If you timely and properly file an application for a 24-month STEM OPT extension, but your current OPT EAD (Employment Authorization Document) expires prior to the decision on your application for 24-month OPT extension, your current EAD card will be automatically extended for up to 180 days pursuant to the terms and conditions specified in 8 CFR 274a.12(b)(6)(iv) of the Code of Federal Regulations.

**STEM OPT APPLICATION STATUS:**
- Please carefully read the STEM OPT mailing instructions we have sent you via email and submit your application to the USCIS in timely fashion.
- Within the 3-4 weeks after you mail your STEM OPT to USCIS, you will receive a receipt notice from USCIS regarding your case.
  - This receipt will have a 13-character application receipt number in the upper-right hand corner. The receipt number will begin with one of these combinations of three letters: EAC, WAC, LIN, YSC, or SRC. The three letters represent which service center (EAC-Vermont, WAC-California, YSC – Potomac, LIN-Nebraska, SRC-Texas) is processing your case.
  - With this number you can track the status of your application at: [https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus](https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus)

**EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT (EAD):**
Once you receive your OPT STEM employment authorization card (EAD) from the USCIS, please make sure to check that all information on the card is correct. If you find any errors, notify us immediately by sending an e-mail to puvisa@princeton.edu. Due to security reasons, we are not able to accept document submission via email so please DO NOT include a copy of your EAD. When we receive an email from you, we will send you instructions how to send us your EAD through DocuPort.

**IMPORTANT! REQUIRED STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES WHILE ON 24-MONTH STEM OPT EXTENSION:**
Failure on your part to contact the Davis IC at the designated timeframes below will result in termination of your SEVIS record and F-1 status. This termination will require immediate termination of employment and departure from the U.S. All reports must be submitted through DocuPort ([https://davisic.princeton.edu/docuport/intlctr_humancheck.php](https://davisic.princeton.edu/docuport/intlctr_humancheck.php)) unless otherwise indicated.

You must:
- Work in a position for an E-Verify Employer for at least 20 hours per week.
- Work in a position related to a STEM CIP, which are approved by the Department of Homeland Security for the 24-month extension.

Additionally, USCIS guidance ([https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/stem-opt](https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/stem-opt)) states that "the training experience must take place on-site at the employer’s place of business or worksite(s)." Therefore, if you have a training opportunity that involves working off-site or from home, please talk with your employer to determine if this is permissible. Employers may wish to consult with their Office of General Counsel.

You must submit the following documents to the Davis IC through DocuPort:
- **Material changes in your I-893 training plan:** You must submit an amended training plan "at the earliest convenience" of Form I-893 if there are any material changes to the training plan previously submitted to us.
- **A change of employer:** A new I-893 form must be submitted within 10 days of the start of your new employment.
- **Complete two (2) self-evaluations during the course of your STEM OPT period:** The first one within 12 months of the STEM OPT start date and a second, concluding evaluation at the end of your STEM OPT period or termination of your employment. Evaluations must be signed by the student and your immediate supervisor.

You must report the following events to the Davis IC:
- **General reporting:** Any changes in your legal name, address, employer, or employment status within 10 days of the change. Please report these changes through: [https://davisic.princeton.edu/forms-resources/optional-practical-training-opt-stem-reporting-forms](https://davisic.princeton.edu/forms-resources/optional-practical-training-opt-stem-reporting-forms)
- **Validation reporting:** A 6-, 12- and 18-month validation report. This reports must be submitted starting from the date the STEM OPT begins and ending when your F-1 status ends – or the STEM OPT ends, whichever comes first. The report must include your: last name, first name, SEVIS ID, current residential and mailing addresses, name and address of your employer and the date you began working. Please submit this report to puvisa@princeton.edu
- **Employment termination:** when your employment ends – voluntarily or involuntarily- before the end of your STEM OPT period. You must report this event within 10 days, even though your employer must do so within 5 days. NOTE: You must submit the concluding evaluation through DocuPort.
- **Employer not meeting its obligations:** if you believe your employer is not meeting its obligations under the laws outlined in the training plan, you are obligated to notify the Davis IC by emailing us at puvisa@princeton.edu
You must not:
- Work for any employer that is not an E-Verify Employer.
- Work in a volunteer/unpaid position.
- Work for a staffing/temporary agency unless the employment meets USCIS guidelines: https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/stem-opt  Please speak with your employer to determine if your employment meets this criteria. Employers may wish to consult with their Office of General Counsel.
- Be self-employed.
- Have more than 150 days of unemployment accrued during the entire period of post-completion OPT (regular post-completion OPT and 24-month extension)

EMPLOYER REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY:
The employer must report to the Davis IC within five (5) business days from the employment end date, or if the student leaves the employer. Employers should seek guidance about this from their legal counsel or directly from the USCIS. Please make sure your employer is aware of this responsibility.

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE U.S.:
Travel before you receive your OPT STEM extension and EAD card:
- If you have applied for the OPT STEM extension, but you have not yet received the new EAD card, you may be able to re-enter the U.S. if your current period of OPT is unexpired at the time of re-entry, and you have proof of filing the OPT STEM application. In addition, you should have proof of employment with an E-Verify Employer. PLEASE NOTE: You also need a valid F-1 visa to re-enter the U.S.
- If you have applied for OPT STEM and have not yet received the EAD card, and your current OPT has expired, you should not travel outside the U.S. The last SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program) Policy Guidance from April 23, 2010 states that “the student must wait to receive the new employment authorization before s/he can travel outside the U.S.” (http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt_policy_guidance_042010.pdf) - page 28, 8.4.4)

Travel after you receive the OPT STEM EAD card:
- If you have a valid OPT STEM EAD card, you should be able to re-enter the U.S. after a temporary absence. Please make sure you travel with: valid EAD card, current I-20 with a valid travel signature, proof of employment with an E-Verify Employer, passport that is valid for at least 6 (six) months in the future and valid F-1 student visa.

Travel if your F-1 visa stamp has expired:
- As long as you are on OPT and STEM OPT, you are still in F-1 status. You must have a valid F-1 visa to re-enter the U.S. after temporary travel abroad (except for travels to Canada, Mexico or the adjacent islands for 30 days or less).
- PLEASE NOTE: Your visa application may be subjected to security clearance. Security clearance for a visa application is usually based on the national origin of the applicant and/or on a determined level of sensitivity in your field of study. Once the application has been sent to Washington D.C. for security clearance, the applicant must simply wait until the consular post approves the visa. Security clearance cannot be expedited. Most security clearances get resolved in a matter of weeks, but your employer might not be flexible to wait that long for your return. Therefore, make sure to plan your trip wisely. If you think that security clearance is a possibility given your situation, have a discussion with your employer before making any travel plans.
- Visa application tips:
  o Make a visa appointment before leaving the U.S.
  o Find out about the embassy/consulate processing times.
  o Have proper documentation for your visa application:
    - At a minimum, you will need: a valid passport, I-20 with valid travel signature on the second page (no older than six months), and an employment letter from an E-Verify Employer
  o Check with the Embassy/Consulate if any additional documentation is needed.

Should you have any additional questions, please contact the Davis International Center at (609) 258-5006 or puvisa@princeton.edu

In addition to reporting requirements listed above, we strongly recommend that you stay in touch with Davis IC throughout your STEM OPT period by subscribing to weekly newsletter entitled This Week @ Davis IC. The newsletter is used to keep you informed and updated about important immigration announcements and changes. You were automatically receiving this newsletter when you were an enrolled student at Princeton. In order to continue receiving it after graduation, you must manually subscribe to the newsletter. Please send an email to intlctr@princeton.edu, with subject line: Please add me to your mailing list for Davis IC Newsletter.