Cap Gap Extension for OPT – H-1B transition

You must remain in contact with Carleton and inform the international student adviser of any possible changes to your status, such as F-1 to H-1B application. Consult with your employer's immigration attorney regarding further H-1B issues.

Those students whose employers have properly filed an H-1B petition and a change of status request (filed under the cap for the next fiscal year) will have their authorized employment period automatically extended until their approved H-1B start date, October 1.

Students whose H-1B petition were filed during the 60-day grace period after the end of their initial 12-month OPT will not be eligible to work, but may be able to stay in the US until October 1 if the H-1B petition is approved.

The cap-gap extension of F-1 status and OPT work authorization automatically ends on September 30. If the H-1B petition is rejected, denied, or withdrawn, the student's automatic OPT work extension and F-1 status will immediately end and the student will have 60 days (from notification of denial) to depart the US or change status.

Students should not travel internationally when an H-1B petition and a change of status application is pending.

The cap-gap extension is automatically granted to all students who meet the above criteria, and your employer may require proof of employment eligibility in the form of a new I-20. Please contact Carleton College and provide proof of H-1B application, including letter of employment and H-1B receipt notification.

Students must still report all the required changes, including unemployment period and address changes during the extension period, within 10 days of their occurrence. Students who have OPT extended due to the cap gap provisions continue to accrue unemployment time and are subject to the 90-day limit on unemployment.

In order to maintain your status and work authorization, students must report to Carleton the following within 10 days of any changes:

- Legal name
- Residential or mailing address
- Employer name and/or address
- Any periods of unemployment

STEM OPT 24-month Extension

Eligibility Requirements
https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/stem-opt

Recipients of bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees in certain science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) fields may be eligible for a one-time 24-month extension of post-completion Optional Practical Training (12-month), for a total of 36 months.

Student and the employer must meet and follow certain requirements in order to apply for and receive this authorized employment extension. Student must file a Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) similar to their initial 12-month OPT application for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

STEM Extension employer must participate in the U.S. Government E-Verify employment verification program and must report any termination of employment within 48 hours to Carleton College.
Extensions of Optional Practical Training
Carleton College

Requirements for 24-month STEM Extension

- Hold a degree in a major (no concentrations) included in the U.S. Government’s list of STEM fields
- Currently participating in 12-months post-completion OPT
- Employed or will accept employment in a job directly related to his/her major area of study (minimum of 20 hours/week paid)
- STEM Extension Employer must be enrolled in U.S. Government’s E-Verify program, [www.dhs.gov/everify](http://www.dhs.gov/everify), and must report termination to Carleton within 48 hours
- Properly maintain F-1 status

STEM Extension Additional Information

- Must apply before expiration of the initial 12-month OPT, but no earlier than 90 days before the expiration date.
- STEM Extension EAD begins from the end date of initial 12-month EAD, regardless when STEM Extension was decided, and is only for one continuous 24 month period.
- Eligible employers can only be changed after student has received extension EAD, and new employer must also be E-Verify participant. Student must submit final evaluation for previous employer and new I-983 for updated employer.
- If the STEM extension is successfully received prior to the expiration of the initial OPT, students may continue employment until the application is processed or until 180 days have passed, whichever is earlier.

Types of Eligible Employment

STEM 24-month Extension Employment must be at least 20 hours/week for an E-Verify employer in a position directly related to his or her DHS-approved STEM Major CIP code.

- **Multiple employers.** Work for one or more employer, but all employment must relate to student’s degree program and each employer must be enrolled in E-Verify and must complete I-983 training plan.
- **Work for hire.** Referred to as 1099 employment, where an individual performs a serviced on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. The company for whom the student is providing service to must be E-Verify participant and employment must also be related to student’s degree. If requested by DHS, student must provide evidence showing duration of the contract period and the name and address of the contracting company.
- **Self-employed business owner.** Student on STEM extension may start a business and be self-employed, but the student’s business must be registered with E-Verify and the student must be actively engaged full-time in the business that relates to student’s degree. Student must prove that s/he has the proper business licenses(s).
- **Employment through an agency or consulting firm.** Student’s STEM Extension may be through employment agency or consulting firm but either must be E-Verify participant, but the third party contracting with the agency or firm (which the student is providing services) need not be.

It is recommended the student maintains evidence for each job documenting the position held, proof of the duration of that position, the job title, contact information for the student’s supervisor or manager, and description of the work.

If it is not clear from the job description that the work is related to the student’s degree, SEVP recommends that the student obtain a signed letter from his or her hiring official, supervisor, or manager stating how the student’s degree is related to the work performed.
Application Procedures

Students and the Form I-983

Before applying to USCIS for a STEM OPT extension, a STEM OPT student must download, complete, sign and submit the Form I-983 to their DSO. The STEM OPT student and their prospective employer must work together to complete this form. STEM OPT students and their employers are subject to the terms of the 24-month STEM OPT extension regulations and Form I-983 instructions, effective as of the start date requested for STEM OPT, as indicated on the form.

Students are responsible for facilitating the completion of this form, submitting it with their STEM OPT application and returning it to their DSO, who will keep it in the student’s record. DHS maintains the discretion to request and review all documentation for eligibility concerns.

The STEM OPT student must complete Section 1 of the Form I-983 and work with their prospective employer to complete Sections 2-6. For more information about these sections, please visit the Employers and the Form I-983 resource page. STEM OPT students are also responsible for completing annual self-evaluations.

Applying for STEM OPT I-20

Collect your documents for the OPT Application

You will need:

- Digital files to upload your documents into the USCIS system.
- All files should be in English and in the following formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF.
- No files should be password-protected or encrypted.

Required files:

- **Passport-Style Photograph**: Photos must be taken within the last 30 days and cannot have been used for your passport, visa, or other US government-related application.
- **Most recent I-94 record**: This should have your status as F-1/DS, if it says something else — please check in with ISL before submitting your application.
- Previous EAD Card: front & back.
- Most Recent I-20 with your OPT/STEM OPT recommendation (you need to sign and date it). You can get this from ISL by submitting the [OPT application form](#).
  - STEM OPT: All applications need to be submitted within 60 days of the OPT recommendation. If you are beyond 60 days, you should contact ISL for a new recommendation.
- Any previous I-20s with CPT (or pre-completion OPT): **If you are missing any, please contact ISL**.
- Official Transcript showing your STEM degree

Create a myUSCIS account (if you don’t already have one):

At the [USCIS website](https://www.uscis.gov), create an account or sign into an already existing account. Details on [how to create an account](https://www.uscis.gov) are also available at the USCIS website.

Complete your I-765 Application Online:

- Select **Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)**
Extensions of Optional Practical Training
Carleton College

- Eligibility Category:
  - For STEM OPT (after 1 year of Post-Completion OPT), select (c)(3)(C):
    - You will need to include your academic level (Bachelors) and your CIP code (located on the first page of your I-20)
    - Employer’s name on eVerify
    - Employer’s eVerify number. This is usually 4-7 digits and different from the EIN.

- Reason for Applying:
  - STEM OPT: Renewal of permission to accept employment.

- Previously filed form I-765:
  - STEM OPT: Yes.

- Preparer: NO

- Name:
  - Legal Name should be your passport name, written as first name, middle name (leave blank if you don’t have one), and then last name.
  - Other names:
    - If no, select NO.
    - If yes, list ANY aliases you have used, i.e. English nicknames, nicknames, etc.

- Contact Information:
  - Enter phone number twice if you only have a mobile phone.
  - Mailing address:
    - Make sure that this is a place where you can receive mail for the next 3 months

- Current Address:
  - Select NO if you are mailing c/o a friend and have a different address.
  - If yes, select YES.

- Gender, select box to match passport.

- Marital Status, select appropriate box.

- Birth Information:
  - Fill in City/Town, State/Province, and Country of Birth. This should closely match your passport (though may be more detailed).
  - Write birthdate in MM/DD/YYYY format.

- Immigration Status:
  - Country of Citizenship (this should match your I-20/passport): If you are a dual citizen, list ALL citizenships by clicking the + icon.
  - I-94 record number — should match the document that you upload.
  - List your arrival date, place of arrival, and status at arrival per your most recent I-94 record. If your ‘status’ listed says anything other than F-1, please contact ISL for assistance!
  - Passport number — can be found on your Biographical Information page.
  - Travel Document number — this would be used only if you do not have a passport, but a travel document instead.
  - List your passport/travel document expiration date and the country that issued the document.
Current Immigration Status: F-1 – Student, Academic or Language Program.

SEVIS Number — can be found in the top left corner of your I-20: If you’ve had a previous SEVIS ID, you should list ALL previous SEVIS IDs in the additional information section.

Other Information:

- **A Number:** List A number from your EAD card.
- **USCIS Online Account Number:** List the number if you know it or select I do not have or know my number.
- **SSA:** List the number if you have it. Only request a card if you do not have or have lost your SSN card. If you do need a card issued, select that you would like an SSN card, select YES to CONSENT OF DISCLOSURE then list your parent’s birth names.

Evidence:

- Upload supporting documents you previously gathered in preparation for completing the I-765 form. This evidence includes previous I-20s with CPT and/or OPT recommendations, along with any supplemental information clarifying complicated situations.
- Post-Completion OPT – Upload current passport and visa for foreign government-issued document
- STEM OPT – Upload front and back of current EAD card

Review and Submit:

- Here you will review all of the information you have provided so far and you will then click to submit your I-765 online application.
- Pay the fee with a credit card or bank account wire payment.
- You should receive a confirmation with your Case Tracking Number so that you can follow along with the status of your case. It can take up to 90 days to process your application, so just be patient and contact ISL if you receive any request for additional information.
Reporting Requirements to Carleton College during 24-month STEM Extension

Email Liz, econdy@carleton.edu, with all STEM OPT employment updates.

In order to maintain your status and work authorization, students must report the following within 10 days of any changes via email or fax:

- Legal name
- Residential or mailing address
- Employer name and/or address
- Loss of employment – EMPLOYER MUST REPORT to CARLETON within 48 hours after student leaves employer with student’s name, SEVIS ID number (if available), and date of departure or termination on company letterhead.

In addition, students must submit a validation report to Carleton College every six (6) months, starting from the date the 24-month extension starts and ending when the student’s F-1 status ends or the 24-month extension ends, whichever is first.

The validation report must include:

- Legal name
- Current mailing and residential address
- Name and address of the current E-Verify employer
- Date student began working for the current E-Verify employer

I-983 12 Month Evaluation - Due at one-year anniversary of your employment. You must submit an evaluation of your progress on your I-983 that is signed by you and your supervisor and submit it to Carleton via email.

I-983 Final Evaluation - Due at the end of your employment with your I-983 employer. You must submit a final evaluation of your work on STEM OPT that is signed by you and your supervisor and submit it to Carleton via email.

Unemployment Period

The 90 days permitted on 12-month OPT increases by 60 days for F-1 students who are on approved 24-month STEM OPT extension for a maximum of 150 days. Student must report to Carleton when unemployment begins and ends.

Travel during OPT

Student must not travel outside the US while the 24-month extension request is pending.

Once your STEM OPT extension has been approved, you should make sure you have the following documents with you in order to re-enter the US:

- Valid passport (at least 6 months pass the date of re-entry)
- Valid F-1 visa (apply for new one if it has expired)
- I-20 endorsed for OPT with travel signature less than 6 months old
- Unexpired EAD card
- Confirmation of employment letter from your E-Verify employer

Completion of OPT

After the expiration of your employment period on your EAD, you have a 60-day grace period during which you cannot work but may depart the US, change your status, or transfer to another school for further studies before end of the 60-day grace period.