Eligibility and When to File:  
24-Month Option Practical Training Extension for STEM-Eligible

The details below are provided to help you determine eligibility for the 24-month extension of Optional Practical Training for STEM-eligible students. This information will provide practical guidance on when to apply for the extension and what to expect with the additional reporting requirements. Read this information carefully.

Glossary of Terms:
1. Optional Practical Training (OPT): work authorization for F-1 students allowing them the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in their degree program to off-campus work.
4. Request for Evidence (RFE): a request issued to an applicant by USCIS to submit further documentation to support a pending application at the Service Center.

Eligibility Requirements
- Applicant has completed a degree in a STEM-eligible field from a U.S. accredited institution with SEVP certification within the last 10 years and has not already utilized this degree to apply for an OPT STEM extension
  - Or applicant is currently engaged in a STEM-eligible Master's or PhD program, has completed all degree-required coursework and lacks only the thesis or dissertation to complete the degree
- Applicant is in an active period of post-completion OPT at the time of requesting the STEM extension
- Applicant files the I-765, with all required documentation and filing fee, to USCIS to request the STEM extension within the necessary filing timeline.
- Applicant is working in a paid position for an E-Verified employer; cannot be self-employed.
- Applicant has filed a completed I-983 with all attestations and supporting documentation to OIE to request the 24-month STEM extension.

Timing considerations for F-1 Visa Holders Currently Engaged in 12-month Post Completion OPT
- When to apply?
  - Apply 90 days before the EAD Expiration Date listed on current EAD Card.
- What to Expect:
  - You can continue working for up to 180 days while waiting on your new EAD card. This is unique to the STEM OPT. This rule can be found on immigration’s policy guidance here.

Additional Reporting Requirements During the 24-month Extension
Individuals engaged in a period of 24-month STEM extension must submit a report to OIE (oie@andrew.cmu.edu) every 6 months verifying:
- Legal name
- Residential or mailing address
- Employer name and address
- Status of current employment

Individuals engaged in a period of 24-month STEM extension must complete two self-evaluations during the course of his or her STEM period. The first evaluation must be submitted within 12 months of the STEM OPT start date and the second, concluding evaluation, must be submitted at the end of his or her STEM OPT period. Evaluations must be signed by the student and his or her immediate supervisor, and then submitted to the DSO.

Individuals engaged in a period of 24-month STEM extension cannot be unemployed for an aggregate of more than 150 days.

Additional Resources
You may have additional questions about whether or not you meet the eligibility requirements or want further details on the requirements; we recommend four excellent resources for more information:
- Study in the States Website - including I-983 Instructions
- NAFSA STEM OPT Information
- USCIS 24-Month Extension Guidance
- Study in the States Planning Tool