the International Services Office at southeastern.edu/international under Forms and Information then Student Online Request Form. Our office will then determine if you are eligible for the extension. (Note: A new I-983 must be submitted any time there is a change in employer or a material change in the original I-983)

2. Once we decide that you are eligible for the extension, we will contact you to make an appointment to complete the STEM extension application.

When you go to the ISO for your appointment, please bring the following:

- Original and completed signed I-765 (can be printed from www.uscis.gov)
 - ✓ **BLACK INK ONLY!** (or type)
 - ✓ **DO NOT LEAVE ANY ITEMS BLANK!** (If it does not pertain to you, enter N/A)
 - ✓ **INLCUDE ALL PAGES PAST PAGE 4, EVEN IF BLANK, WRITE N/A ON THOSE SPACES**
- **Part 1. Reason for Applying** – Select 1.c. Renewal.

○ **Part 2. Information About You –**

- Complete the fields for Last name, first name, etc. then enter any other names used in the appropriate section
- Enter your U.S. Mailing address. This address must be available to you for at least 3-5 months since this is where USCIS will mail your receipt and EAD card if approved. If you are using a friend or relatives address, you must enter the In Care of Name or the documentation will not be delivered. Be sure to mark in the box if this is your physical address. If you are using a friend or relative's address you will mark this selection No and then complete the U.S. Physical Address box. If this is your Physical Address, you may skip the Physical Address section.
- Other Information – Do not complete 8 and 9 if you do not have these numbers, you will know if you did. Complete 10, 11 & 12. For 13.a. select if you have ever received an SSN. If you have skip to 14 and select No then skip to number 18.a.
- Country of citizenship – List your country/s of citizenship
- Place of Birth – complete items 19.a. – 20.
- Information about last arrival in U.S. – Enter your I-94 number. You can get this by going to www.cbp.com/i94 and select [Get I-94](#)
- Enter your passport number in 21.b.
- Skip 21.c.
- Enter the country that issued your passport. In 21.e. enter your passport expiration number.
- For 22 – 24, this information can also be found on your I-94 record.
- 25 should be F-1 Student
- 26 is your SEVIS ID found on your I-20
- 27 should be entered (c) (3) (c)
- 28.a. Write your degree earned as it appears on your I-20 form
- 28.b. make sure this name matches what is in E-Verify
- 28.c. employer's E-Verify number
- skip 29 – 31.b.

○ **Part 3. Applicant's Statement**

- Select the appropriate box under Applicant Statement
- Applicant's Contact Information – Enter your contact information
- Read through the certification statement and then sign and date under Applicant's Signature
- If you were the only person to complete the form and had no interpreter, you may skip the remaining questions.

Photocopy of pages 1-3 of the STEM OPT I-20 (we will issue this during your appointment and you will receive a copy)

Copy of your I-94 record obtained from
<http://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/i-94-instructions>

Photocopy of passport page with photo, passport number and expiration date (must be valid for at least 6 months out from application date)

- Photocopy of ALL previously used EAD cards**
- Check or money order payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” for \$410.00**
- Two (2) passport photos. Must be 2” x 2” with white background.**
- Verification of graduation and degree from Southeastern.** Official Southeastern transcript (may be requested in Admissions Office in person or through this link online http://www.southeastern.edu/admin/rec_reg/transcript_request/index.html Do not use the online request, instead download the request form and send it to the International Services Office and we will assist with getting the transcript for the STEM application) USCIS no longer accepts copies of diplomas.

Next Steps

A Notification of Receipt from USCIS should arrive to the address on the I-765 within 2-3 weeks. This receipt has a code beginning with EAC and a series of numbers. This is your case number and you can track the status of your application online at www.uscis.gov.

It will take 45-90 days for your application to be processed. When approved, USCIS will send you an Approval Notice and then an Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) with a picture on it and the authorization dates you are allowed to work under OPT. Once you receive the card, please ensure that your name is spelled correctly and the dates are correct. If a student's regular post-completion OPT expires after a STEM OPT I-765 is properly and timely filed, the student's employment authorization is considered automatically extended for up to 180 days while the STEM EAD application is pending.

The ISO will also issue you a new I-20 for the approved STEM OPT. If you receive the card at your own address, please contact the ISO that you have received the card. We will need a copy for our records and we will then issue you the new I-20.

Student Requirements

Travel

If your current EAD card has expired you cannot travel outside of the US, even during the 180 valid period. Once you receive the new EAD card, you can travel but must show the following documents:

- New EAD card
- Passport valid 6 months into the future
- Proof of Employment (this can be a letter from your employer)
- Most recent I-20 with valid travel authorization on 3rd page
- If your visa has expired or will expire while you are out of the country, it will need to be renewed

Student Reporting Requirements

Students must report the following to the International Services Office:

- Upon receipt of EAD card, student must give a copy to the ISO
- Change of employment, termination, new position title and employer name, address and contact information.
- Change of name or visa status information
- Change of address within 10 days
- Every 6 months must report to ISO to confirm status (you will be provided with a form that tells you what to report and what your reporting dates are)

- After 12 months, you will be required to submit page 6, Evaluation of Student Progress, of the I-983. At the end of the 24 month extension, you will then submit page 7, Final Evaluation of Student Progress.
- Transfer to another F1 program or change in educational level

Important Notes

You cannot accumulate more than 150 days of unemployment during the 24 months.

Your I-20 must be signed for travel every six months.

Unlike regular OPT a student on STEM extension cannot meet their employment requirement through volunteer work.

***NOTE: Failure to report to the ISO any changes or failure to report for the twelve month validation will result in your SEVIS record automatically terminating with reason “Failure to Report While on OPT.”**

Employer Requirements

Your employer is required to report to our office through email (international@selu.edu) within 48 hours of your termination or departure if the termination or departure is prior to the end of the authorized period of STEM OPT. The report must include the following information:

- Your legal name
- Your SEVIS ID number
- Date your employment ended

Further information on Employer requirements can also be found at

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2016/03/the-stem-opt-24-month-extension-heres-whats-new>