STEM OPT EXTENSION ONLINE WORKSHOP
Instructions

• View each slide completely

• It may be helpful to have the following document close by when viewing

• After completing the workshop, please click the link on the final slide to submit proof of your participation
STEM OPT EXTENSION

Overview of the NEW Regulations
STEM OPT Extension

• F-1 Students with degrees in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) may be eligible for an extension of their Post-Completion OPT work permission.

• On March 11, 2016 the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published new expanded regulations which take effect on May 10, 2016.
Transitioning to the new STEM OPT Rule

• It will take some time for DHS (including SEVIS and the Service Centers), employers and universities to define the application procedures and reporting requirements of STEM OPT.

• Immigration Services will continue to update our STEM OPT materials and keep students informed.
What’s Different?

• Extension granted for 24 Months- Previously 17 Months

• Students may be eligible to have two STEM OPT extensions during their time in the U.S.

• Students currently in a non-STEM degree can be eligible for a STEM OPT extension based on a previous STEM degree obtained in the U.S. from an accredited institution.

• There is a new expanded list of STEM eligible CIP codes
What’s Different?

• The student and employer will be required to use the new Form I-983 Training Plan

• Additional reporting requirements (evaluation, exit survey, etc...)

• Employers must provide a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)

• DHS is permitted to conduct employer site visits to confirm that training plan goals are being met

• Volunteering is no longer permitted on the STEM OPT extension
What’s Different?

• Students’ compensation must be commensurate to similarly situated U.S. workers

• Self-employment is not permitted

• Small start-up companies: There appear to be ways for some to qualify as long as the employer has an FEIN, student is considered an “employee” and a supervisor can complete the Form I-983

• Most temporary agency and contract work will not be eligible

• During the STEM OPT extension you could have up to 150 days of unemployment time (90 used during post OPT and 60 for STEM OPT)
THE STEM OPT APPLICATION
I want to file a new STEM OPT Application!

- All STEM extension applications, regardless of when they are filed, must be received by USCIS before your current Post-Completion OPT expires.

- Anyone considering a STEM OPT extension will be required to complete a Form I-983 with their employer. The form I-983 can be found here: [https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview)

- An I-20 will be provided by our office and you will mail this with your application.
PREPARING YOUR STEM OPT APPLICATION

Where to Start! What Forms to Prepare!
3 Steps to Take

• Complete STEM OPT Extension Online Workshop

• Log into istart.uga.edu and complete the 3-Part STEM OPT Extension request form.
  • I-20 Request Form
  • Download/Upload Form I-983 Training Plan
  • Complete STEM OPT Extension Certification Statement

• Prepare Materials - Review the Next Screen for List of Materials
Completing the Form I-983

• Visit https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview

• Click on this icon. Step-by-step instructions for completing the Form I-983 are included.
Completing the Form I-983

- When preparing the Form I-983, you will be asked to include UGA’s school code and the Designated School Official (DSO) recommending your STEM OPT

  UGA School Code: ATL214F00222000

  Using the last number of your UGA ID (81X Number); Example: 81XXXXXX?

  Jennifer Beasley- 0, 1, 2
  Ashley Johnson- 4, 6, 7
  Linnea Tighe- 3, 5, 8, 9

Contact Information for all advisors is below:

  1324 S. Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30602
  Phone: (706) 542-2900
  Email: immigration@uga.edu
Prepare Supporting Materials

- Include I-20 signed by both your immigration advisor and yourself
- Copy of current EAD card (front and back)
- Two identical passport-style color photos of yourself taken within 30 days of filing application.
- Copy of official UGA or Previous School’s transcript showing conferred degree
- Copy of Passport ID page
- Copy of I-94 card, both front and back, or copy of I-94 print out from [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94)
- If you are applying using a previous degree, submit transcripts and previous I-20
STEM OPT I-20 Recommendation

• When all materials are complete, Immigration Services will create the required I-20 recommending the STEM OPT extension.

• An email notification will be sent when the documents have been processed with options for collecting the items needed for the application.

• NOTE: Your I-20s will not be issued without submitting the Form I-983 in iStart. Click Here for more I-983 information.
STEM EXTENSION EMPLOYMENT

What jobs? How many hours? Where to work?
Employment Limitations

• Employment must be paid.

• Employment must be a minimum of 20 hours per week.

• Employment must be directly related to your course of study.
Unemployment Limitations

• Students approved for the 24-month STEM OPT extension may not accrue more than a total of 150 days of unemployment throughout their entire 36 months on OPT.

• **Unemployment Caution:** SEVIS records will automatically terminate for students who have no employment reported for 150 days. Be sure that you have made alternate plans and communicated them to Immigration Services before your record is terminated. If you have any concerns, you can always contact your Immigration Services advisor.
STEM EXTENSION REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

You’ve been approved…now what?!
Self-Evaluations

• Students must submit to Immigration Services self-evaluations via the I-983 during the first 12 months on the STEM OPT extension and at the completion of the 24-month extension period or at the conclusion of employment, whichever comes first.

• Evaluations should be submitted within 10 days of the required date.

• Visit istart.uga.edu to upload all reporting requirements.
Students & Employers Report Changes

• Student **and employers** must report to Immigration Services a change in any of the following via the I-983:
  
  • Employer name and address
  • Decrease in student's compensation
  • Reduction in hours worked to less than 20 hours a week
  • Employer's EIN
  • Termination of employment
Students Report

• Legal Name
• Residential address
• Employer name and address
• Change in status of current employment, including loss of employment, change of status to H-1B, transfer to another F-1 program, or change employers. If you change employers, you and your employer will need to complete a new I-983 and submit to Immigration Services.
Students Report- Every 6 Months

- Legal name
- Residential address
- Employer name and address
- Status of current employment
Keep Records of your Employment

Keep records of your employment history for your personal file, to present as evidence of maintaining lawful status should you apply for future immigration benefits.

- **Examples of records to keep:**
  - offer letters
  - contracts
  - payroll stubs
  - letters describing volunteer activity and hours
RESOURCES FOR STEM OPT EXTENSIONS
Online Resources for STEM OPT

- Study In the States STEM OPT HUB: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub
- Help from UGA Immigration Services: is.uga.edu or email immigration@uga.edu
Workshop Completion Page

To complete this workshop, please visit the link below

OPT STEM Extension Confirmation