



OPT STEM EXTENSION FORM:

Eligibility Requirements:

- You must have successfully completed a Bachelor's, Master's or doctoral degree in a field on the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List. Please note that you may be eligible use a prior STEM degree earned in the U.S. for this requirement; to use a prior STEM degree, you must:
 - a. Have received your most recent degree (which does not need to be STEM-related) from a currently accredited Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified school in the U.S.
 - b. Have received your prior, qualifying STEM degree in the U.S. within 10 years of applying for the STEM OPT extension.

The qualifying STEM degree must be on the Department of Homeland Security's STEM Designated Degree Program List at the time you submit your STEM OPT extension application (rather than at the time you received the degree).

- Students should check the code listed under "Primary Major" on the third page of their Form I-20, and check it against the CIP Code column of the STEM Designated Degree Programs List.
- You must be currently on F-1 status and participating in a 12-month period of OPT working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to your major area of study.
- A Designated School Official (DSO) at the International Center of Rowan University must recommend the 24-month OPT extension in SEVIS after reviewing your request.
- The employer must agree to report the termination or departure of the STEM OPT employee to the International Center within 48 hours if it is prior to the end of the authorized period of OPT.

Employment Requirements:

- Student must have a job offer from an employer registered with the E-Verify employment verification system at the time of application for the OPT extension. It is your responsibility to ensure your employer is registered with E-Verify.
- Employment has to be paid. Volunteer/unpaid work or self-employment is not permitted.
- Multiple employers are allowed as long as the student is working for more than 20 hours for each employer.
- At least 20 hours per week
- Directly related to field of study and appropriate to degree level obtained, not a previous degree
- The job must provide formal training and learning objectives directly related to your qualifying STEM degree.
- Student must be able to complete the I-983 Training Plan with your employer.

Application Period:

- You can apply as early as 90 days before your current 12-month OPT EAD card expiration date.
As long as the student files on time, Employment can be continued while the 24 months OPT STEM extension application is pending until a final decision from USCIS.
- The application must be received by USCIS before the OPT completion end date and USCIS can take up to 90 days to issue the EAD card.



Travel While on OPT:

- The student cannot travel abroad while the OPT STEM extension application is pending
- Applying to renew the visa while on OPT is a high risk.

Application Process:

Submit the following items to the International Center to be reviewed by an advisor before mailing your materials to USCIS:

- A completed Rowan University OPT STEM EXTENSION FORM
- I-983 Training Plan for STEM OPT students- Fully completed and properly signed. Please carefully read I-983 instructions before completing the form. Please also review the Study in the States Tutorial and the Form I-983 Overview.
- I-765 (you can find instructions on filling out this form here)
 - For item #16 put (c)(3)(c)
 - Be sure to completely fill out item #17 and make sure that the employer is participating in the E-verified program.
 - Note: You will have to use a valid mailing address (for the next 6 months) for where you want to receive all the communication from USCIS directly. Rowan IC is not responsible for any loss or delay of your OPT application. For questions on this matter you should contact the USCIS directly.
- Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance - this form is optional. If you include it, you will receive an email or text message informing you that the USCIS has received your application.
- Check or money order for \$410.00 payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security."
- Two passport size photos (2' x 2'). Photos should be taken within the last 30 days. For more information on photo specifications, please visit: 1.usa.gov/1s8K6UC. Softly print your first and last name and the I-94# at the back of each photo.
- Photocopy of EAD card (front and back)
- Photocopy of passport, which is still valid for the next 6 months in the future
- Photocopy of F-1 Visa page (where picture and expiration date are shown.)
- Copy of the most current I-94. You can retrieve your I-94 information here: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home; you also can use a photocopy of the I-94 admission card (front and back).
- Photocopy of your degree and/or official transcripts showing the level and program of study.
- A signed letter from the STEM employer on a letterhead including the following information: Company's name, mailing address (at where you are physically working), hiring date, position title (related to the field of your studies), company's E-verify#.
- Original I-20 from Rowan University with the 24-month OPT Extension request (will be issued by an advisor after receiving all necessary documents)

If you live in NJ, mail your materials to:

U.S. Postal Service deliveries:

USCIS

P.O. Box 660867

Dallas, TX 75266

Express mail and courier deliveries:

USCIS



Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Highway 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

If you live in any other state please check the mailing address.

Additional Resources:

- [STEM OPT Hub](#) (DHS Study in the States)
- [Final STEM OPT Rule](#) (Effective May 10, 2016)
- [USCIS' webpage on the 24-month STEM OPT extension](#)
- [Employer Reporting Requirements](#) (DHS Study in the States)



Reporting requirements:

- During the 24-month STEM OPT extension, you must report to a DSO within 10 days of any change of the following: legal name, residential or mailing address, employer name, employer address, and/or loss of employment, new employer, adding second employer, leaving the employment or the country. Note:
 - If you decide to leave the US and abandon your OPT, you must notify the IC. You may not be unemployed for a cumulative period of more than 150 days total for post-completion and OPT Extension.
- The student must also make a "validation report" to the DSO every six months starting from the date the 24-month extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status ends, the student changes educational levels at the same school, the student transfers to another school, or the 24-month OPT extension ends, whichever is first. This report must be made by the student, and SEVIS updated by the DSO, even if the student's employment has not changed. The validation report must include the student's:
 - Full legal name
 - Current mailing and residential address
 - Name and address of the current employer
 - Date the student began working for the current employer
 - The report is due to the DSO within 10 business days of each report due date
- Submit Form I-983 completed by student and employer twice to Rowan International Center. The first assessment is at 12 months after the STEM EAD card begins. Final evaluation is at the end.
- In a typical full 24-month STEM OPT extension, there will be three report due-dates:
 - 6 months after the STEM OPT employment start date
 - 12 months
 - 18 months
 - 24 months marks the end of the STEM OPT extension and the student's obligation to submit the 6-month report, so a final validation report at the 24-month mark is not required (although a final training self-evaluation is).
- Your employer must report the termination or departure of a STEM OPT student to the DSO at the student's school, within five business days of the student's termination or departure.
- Submit a new form I-983 completed and signed by your new employer to the IC within TEN days of beginning the new employment.
- 24 months STEM extension can be used twice in an academic career.
- OPT authorization ends if the 24 month extension is denied. Students have a 60 day grace period to leave the country. Students have the same grace period if the OPT ends and they simply decide to leave the country.

Student's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY OPT STEM EXTENSION REQUEST FORM

Name: _____ Banner ID: _____
Major: _____ Degree: _____
Date of STEM Degree Completion: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
Current OPT End Date: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
Current U.S. Address: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Employer's Name: _____ Employer's Email: _____
Employer's Address: _____
Supervisor's Name: _____
Supervisor's Phone: _____
Job Title: _____
Employer Identification Number (EIN): _____

Statement of Understanding:

I have read and understand all the OPT STEM Extension information and requirements provided. I have maintained valid F-1 status since I began my studies at Rowan University. My employment is directly related to the qualifying STEM degree/fields. I understand that while on OPT STEM extension, my employer must be registered with E-Verify. I understand that I am to consult with an attorney regarding the effect of changing to an employer that is not the employer named on the I-765.

Student's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____