

HIO Request for OPT STEM Extension Recommendation

Eligibility Criteria

You must have completed a degree in a STEM field. Review the list of [STEM designated degrees](#) to confirm your eligibility. You can identify your degree code (CIP code) from the “Program of Study” section of your I-20. Once you have verified your eligibility, you must also review the degree definition as provided by the [U.S. Department of Education](#). You must relate your prospective STEM employment with this definition.

HIO STEM Application Documents

- A completed HIO [STEM Extension Request Form](#)
- A photocopy of your current OPT EAD card
- A printout of your most [recent I-94](#)
- A completed [I-983 \(instructions\)](#)
- Proof of a HIO STEM fee payment of \$300** through Online Credit Card Payment via [Touchnet](#), such a screenshot or a PDF of your payment confirmation
 - [Touchnet Order](#) # _____

****STEM Payment:** This is a one-time non-refundable fee to maintain your SEVIS record after you are no longer a fee-paying student. You also maintain full access to HIO advising and resources. This fee is wholly separate from the USCIS application filing fee.

Submitting STEM Extension Request to HIO

Due to the current public health emergency, the HIO can only accept digital applications. [Please use a secure file transfer for security purposes.](#)

- EMAIL application to HIO**
 - Send **ONE** email with **ALL** required STEM documents listed above to internationaloffice@harvard.edu
 - Use the SUBJECT **“STEM APPLICATION – HIO ADVISOR’S NAME”**
 - *Example: STEM APPLICATION – JANE DOE*

****The HIO will NOT accept incomplete or piecemeal applications. Sending multiple emails with separate attachments will severely delay the processing of your application****

Receiving Final STEM Application and Instructions from HIO

Due to the current public health emergency, pick-up at the HIO is unavailable. We will send your Form I-20 with a STEM OPT recommendation via a secure email. The email will also contain further instructions regarding your STEM OPT extension application to USCIS.

While waiting for your new STEM I-20 and instructions, you can begin preparing the following materials that you will submit to the USCIS as part of your final STEM application:

- Copy of your academic transcript and diploma in a STEM field – Do not use a computer printout of grades. An unofficial transcript issued by Harvard is acceptable.
- Personal check of \$410 made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security."
- Two recent identical U.S. passport-size photographs not used for a previous passport or U.S. visa application (photos must be taken within the past six months).
- Photocopies of immigration documents:
 - All of your previous Forms I-20;
 - Front and back of your current OPT EAD;
 - I-94 printout;
 - Biographical page of your valid passport;
 - F-1 visa stamp (not applicable to Canadians).

STEM OPT Extension Reminders

- **DO NOT** submit your completed application to USCIS until you receive your new Forms I-20 from the HIO.
- You may submit the STEM application up to 90 days prior to the end of your current OPT EAD card.
- Submit your application to USCIS no later than two weeks prior to the end of your current OPT EAD card.
- Your STEM extension request will be denied if USCIS receives your application after the end date of your current EAD.

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Employee/Student Information

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Current U.S. Residential Street address: _____ Apt. #: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Harvard School and Degree Program: _____

E-Mail _____

After reviewing the CIP code definition of your degree, please describe how the position draws on knowledge gained and developed during your academic program in 2-3 sentences. For example, you may cite specific coursework; dissertation or thesis research; or lab work that has provided you with fundamental knowledge you use in your job duties. ***NB: The HIO is required to enter this information in your SEVIS record. Failure to provide adequate information in this section will delay the HIO in issuing your STEM I-20.***

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I must only engage in employment reflected on the Form I-983 which this STEM OPT extension application is based. Failure to comply with the STEM OPT rules and reporting requirements may constitute a status violation; such violations may have negative consequences for my current immigration status or result in delays and denials of future immigration benefits.

- I will comply with the [mandatory federal reporting requirements](#) while on STEM OPT: *6 month reporting, evaluation on student progress, and final evaluation on student progress.*
- I will update the HIO within 10 days of any change(s) outlined below by contacting my HIO advisor:
- Any [material changes or updates](#) to the information on the I-983 (i.e. employer's address, reduction of hours, etc.);
 - Any changes of employers;
 - Any changes of my address (where I physically reside); and/or
 - End of employment or any change of my immigration status (e.g., F to H or J, etc.)
- I will thoroughly review all STEM OPT instructions provided to me by the HIO and will review HIO e-mails so that I remain informed about my STEM OPT and how to properly maintain my F-1 status during the OPT period.
- I authorize my employer to complete the information and agreement below so that I may apply for an extension of Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment authorization as permitted by F-1 immigration regulations.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Employer Reporting Requirements (To be completed by employer; please print clearly and legibly):

There are numerous employer requirements to which you must adhere. Some of those requirements are enumerated here, but you should pay particular attention to the attestation on page 2 of the I-983 and the employer information located at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/employers-and-the-form-i-983>. General employer requirements include being registered with the E-Verify program and ensuring that hiring an international student with STEM employment will not displace a U.S. worker.

Form I-983

Any material changes to the Form I-983 submitted to the HIO must be reported within 10 days of any change to avoid invalidating the student's STEM OPT employment authorization. Material changes or deviations may include, but are not limited to:

- Any change of the employer's Employer Identification Number, (i.e., the company's Federal Tax ID number) resulting from a change in the employer's ownership or structure;
- Any reduction in student compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked;
- Any significant decrease in hours per week that a student engages in a STEM OPT training opportunity; and/or
- Changes to the employer's commitments or student's learning objectives as documented on the Form I-983.

As long as the STEM OPT student and employer continue to meet the regulatory requirements and the modified Form I-983 meets these requirements, the student's employment authorization will not cease based on a change to the plan.

STEM OPT Termination or End of Employment

Per 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C)(4) - The employer agrees to [report the termination or departure of an OPT](#) employee to the DSO at the student's school if the termination or departure is prior to end of the authorized period of OPT. Such reporting must be made within 48 hours of the event. An employer shall consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left the employment or if the student has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the consent of the employer, whichever occurs earlier. Please send the report to internationaloffice@harvard.edu.

Employee's Position Title: _____ Start Date: _____

Employer (Organization) Name: _____

Employer Address: _____

Employer's EIN#: -

E-Verify Employer #:

Older numbers are five digits and newer ones are six digits

Supervisor Name as listed on the I-983: _____

Supervisor Tel.: _____ Supervisor Email: _____

Authorized Signer Name: _____ Title: _____

Authorized Signer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note to the Employer:

Per 8 CFR 274a.12 (b)(6)(iv) a person granted OPT may continue to work for up to 180 days following the expiration of the original OPT while the STEM extension is pending. The U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) agency will issue Form I-797 to acknowledge receipt of the extension application. USCIS processing for the extension may take approximately 90 days.