

Post-completion OPT & STEM extension

(STEM major students)

International Students and Scholars Office

309 Wes Watkins Center / 405-744-5459

CAUTION

Do NOT complete I-765 application on USCIS website without the OPT recommended I-20 from the ISS office



I-765 application will be denied or rejected by USCIS if you file without the OPT recommended I-20



What is OPT?

(Post-completion Optional Practical Training)

Defined as "temporary employment for practical training directly related to a student's major field of study"

Eligibility

- Post-completion OPT authorization is based on <u>completion of coursework</u> for students
- F-1 student in good academic standing:
 - ☐ No "I" (Incomplete) grades
 - ☐ Undergraduate GPA: 2.0 / Graduate GPA: 3.0
- Must have been lawfully enrolled on full-time basis at an SEVP approved school for one academic year
- F-1 student who has not been granted OPT at current educational level

(Post-completion OPT is available once after completion of each educational level – BS, MS, PhD)

Post-completion OPT Application Dates

- You can start to file OPT up to 90 days before the end date of your degree program (last day of final semester)
- File OPT no more than 60 days after the end of your degree program

- Students who have a GPA requirement to graduate may choose to apply during 60-day grace period
- Students who are missing the thesis deadline during the semester may choose to wait until final grades are posted

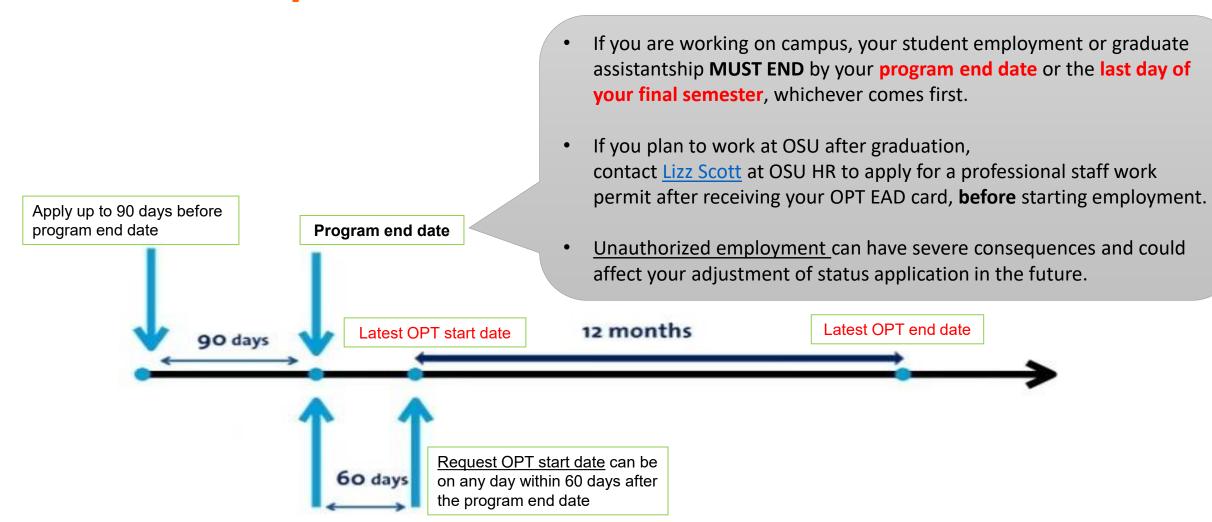
ISS strongly recommends waiting before you apply OPT until you are certain that you do not need another semester

Be cautious to pick OPT start date as changing it later during process may cause some issues

Post-completion OPT Requested Dates

- Requested OPT start date cannot be more than 60 days after the program end date
- Requested OPT end date cannot be more than 12 months after the requested OPT start date
- EAD start date will be the requested date or date of approval, whichever comes later
- If approved after the requested start date, the approved end date will be extended to reflect that (up to 14 months)
- 14-month limit = 60-day grace period + 12 months of OPT
- When you choose the OPT start date, you may consider
 - Job start date, USCIS processing time, ISS processing time, Personal needs, etc.

Post-completion OPT Timeline



Preparation for Post-completion OPT

Is this semester your final semester?

- Confirm with your academic advisor
- Student & academic advisor need to complete and sign the Final Semester Verification Form
 (Graduate students The Graduate College signature is also needed)

Final Semester Enrollment

- Per immigration regulations, students in their final semester are required to take at least 1 in-person course (but not required to take a certain number of credit hours)
- If you are a Master's or PhD student with assistantship, consult the Graduate College for requirements to keep your assistantship

Caution: Under-enrollment and failure to graduate can result in loss of F1 status & OPT

Preparation for Post-completion OPT

- 1. Find the OPT I-20 Request on ISS Terra Dotta portal
- 2. Must read the **OPT information PDF** first and start to fill out
- 3. Must complete the OPT quiz with a score of 80% or above within 3 attempts
- 4. After passing the quiz, complete the Packet, upload & submit request
 - ★ Options for Uploading form I-765 in the packet for ISS to review
 - Start form I-765 on USCIS website, DRAFT it, download draft version and upload it to Packet (https://my.uscis.gov)

OR

■ Download <u>PDF version of form I-765</u> on USCIS website, fill out, and upload it to Packet (https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-765.pdf)

Preparation for Post-completion OPT

- 5. Upon OPT I-20 Request submission ISS reviews and contacts you if further clarification is needed
- 6. ISS issues the OPT recommended I-20 if everything looks good / OPT I-20 fee will be charge to student's bursar
- 7. Student reviews & signs the I-20
- 8. Student completes I-765 application & pays application fee to USCIS

Do NOT complete the I-765 application without the OPT recommended I-20 from ISS office

ISS office reviews the OPT packet only to issue OPT I-20
 * ISS does NOT send the application to USCIS for students *

After Receiving OPT I-20 from ISS

Option 1 - File I-765 application with USCIS ONLINE

- Get immediate application receipt notice
- Application fee \$470 can be paid by credit/debit card
- No delays with mailing issues
- ISS recommends the online application

OR

Option 2 - File I-765 application with USCIS by mail

- Traditional method with hard copy documentation
- Application fee \$520 is paid by check, money order, cashier's check, but no cash
- In case the internet fails!

Do NOT file I-765 application without OPT recommended I-20 from ISS office

Who Can Submit the Form I-765 Online?

Initial release of online I-765 is limited to students in these categories:

(C)(3)(A) Pre-Completion OPT
(C)(3)(B) Post-Completion OPT
(C)(3)(C) STEM Extension

Other categories may submit the paper form I-765



To file Form I-765 online, visit <u>my.uscis.gov</u> to create USCIS online account



Quick Tips

- The online form is the same as the paper version
- USCIS automatically saves your answers, so you can work at your own pace
- Draft forms are saved for 30 days from the last time you worked on your form
- Applicants must be in the U.S. to apply



Filling out Form - Formats

- Photos: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- Documents: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF or TIFF
- Foreign language documents must have English translation
- Maximum size : 6 MB per file
- The only characters allowed in document file names are : English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, parentheses
- Do NOT use special characters

Filling out Form I-765 Applicant's Declaration / Certification & Paying application fee

- Sign digitally
- Review entire entries before paying
- After agreeing to the applicant statement, you will be directed to pay.gov
- When hit 'Continue' to pay the fee, the form will be submitted
- Once you submit the payment, you CANNOT make corrections
- Click on 'Go to my cases' to see your case and receipt notice



Filing OPT By Mail

List to apply for I-765 Application

- \$520 Application fee (Check or Money order)
- 2 passport style photos
- Completed and <u>signed</u> I-765
- Form G1145 Electronic notification
- Signed I-20 copy with OPT Notation
- OPT application must be filed within 30 days of date DSO recommendation
- Copies of all previous OPT & CPT I-20s (if applicable)
- Copies of all previous EADs (if applicable)
- Copy of I-94
- Color copy of valid visa page

Filing location

Mail filers submit applications to USCIS Chicago Lockbox at:

U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS PO Box 805373,

Chicago, IL 60680

FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:

USCIS

Attn: I-765 C03

131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor,

Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Filing OPT By Mail

Mail filers only

Mark 'N/A' on text fields that don't apply

If a question does not apply to you, type or print "N/A" unless otherwise directed.

(For example, if you have never been married and the question asks, "Provide the name of your spouse", enter N/A.)

If your answer to a question which requires a numeric response is zero or none, type or print "None" unless otherwise directed.

(For example, "How many children do you have" or "How many times have you departed the United States".)

de all other names you have ever used, including aliase in name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to lete this section, use the space provided in Part 6. ional Information. Family Name (Last Name) Given Name (First Name) M/A M/A
(Last Name) Given Name (First Name)
Family Name (Last Name) Given Name (First Name)
Middle Name N/A Family Name N/A
(Last Name) N/A Given Name (First Name) N/A
Middle Name N/A
1 (((((((((((((((((((

ISS **does NOT recommend** to enter 'N/A' under Middle Name. USCIS might mistakenly use NA as your middle name on your EAD.

If you do not have a middle name, leave it blank.

Filing OPT - Address

Both for mail & online filers

Highly recommend: Use the ISS Address as Mailing Address on I-765 to avoid mailing complications

Part 2. Information About You (continued)						
Your U.S. Mailing Address (USPS ZIP Code Lookup)						
5.a.	In Care Of Name (if any)					
5.b.	Street Number and Name 309 Wes Watkins Center					
5.c.	Apt. Ste. Flr.					
5.d.	City or Town Stillwater					
5.e.	State OK J.f. ZIP Code 74078					
6.	Is your current mailing address the same as your physaddress? Yes X					
	NOTE: If you answered "No" to Item Number 6.,					

- ISS address:
 309 Wes Watkins Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 74078
- If you use ISS address on Mailing address, enter your own address on <u>physical address section</u>

Filing OPT – Additional Information

Both for mail & online filers

Additional Information section (Page 7, Part 6 on I-765 Form) — Enter Previous OPT, CPT & SEVIS ID# if applicable

Showhat is provided, you may make copies of this page and file with this application or attach a separate r. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) ach sheet; indicate the Page Number, Part and Item Number to which your answer refers; and and date each sheet. 1.a. Family Name (Last Name) 1.b. Given Name (First Name) 1.c. Middle Name 2. A-Number (if any) > A- 1.c. Middle Name 2. A-Number (if any) > A- 1.c. Middle Name 3. 2 2. 4.d. Previous SEVIS ID# N00222333555. Bachelor of Science Previous CPT: Full-time: 05/14/2015-08/15/2015	Pa	art 6. Additional Information	
3.a. Page Number 3.b. Part Number 3.c. Item Number 26 3.d. Current SEVIS ID# N00012345678. Master's degree; Previous OPT: Post-Completion: 05/21/2016-08/20/2017	SAMPL 1.a. 1.b. 2. 3.a.	thin this application, use the space below. If you need more what is provided, you may make copies of this page and file with this application or attach a separate r. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) ach sheet; indicate the Page Number, Part and Item Number to which your answer refers; and that date each sheet. Family Name (Last Name) Given Name (First Name) Middle Name A-Number (if any) A- Page Number 3.b. Part Number 3.c. Item Number 2 Current SEVIS ID# N00012345678.	3 2 26 Previous SEVIS ID# N00222333555. Bachelor of Science Previous CPT: Full-time: 05/14/2015-08/15/2015 Previous OPT:

How to Track the OPT Application

Mail filers only

Online tracking after obtaining OPT receipt number

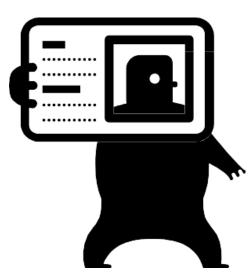
- 1. Go to USCIS.gov
- 2. Find USCIS Case Status Service Online
- 3. Check processing times 90 days or more



USCIS National Contact Center # 1-800-375-5283

EAD - Employment Authorization Document

- USCIS authorizes employment with the approval of EAD (normal processing time is 90-120 days)
- I-765 receipt does **NOT** authorize employment
- Only the EAD card authorizes employment
- Official dates of employment are verified on the EAD
- Start working after receiving the EAD



EAD - Employment Authorization Document



Documents needed for **international travel during OPT**

- Valid passport & F1 visa
- Recently endorsed I-20
- Valid EAD card
- Job offer letter

Limit your time out of the U.S.

If you plan to work at **OSU** while on OPT, you must contact <u>Lizz Scott</u> at OSU HR to apply for a professional staff work permit after receiving your OPT EAD card, **before** starting employment. elizabeth.scott@okstate.edu

EAD - Delivery Procedure

If you entered ISS as your mailing address



ISS will notify by email (iss@okstate.edu) upon ISS receipt of EAD



You can either-

- 1. Pick up EAD in person at ISS office or
- 2. Order eShip for delivery by express mail only (FedEx, UPS, DHL)

E-Ship: https://study.eshipglobal.com

Create account, enter your name, CWID, & request packet from ISS office as sender

- Report any employment (including volunteering) in the SEVP portal within 10 days of changes
 ISS OPT employment update form is also available on ISS website in case the SEVP portal has issues
 (https://okstate.forms-db.com/view.php?id=453764)
- Students must work(paid) or volunteer in their field of study with their current degree
- Students must work at least 20 hours per week to be considered employed
- Keep records & report employment / volunteer work

Employment Types

- Regular paid employment (multiple employers are allowed)
- Short-term multiple employers (gigs)
- Work for hire 1099 employment (contractual relationship)
- **Self-Employed** prove proper licenses
- Agency or consulting firm (Caution employee & employer relationship)
- Volunteers or unpaid internships in your field of study

(Post-completion OPT only – not available for STEM OPT extension)

Volunteering & Unpaid Internships

- Student may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern in their field of study, where this practice does not violate labor laws
- At least **20 hours** per week
- Be able to provide evidence acquired from employer
- ISS does not need verification of volunteer work
- Dept of Labor (Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under Fair Labor Standards Act) must not violate any labor laws

Unemployment Period

Total **unemployment period** under Post-completion OPT

90 cumulative days

- Consequences of exceeding unemployment period
- ⇒ **SEVIS record might be terminated** by system automatically
- Prior to reaching the limit of allowed unemployment, prepare to:
 - Transfer out
 - Change educational level
 - Complete change of status
 - Depart the U.S.

Social Security Card

If you already have the Social Security card (SSN) issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA), skip to the next slide

If the Social Security Administration (SSA) has never issued the Social Security card to you, you may request one **directly to a SSA office**.

You can Request a Social Security number after receiving your EAD card. Please note that the Social Security Administration will not allow you to apply for the SSN until on or after the start date on the EAD.

Request a Social Security number

- Instruction for SSN Application: <u>SS5 FS.pdf</u>
- SSN Checklist: <u>SSN Checklist.pdf</u>
- Information about SSN for International Students: <u>International Students and Social Security Numbers</u>
- Social Security Office Locator

ISS OPT Fees

In an effort to increase support services for OSU international students and alumnithe ISS would like to announce the following fees. These fees will be implemented for the Fall 2025 semester starting August 18, 2025.

- \$150 F-1 Optional Practical Training Fee per application
- \$300 F-1 STEM Optional Practical Training Fee per application

This will be charged to student's bursar account when OPT or STEM OPT I-20 is issued.

SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program) portal

- SEVP sends the portal activation link to you a few days after your OPT start date
- SEVP email comes from: <u>do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov</u>

to: your email registered on SEVIS system (I-20)

- If you are not sure which email address you have on SEVIS or want to change it, contact ISS @iss@okstate.edu
- Be sure SEVIS has the correct email address at the time of OPT application
- It is the student's responsibility to report any employment (including volunteering) or personal information changes through SEVP (only students have access)

- SEVP Portal allows F-1 students to report information directly to fulfill legal reporting requirements
- Report any employment or other changes within 10 days
- SEVP Portal allows you to :
 - View your post-completion OPT status
 - Report changes address, phone, & employer information
 - View & update your employment

SEVP portal User Guide

https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/assets/sevp_portal_student_user_guide.pdf

SEVP Response Center

SEVP@ice.dhs.gov

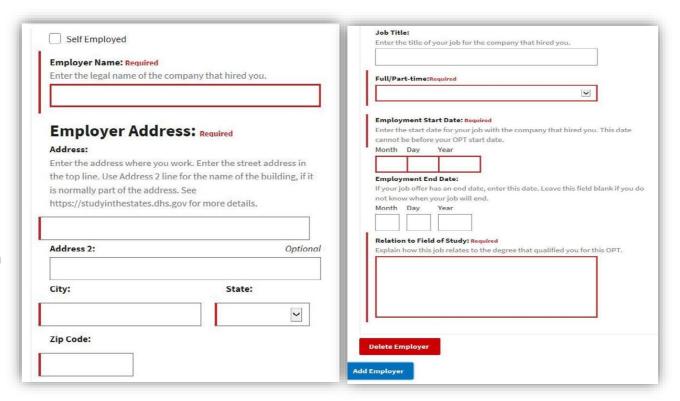
Adding Employer – via SEVP Portal

Relation to Field of Study:

Explain <u>how</u> employment is related to your field of study

Example: "I studied Management Information Systems and now work for a Software company using data mining, analytics, big data skills, and programming languages (hadoop, R, SAS) which is knowledge gained during my MS / PHD study."

Watch out for character limits



Adding the Employer – via the ISS Webpage

Use the ISS link if you have problems with the SEVP Portal

ISS reporting link: https://lcl.okstate.edu/iss/forms.html

OPT / STEM OPT

Apply for OPT

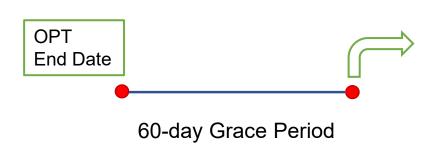
OPT-STEM Extension / OPT-STEM Reports

12-month Post-Completion OPT Employment Update Form

Keep all documentation of your OPT employment
 (You may be asked to provide <u>proof</u> that your employment is related to your field of study in the future)

After OPT Completion

You have a 60-day grace period following your OPT end date



You must choose one of following:

- Depart the U.S. by end of 60 days
- Change educational level at OSU for different degree
- Transfer out to another university and start new program (no later than 5 months from OPT end date)
- Complete change of status

USCIS Premium Processing - optional

• Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service is now also available to F-1 students who have a pending Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization and wish to request a premium processing upgrade.

USCIS – Premium Processing Information

https://www.uscis.gov/forms/all-forms/how-do-i-request-premium-processing

FAQs

- Q1. Do I need to provide a completed and signed form I-765 to ISS if I am applying online?
 A1. Yes, ISS needs the information to issue your OPT I-20.
- Q2. Do I need to send my dependent(s)' F-2 I-20(s) along with my OPT application to the USCIS? A2. No, Just the F-1's OPT I-20 will be needed.
- Q3. How do I prove that OSU is a SEVP certified institution?
 - A3. Your I-20 page 1 indicates OSU's certification and SEVIS school code.

FAQs

• Q4. Do I need to have an SSN before applying for OPT?

A4: No, You may refer to the <u>I-765 official instructions</u>, especially regarding page 2, part 2, items 13.a.-17.b.

Q5: Can I travel internationally after applying for OPT?

A5: We do not recommend travelling internationally prior to receiving the EAD unless there is a compelling reason.



STEM OPT extension

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)

International Students and Scholars Office

309 Wes Watkins Center / 405-744-5459

STEM OPT

What is OPT STEM Extension?

- Allows for up to <u>24 additional months</u> for STEM fields
- Start after 12-month post-completion OPT
- USCIS Webpage for STEM OPT

https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-extension-for-stem-students-stem-opt

STEM OPT - Eligibility

- Must be in active post-completion OPT status with BS, MS, or PhD degree listed on DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List
- Must have <u>current</u> or <u>previous</u> degree in <u>eligible STEM major</u> from U.S. SEVP certified institution of higher education
- Check STEM eligible CIP code: https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/stemList2024.pdf
- Must have <u>full-time</u> job offer for <u>paid employment</u> from E-Verified employer who is willing & able to meet STEM OPT reporting requirements
- STEM OPT is available for two times in lifetime
- Must not used STEM extension either at current or higher education level

STEM OPT - Eligibility

Employer – Employee Relationship

- Must have bona-fide employer-employee experience
- No volunteer positions
- Start up businesses & self-employment do not qualify for STEM-OPT extension option

Previously Obtained STEM Degrees

- F1 student participating in post-completion OPT based on non-STEM degree can use prior STEM-OPT qualified degree for STEM OPT application
- If you have STEM-OPT eligible prior degree, on I-983, page 1, question "Based on prior degree?"
 check "yes" if application is based on the prior degree
- Employment must be related to previous STEM degree
- Degree must be received <u>within 10 years</u>
- Student must send <u>official transcript of prior degree</u> to ISS to verify

STEM OPT - Employment

Unemployment Period

- Unemployment days additional 60 cumulative days (including weekends & holidays)
- Total unemployment days accrues for

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Post-completion OPT (90) + STEM OPT extension (60) = 150 days
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- Must report termination of employment within 10 days of event
- Inquire to ISS for remaining unemployment days

STEM OPT - Filing Parameters

- Must file STEM OPT within 90 days of current OPT expiration date but may NOT apply after current OPT
 expiration date
- Student and employer must complete and sign Form I-983 (Training Plan for STEM OPT Students) and submit to ISS. The job offer must be full-time and paid job.
- Check official I-983 guidelines: https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983Instructions.pdf
- Check <u>I-983 Form overview</u>: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub/additional-resources/form-i-983-overview
- USCIS must receive application within 60 days of STEM OPT I-20 issuance

A student who files application timely may continue employment while extension application is pending, until final decision is made, or for 180 days. Contact USCIS if processing time is over 180 days.

Filing OPT By Mail

List to apply for I-765 Application

- Application fee \$520 Check or Money order
- 2 passport style photos
- Completed I-765 Item #27 (C) (3) (C)
- Form G1145 Electronic notification (Mail filers only)
- I-20 copy with STEM OPT Notation
 - * OPT application must be filed within **60 days** of date DSO enters recommendation for STEM OPT in SEVIS
- Copies of all previous I-20s for OPT & CPT
- Copy of EADs
- Copy of I-94
- Colored copy of Valid page
- Copy of official transcript or diploma showing completion of degree

Filing location

Mail filers submit applications to USCIS Chicago Lockbox at:

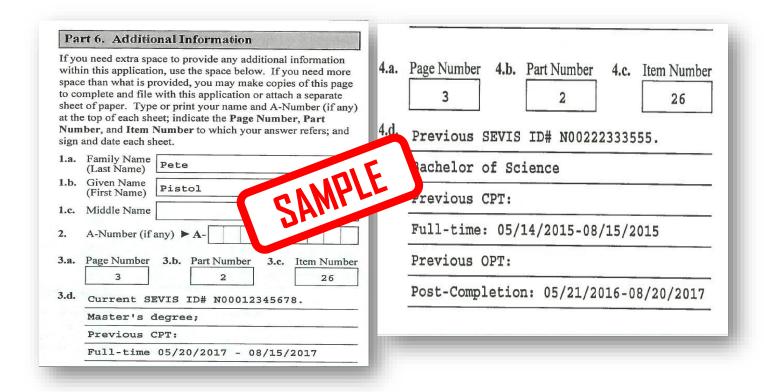
U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS PO Box 805373, Chicago, IL 60680 FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:

USCIS Attn: I-765 C03 131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor, Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Filing OPT By Mail

Previous OPT, CPT & SEVIS ID# on I-765 Form - Page 7, Part 6



In SEVP portal, STEM OPT students are unable to add new employer or change start date of new employer due to Form I-983 (Training plan) requirement

- For new employment
- ⇒ Submit new I-983 to ISS (DSO) within 10 days of new employment start date
- For employment end date changes
- ⇒ Submit Final Evaluation on Student Progress (page 5 of I-983) to ISS (DSO) within 10 days of job end date

STEM OPT **Report forms** are available on ISS website

- Changes in employment status
 Termination / Resignation / Departure
- For Material changes on Form I-983
- ⇒ Submit updated I-983 to ISS (DSO) within 10 days of any material changes :
 - Change in employer's EIN
 - Compensation and reduction of work hours
 - Significant decrease in hours per week
 - Changes in learning objectives or employer's commitment

STEM OPT **Report forms** are available on ISS website

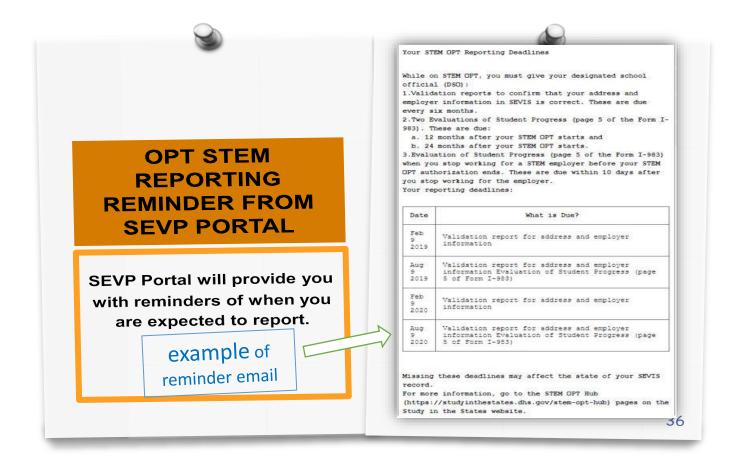
Reporting on SEVP portal

- You will **not** be able to change read-only portions
- Must go through ISS (DSO) to report new employment with completed & signed Form I-983

ISS form: STEM OPT Change of Employment Report (https://iss.okstate.edu/employment/stem-opt.html)
Form I-983: https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983.pdf

- You cannot edit employer information to work for another employer
- SEVIS will push updates into SEVP portal (within a few days)

Regular Participation Reporting - Every 6 month



Regular Participation Reporting - Every 6 month

- 6 & 18 month Participation Report
 - Student is responsible for **reporting** following information **to ISS**
 - Legal name
 - Current address
 - Name and address of current employer
 - Job title
 - Supervisor information
 - End date of employment

Submit 6 & 18 month participation report to ISS through ISS website

Regular Participation Reporting - Every 6 month

I-983 Form, Page 5

- 12 month STEM OPT report
 Must report with completed & signed
 Evaluation on Student Progress
- Final or 24 month STEM OPT report
 Must report with completed & signed
 Final Evaluation on Student Progress
- Keep copy of the evaluations for your record





Submit 12 & Final or 24 month participation report to ISS through ISS website

STEM OPT – EAD delivery

- Use your own physical address as mailing address on I-765 form
- Do NOT move after filing I-765 application for STEM OPT
 If you must move, use ISS address as mailing address on I-765 to avoid mailing complications and inform ISS
- USCIS mailing is not forwarded to another address
- If EAD is not delivered successfully, it will be returned to USCIS
- If you must change your address after filing, contact

USCIS National Customer Service number: (800) 375-5283

There is risk in changing your address after filed I-765 application

After STEM OPT Completion

You have a 60-day grace period following your STEM OPT end date



You must choose one of following:

- Depart the U.S. by end of 60 days
- Change educational level at OSU for different degree
- Transfer out to another university and start new program (no later than 5 months from STEM OPT end date)
- Complete change of status

Enter this code on the OPT quiz - Question #1

International Students & Scholars Office

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