



# OPT: 24-Month Extension

Science, Technology, Engineering, and  
Mathematics (STEM) Majors

**Global Services**  
**Bryan Hall 108**



*Office of*  
**International  
Programs**

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

# STEM Eligibility

- ▶ Effective May 10, 2016 new regulations (8 CFR 214.16) establish a 24-month STEM Extension for certain majors in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
- ▶ STEM majors are identified by the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Homeland Security
  - ▶ IP-GS **does not** choose which majors are STEM eligible
  - ▶ IP-GS **must** follow STEM eligibility guidance as set forward by the Department of Education and the Department of Homeland Security
- ▶ This tutorial outlines the application process and eligibility requirements for a STEM extension

# STEM Eligibility

- ▶ The list of majors that The Department of Education and U.S. Department of Homeland Security have used to identify STEM eligibility can be found here: <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf>
- ▶ Please note: Your degree *name* **does not determine** if you are eligible, rather the code (Classification of

## PROGRAM OF STUDY

### EDUCATION LEVEL

DOCTORATE

### NORMAL PROGRAM LENGTH

60 Months

### PROGRAM START DATE

15 AUGUST 2010

### MAJOR 1

Chemical Engineering 14.0701

### PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Required

### PROGRAM END DATE

15 MAY 2015

### MAJOR 2

None 00.0000

### ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES

Student is proficient

# STEM Eligibility

- ▶ The CIP Code listed on your I-20 must match the exact coding that is listed on the STEM Designated Degree Program List for an immigration advisor to recommend a STEM extension
- ▶ If your major code is not found on the list you are not STEM eligible and an immigration advisor cannot recommend the extension
- ▶ Keep in mind you may use Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) concepts in your degree program and still not be eligible for the STEM extension
- ▶ CIP codes are **not** determined by IP-GS and IP-GS **cannot** adjust or recommend STEM OPT for students in majors that are not identified as STEM majors

# 24-Month OPT Requirements

- ▶ CIP Code of degree major appears on the DHS STEM Designated Degree list (see previous slides to determine if you are eligible)
- ▶ Hold a degree from an accredited, SEVP Certified, US Institution:  
<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/school-search>
  - ▶ Degrees obtained outside the United States are not eligible for STEM extensions
- ▶ Must hold a job and work at least 20 hours per week
  - ▶ Volunteer positions do not meet STEM requirements per regulations
- ▶ Employer must be registered in E-Verify program
  - ▶ Cannot be self-employed for a STEM extension
- ▶ Student and the employer complete a [Form I-983](#) training plan and student provides IP-GS a completed and signed form prior to DSO recommending the extension. Instructions for completing the form can be found [here](#).
- ▶ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) processes STEM applications and must receive the application prior to the expiration of the standard 12-month OPT

# Previously Obtained STEM Degree

The new 24-month rule permits students to use a previously obtained STEM degree from an accredited U.S. educational institution as a basis to apply for a STEM OPT extension, even if it did not serve as the basis for the student's standard 12-month post-completion OPT, under the following conditions:

- ▶ The prior degree was conferred no more than 10 years before the DSO recommends a STEM OPT extension in SEVIS based on that degree;
- ▶ The prior degree was conferred by a U.S. educational institution that is accredited and SEVP-certified at the time the student's DSO recommends the student for the 24-month OPT extension;
- ▶ The prior degree is in a degree program category included on the current STEM Designated Degree Program List at the time of the DSO recommendation;
- ▶ The practical training opportunity that is the basis for the 24-month STEM OPT extension must directly relate to the prior degree;
- ▶ The prior degree was actually conferred (i.e., a student who uses a prior degree cannot take advantage of the "all but thesis or dissertation" exception)

# Application Process

1. Submit documents in [mypassport.wsu.edu](https://mypassport.wsu.edu) (see next slide for list of documents)
2. IP-GS immigration advisor reviews submitted documents
3. If complete, IP-GS immigration advisor creates an OPT STEM I-20
4. Student collects I-20 and mails all application materials to USCIS
5. USCIS reviews and processes application within 2-3 months of submission
6. If approved student engages in the STEM extension

# Application Materials

- ▶ Upload completed I-983 (must be signed by employer)
- ▶ Completed I-765
- ▶ Check for 410 dollars made out to Department of Homeland Security
- ▶ Two passport style photos
- ▶ Copy of valid passport page (include extension if necessary)
- ▶ Copy of visa (can be expired)
- ▶ Copy of I-94 number or card
- ▶ Copy of previous EAD card (front and back)
- ▶ Copy of transcript
- ▶ Form G-1145
- ▶ If applying using a previously obtained STEM degree include: letter : transcript and letter on letterhead from PDSO at previous school indicating CIP Code of degree obtained, date degree was obtained, school accreditation, and SEVIS school code



# Next Steps: After approval of extension

- ▶ Be aware that the I-983 form requires periodic updates (“Evaluation of Student Progress”) by the employer during the course of your OPT extension
- ▶ Go to [mypassport.wsu.edu](https://mypassport.wsu.edu) to submit Evaluation of Student Progress forms a) within first 12 months of OPT STEM extension approval; and b) within second 12 months
- ▶ Complete follow-up tutorial on WSU-IP website for mailing instructions and other STEM extension requirements