

F-1 Post-Completion OPT Extensions:

H-1B Cap-Gap Extension
STEM OPT Extension

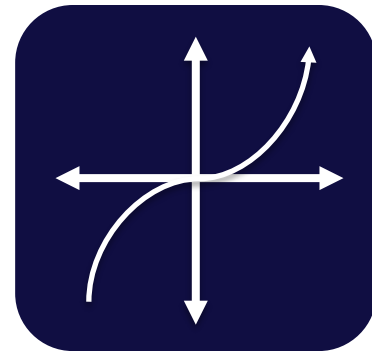
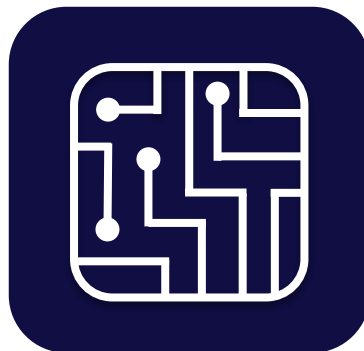
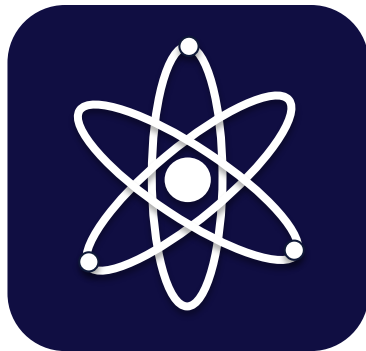
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UConn

OPT Extension #1: STEM OPT Extension

**Did you receive your degree in a STEM field?
(Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)**



**You may be eligible to apply
for a
24-Month OPT Extension!**

OPT STEM Extension

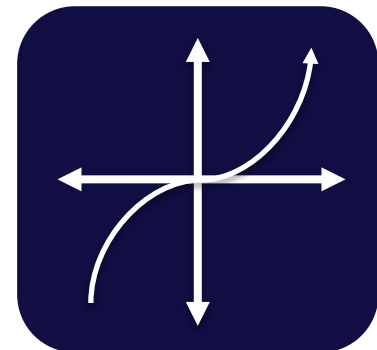
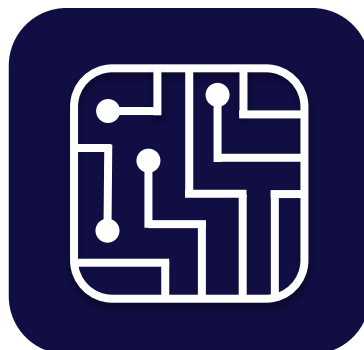
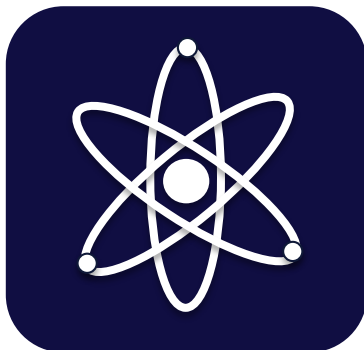
ELIGIBILITY

- You must be a Post-Completion OPT participant
- Your field of study must be a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) field and your SEVIS record must have a designated CIP (Classification of Instruction Programs) code on The Department of Homeland Security's STEM Designated Degree Program List (<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>)
- Thesis pending STEM OPT Extension is allowed, in theory. However it is better to have completed your degree (PhD, Master's or Bachelor's)
- You may also be eligible if you have completed a STEM eligible degree in the past, at a different institution (but have not yet applied for a STEM Extension based on that degree).

OPT STEM Extension

ELIGIBILITY

- You must not have previously received more than two OPT STEM extensions.
- You must have a job offer or be employed by an employer registered and actively using “E-Verify”. For more info on “E-Verify” visit:
http://www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/programs/gc_1185221678150.shtm
- The employer must agree to all STEM Training/Reporting requirements.



Applying for STEM Extension OPT

STEP 1: Apply with ISSS (School)

1. Complete Form I-765
2. Form I-983 completed by student & employer
3. Complete OPT STEM Ext. Application Form (ISSS 356)
4. Copy of your diploma
5. Copy of all previous EAD cards
6. Payment receipt of STEM OPT SEVIS Maintenance Fee (\$300)

Submit these forms to ISSS in person, by mail or by email.

THEN

The process is almost identical to regular 12-month OPT application. The forms and required items are slightly different.

Up to two weeks later,
you will receive a new I-20 from ISSS with an updated OPT recommendation that includes the STEM Extension.

Applying for STEM Extension OPT

STEP 2: Apply with USCIS (Government)

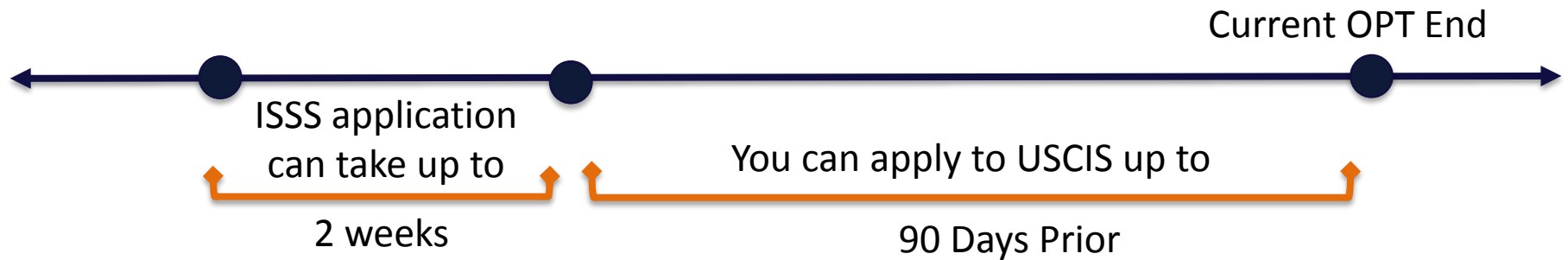
1. Complete **Form I-765** with updates from ISSS recommendations
2. Photocopy of the **new I-20** with STEM OPT recommendation
3. Photocopies of **all previous I-20's** (including original OPT recommendation)
4. 2 passport style **photos**
5. Photocopy of your **most recent visa**
6. Photocopy of your **passport** ID page
(must be valid at least 6 months into the future)
7. Form **I-94** printout or copy of I-94 card (Canada)
8. Photocopy of previous Employment Authorization Documents (**EAD**)
9. **Copy of your degree certificate or diploma**
10. Personal check to U.S. Department of Homeland Security for **\$410**

Mail these forms to USCIS within **60 days** of your new I-20 issuance.
Late applications will be rejected.

The I-983

- <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/i983.pdf>
- The I-983 must be submitted with your initial OPT application, and any point thereafter when you have changed employers, or when there are substantial changes to your employment situation.
- If you are employed by a temp/staffing agency, the agency cannot complete the training plan as your employer. The client needs to complete the form.
- The I-983 is not mailed to USCIS with your application.

When to Apply



PLUS...

Applications must be received by USCIS no later than current OPT

Expiration date and
within 60 days of completion by ISSS.

When to Apply

If you filed your STEM extension application in a timely fashion, your work authorization will automatically extend for up to 180 days while your STEM extension application is pending with USCIS

Extension period is fixed; you cannot choose the dates. It starts the next day after your original OPT was set to expire.

Reporting Requirements for STEM OPT

All changes should be
reported through the
ISSS Website

Go to
[ISSS.uconn.edu](https://issss.uconn.edu)

Click on
“Submit Your OPT
Employment Information”

Follow the prompts

The screenshot shows the ISSS website interface. At the top, the UConn logo and navigation menu are visible. Below the header is a large banner image of students performing. The main content area features several service tiles. The 'OPT Information Form' tile, which includes the text 'Submit Your OPT Employment Information', is highlighted with an orange circle. Other visible tiles include 'Request I-20/DS-2019', 'STEM OPT New Ruling Overview', 'Walk-in Advising Schedule', 'Check In', and 'Update Your Local Address'.

Reporting Requirements for STEM Extension OPT

OPT Information Form (ISSS 345)

All students are
required to report any
change of...

...Students must
make a
“Validation Report”
to ISSS every 6
months.

ADDRESS

Please update within
10 days from the move

NAME

Provide a copy of
official documents
to prove the change
Example: Passport

EMPLOYER

Name and Address
of Employer
&
Employment status
or interruptions

Reporting Requirements for STEM Extension OPT

ALSO...

The employer must agree to report the termination of the student's employment or departure of the student to ISSS or through *“any other means or process identified by the Department of Homeland Security”* within **5 days** of the event.

Reporting Requirements for STEM Extension OPT

ALSO...

The student must self-evaluate their learning from the **I-983 training plan** and the employer must sign off on its authenticity. Evaluations must be submitted prior reaching **12 months** and **24 months** on STEM OPT.

STEM Extension Unemployment

- Students granted a STEM extension may not accrue an aggregate of more than **150 days** of unemployment during the total OPT period (90 days for OPT, 60 days STEM)
- Unlike a standard 12-Month OPT, unpaid positions (e.g. volunteer, internship, etc.) **CANNOT** be counted as “employment”

OPT Extension #2: Cap Gap OPT

An extension of your OPT that may occur if your employer files a petition on your behalf for an H-1B visa.

Standard Post-Completion OPT Eligibility Requirements

Required

- Must have been **enrolled FULL-TIME** for at least one academic year
- Employment must be in **field of study** & appropriate to level of education
- Employment must be **full-time (20+ hours/week)**
- Takes place after completion of **ALL degree requirements**
- One 12 month period for each academic program; combined **pre- and post-completion time**

Not Required

- Job offer is **not required** to apply

Not Eligible

- Had **full-time CPT for 12 months**

Key Points to Consider

TRAVELING

International travel is **NOT** recommended while on Post-Completion OPT

UNLESS

You are employed in your field of study & have a valid F-1 VISA

If you travel on OPT, you must have the following to reenter the country:

1. **Valid Passport:** Valid 6 months into the future at time of reentry
2. **Valid VISA:** Can be difficult to renew your visa while on OPT
3. **I-20 with OPT recommendation and current travel signature**
4. **Valid EAD**
5. **Employment verification letter:** Must be in field of study

H-1B Cap Gap Extension

CAP

the congressionally-mandated limit on the number of individuals who may be granted H-1B (Specialty Occupation) status during each fiscal year (10/01 – 09/30)

GAP

Occurs when there is a “gap” between OPT end date and H-1B start date



H-1B Cap Gap Extension

For 2016, the cap was **65,000 (+20,000 for U.S. higher degree holders)**

Individuals whose employers are exempt from the H-1B “cap” are not subject to this number – e.g. universities and colleges

The earliest your cap-subject employer can file the H-1B petition is April 1st.

The earliest your H-1B can become effective is October 1st.

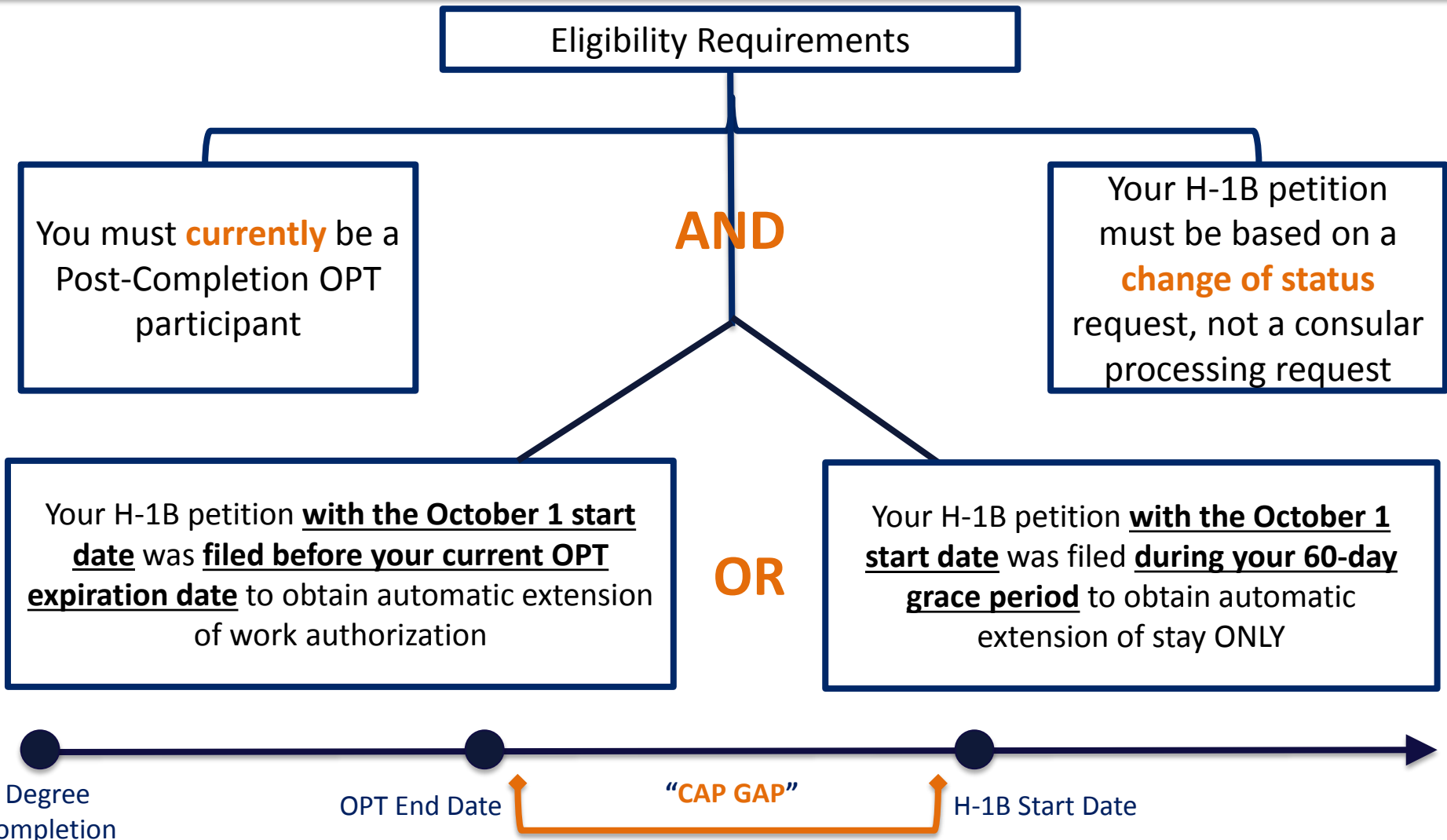
↳ That means that if your F-1 status (including grace period) ends:

BEFORE APRIL 1ST: You must leave the U.S. before the H-1B filing date. You cannot be in the country while awaiting a decision.

AFTER APRIL 1ST: You may be eligible for an extension of your status **and/or** work authorization to the H-1B start date (October 1).



H-1B Cap Gap Extension



H-1B Cap Gap Extension

Reporting
Requirements



PROVIDE ISSS with:

1. I-797 Receipt Notice of
your H-1B petition

OR

2. I-797 Approval Notice of
your H-1B petition



You will receive **a new I-20
with annotation of your Cap-
Gap extension** from ISSS.
You will not receive another
EAD



Key Points for Cap Gap

TRAVELING

NO INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL
while on Cap-Gap extension

TERMINATION



Cap-Gap extension ends on September 30
no matter the petition/application status

The Cap-Gap extension would
automatically terminate upon the
rejection, denial, or revocation of the
H-1B petition filed on your behalf

60-day grace period starts on the H-1B
denial date

Contact Information

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