

STEM OPT Eligibility

[See Study in the States for basic eligibility requirements.](#)

- You are currently on approved Post-Completion OPT.
- You had fewer than 90-days of unemployment while on Post-Completion OPT.
- Your employer is enrolled in the E-Verify program and has an EIN (Employer Identification Number). (E-verify and EIN are not the same thing so you will need two different numbers).
- You are not self-employed.
- You have a job of at least 20-hours per week that is PAID. Unpaid volunteer or less than 20 hour positions are not permitted on STEM OPT.
- Your application for STEM OPT extension must be received by USCIS before your Post Completion OPT expires.
- You can be eligible for two STEM extensions in a lifetime, i.e. Bachelors and Masters, Masters and PhD, Bachelors and PhD.
- The degree that serves as the basis for a second lifetime STEM OPT extension, must be at a higher educational level than the degree that served as the basis for the student's first STEM OPT extension.
- A previous STEM degree obtained within the last 10 years from a U.S. institution can be the basis of a STEM OPT extension if current employment is in a STEM field. Example: Undergraduate STEM degree at a U.S. institution. Student then obtains a separate non-STEM Master's degree. That student is initially only eligible for 12-months of OPT, but if working in a demonstrable STEM field, the student can subsequently apply for a 24-month STEM OPT extension based on previous undergraduate STEM degree. Talk to an ISSS Advisor if this is your situation as it is rare.