OPT STEM EXTENSION
APPROVAL AND REPORTING

ONCE STEM EXTENSION IS APPROVED

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NEXT?

- [ ] Log in to myoiss.msu.edu and **upload a copy of your Approval Notice** and **STEM OPT Extension Employment Authorization Document (EAD card).**
- [ ] **Report** all employment and address changes within 10 days of the change to OISS.
- [ ] Do **not exceed more than 150 days of unemployment**. F-1 STEM OPT students are permitted a maximum of 150 days of unemployment with no more than 90 days while on post-completion OPT.

WHAT ARE THE STEM OPT EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS?

- [ ] Any employment you engage in while on STEM OPT **must be directly related to your major**. OISS advisors are unable to determine your degree relevancy or confirm that your job is directly related; determining the relevancy is up to you.
- [ ] Employment **must be a minimum of 20 hours per week**. There is no defined maximum number of hours one may work while on STEM OPT extension.
- [ ] Employment **must be paid**. Unpaid employment is not count as STEM OPT employment.
- [ ] Employer must be **enrolled in E-Verify**.
- [ ] A **Form I-983 must be completed and signed** by employer and student.

WHAT IS MY STATUS WHILE ON STEM OPT?

STEM OPT is not a different immigration status. STEM OPT is a benefit available to students with F-1 status and you will remain in F-1 status during STEM OPT.

CAN I TAKE CLASSES WHILE ON STEM OPT?

You may **not** take classes toward an educational or professional objective, such as a degree or certificate program.

You are allowed to take classes that are avocational or recreational in nature, if the experience is really and truly "just for fun", and as long as the classes will not result in an educational or professional objective.

If you wish to start a new program of study, you will either need to change your level (if pursuing a new program at MSU) or transfer your SEVIS record (if attending a different university). Doing so will forfeit the rest of your STEM OPT extension and you must stop working.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

It is your responsibility to report all address and employment changes within 10 days of the change.

Failure to report employment and address updates in a timely fashion can have negative consequences on your F-1 status.

Address updates: Changes to your U.S. physical address or phone number should be updated through the Residential Address/Phone Update in the MyOISS Portal (myoiss.msu.edu) within 10 days of the change.

STANDARD STEM OPT REPORTING TIMELINE

All reports are submitted via MyOISS Portal (myoiss.msu.edu) within the F-1 STEM OPT section.

6 Month Report	12 Month Report	18 Month Report	24 Month Report
Submit **6 Month Report** in MyOISS portal to confirm personal and employment information	Submit **12 Month Report** in MyOISS portal to confirm personal and employment information	Submit **18 Month Report** in MyOISS portal to confirm personal and employment information	Submit **24 Month Report** in MyOISS portal to confirm personal and employment information
	Upload **1-983 Evaluation**: (Page 5 of I-983) Top evaluation should be completed by you and signed by signature authority		Upload **1-983 Evaluation**: (Page 5 of I-983) Bottom evaluation should be completed by you and signed by signature authority

OFF CYCLE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All reports are submitted via MyOISS Portal (myoiss.msu.edu) within the F-1 STEM OPT section.

Material Changes	Ending Employment	New Employment
Submit the **Material Change in STEM Employment eForm** in MyOISS if there are any material changes to your I-983. Read about what constitutes a material change here.	Submit the **Ending STEM Employment eForm** in MyOISS if leaving an employer/organization; have an approved change of status; or are ending your STEM OPT early.	Submit the **New STEM Employment** eForm in MyOISS to report new employment with a E-verified company or organization.
Upload **updated I-983** training plan.	Upload **I-983 with Final Evaluation.**	Upload **new I-983** training plan for new employment.

TRAVEL

OISS can NEVER guarantee re-entry to the United States (U.S). Admission to the U.S. is up to the discretion of the Customs & Border Protection (CBP) officer at the port of entry.

TRAVEL ONCE STEM OPT EXTENSION IS APPROVED

You will need the following original documents to re-enter the U.S. during approved STEM OPT:

- ☐ Valid Passport (valid for at least 6 months after date of return to the U.S.)
- ☐ Valid F-1 visa
- ☐ STEM OPT I-20 with valid travel signature (less than 6 months old at time of re-entry)
- ☐ Unexpired STEM OPT EAD card
- ☐ Offer letter or letter from your current employer

Students must show they have employment they will be starting or resuming upon re-entering the U.S. while on STEM OPT approved status.

Students cannot enter U.S. to search for employment while on approved STEM OPT extension.

NOTE: If you have an expired F-1 visa and you plan to make a short trip to Canada, Mexico, or adjacent (Caribbean) islands, read about Automatic Revalidation on the OISS website.

HEALTH INSURANCE

WHAT HEALTH INSURANCE OPTIONS DO I HAVE WHILE ON STEM OPT?

After you graduate from MSU, there is no requirement for you to continue to carry health insurance. However, the cost of medical care in the U.S. is so high that it is very risky to be inside the country without health insurance coverage.

We highly recommend that you obtain coverage for your entire STEM OPT extension time period.

- ☐ If you are employed full-time during STEM OPT, you might receive health insurance as a benefit of your employment.

  NOTE: U.S. employer-issued health insurance policies often do not cover medical evacuation or repatriation, which are essential coverages for any non-citizen living in the U.S. Please email ihealth@msu.edu for information on how to buy an inexpensive policy to meet these needs.

- ☐ If you do not receive employee health insurance, you should obtain your own health insurance. You can continue to purchase MSU Student Health Insurance during STEM OPT if you wish. You can enroll at https://students.care26.com/login.

- ☐ If you would prefer to use a different plan, please email the OISS Community Health Program at ihealth@msu.edu to obtain a list of alternative plans that can be used during STEM OPT. **Please note that no alternative plan offers the same high level of coverage offered by MSU's Student Health Insurance Plan.**

AFTER STEM OPT ENDS

HOW LONG CAN I STAY IN THE U.S. AFTER MY STEM OPT END DATE?

Students who maintain their visa status while on STEM OPT will receive a 60-day grace period starting the day after their STEM OPT extension authorization ends. Only students who complete STEM OPT and do NOT exceed the 150-day unemployment limit receive the 60-day grace period. Before the 60-day grace period is over, students must:

- ☐ Depart the U.S.
- ☐ Be approved for a change of status from F-1 to another visa status
- ☐ Receive a new I-20 to pursue a new academic program at MSU
- ☐ Transfer your SEVIS record (I-20) from MSU to another SEVP-certified institution

STEM OPT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CAN I WORK MULTIPLE JOBS WHILE ON STEM OPT EXTENSION?

Yes, you may work for more than one employer during the approved STEM OPT extension authorization. Each employment must meet STEM OPT employment requirements (related to your program of study, at least 20 hours a week, be a paid position, for an employer enrolled in E-Verify, and have a completed I-983 training plan) and report the STEM OPT employment to OISS within 10 days of any change.

AM I ALLOWED TO WORK FOR A STAFFING OR TEMPORARY AGENCY?

Staffing and temporary agencies and consulting firms may employ students under the STEM OPT program if the staffing agency will be the entity that provides the practical training experience to the student.

The staffing agency or consultancy must maintain a bona fide employer-employee relationship with the student during STEM OPT dates.

The staffing/temporary agency must be e-Verified, must provide the practical training/ supervision to the student, and must complete the I-983 form and subsequent reporting for the student.

CAN I BE SELF-EMPLOYED DURING STEM OPT?

Self-employment is not permitted as students are required to have a a "bona fide employer-employee relationship" as demonstrated on a completed I-983 training plan.

WHAT IF I AM TERMINATED/FIRED BY MY EMPLOYER?

If you are terminated, you must report your termination to OISS within 10 days by submitting all forms and documents required for reporting under “Ending Employment.” An advisor in OISS will update your SEVIS record. If you do not have a new employer, you will begin to accrue unemployment days.

If you do have a new employer, you will need to report and submit the necessary documents under “New Employment.”

HOW DO I REQUEST A TRAVEL SIGNATURE WHILE ON STEM OPT?

Students on STEM OPT extension can continue to request travel signatures through the MyOISS portal.