

STEM EXTENSIONS

Students who have received a U.S. Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees in certain **STEM majors** (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), are eligible for a one-time, 17-month extension of post-completion OPT (for a total eligibility of up to 29 months). To be eligible for the 17-month extension, the following conditions must be met:

- The student must have completed certain science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degrees. If you have a double major, you will qualify if one of the degrees is a STEM major.
- The student must be authorized for OPT at the time of the extension application and working in a job or have a job offer related to his or her field of study.
- The extension must be based on the same degree as the post-completion OPT.
- At the time of application for the OPT extension, the student's employer (or prospective employer) must be registered with and participating in the USCIS' E-Verify employment verification program.
- The student must not have exceeded 90 days of unemployment in the initial 12-month period of OPT.

What is E-Verify?

E-Verify is an Internet based system operated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA) that allows participating employers to electronically verify the employment eligibility of their newly hired employees. An employer's participation in E-Verify is voluntary and is currently free to employers. If your company wants to participate in E-Verify, visit the **DHS web site**.

When to Apply for the STEM Extension

The USCIS must receive your application before the expiration date of your EAD, but no earlier than 120 days before the expiration date. The USCIS recommends that students apply within 90 and 120 days of the expiration date of the current OPT. Timely applications will automatically extend the 12-month OPT work authorization up to 180 days until you receive the 17-month OPT Extension EAD.

Application Instructions

Visit the Office of International Student Services for instructions.