

## STEM Extension FAQs

### **The I-983 is asking for SIU's SEVIS school code. Where can I find this?**

It's listed on your I-20 in the SCHOOL INFORMATION box.

SIU's SEVIS School Code is CHI214F01061000

### **The I-983 is asking for DSO Name and Contact Information. What information should I use?**

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### **The I-983 is asking for the Qualifying Major and CIP code. Where can I find this?**

The CIP code is listed on your I-20 under MAJOR 1 next to the name of your major.

The number format will be 00.0000 (Make sure to include the decimal point).

### **The I-983 is asking for the STEM OPT requested period. What is this?**

There are two possible scenarios for this one.

Scenario 1 - If you are applying for the **24 Month STEM Extension** for the first time, the STEM OPT requested period is the 24 months from the day after your initial OPT ends.

#### *Example:*

*If the end date on your OPT EAD card is 07-16-2016, your STEM OPT requested period will be*

*From: 07-17-2016 To: 07-16-2018*

Scenario 2: If are already on an approved **17 Month STEM Extension**, and are applying for an additional 7 Month Extension, the STEM OPT requested period is the 7 months from the day after your initial 17 Month STEM ends.

#### *Example:*

*If the end date on your STEM OPT EAD card is 07-16-2016, your STEM OPT requested period will be*

*From: 07-17-2016 To: 02-16-20*

### **Why did the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implement a new STEM OPT extension rule?**

The STEM OPT extension rule is in response to a court decision that vacated the 2008 DHS rule on procedural grounds. The rule includes changes to the policies announced in the 2008 rule to increase the educational benefits provided by STEM OPT extensions and oversight of STEM OPT.

### **How do the changes to the STEM OPT rule benefit international students and schools?**

The changes to the rule promote the ability of international students to gain valuable and practical STEM experience that supplements the knowledge gained through their academic studies, while guarding against harmful effects to U.S. workers. By applying their academic knowledge in a STEM OPT extension, students will be in a better position to begin careers in their fields of study. The changes also help U.S. colleges and universities remain globally competitive in attracting international students to study and lawfully remain in the United States.

### **What is DHS's legal authority to propose the rule?**

Under the Homeland Security Act and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, DHS has the authority to issue immigration-related regulations, including those related to international students. The Secretary of DHS also has the authority to propose regulations that determine who is authorized for employment in the United States. DHS did not propose any substantive changes to general (12-month) post-completion OPT or Cap-Gap Relief for F-1 students in the rule.

### **As a STEM OPT participant, am I required to pay Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes for Social Security and Medicare?**

STEM OPT participants generally are not subject to Social Security and Medicare contributions (FICA withholdings) until after the first five calendar years that they hold F-1 nonimmigrant status. As a participant in STEM OPT, you are not considered a resident for federal tax purposes as long as you comply with the requirements of your F-1 visa and have not already held F-1 status for parts of five calendar years.

### **What is the purpose of the Form I-983, "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students?"**

You are required to submit a Form I-983 to ensure that you are receiving the academic and training benefits of your STEM OPT extension. You must work with your employer to prepare the Training Plan and submit it to your DSO before your DSO may recommend a STEM OPT extension in your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) record.

For more information, visit the [Form I-983 resources](#) on the STEM OPT Hub.

### **What if I need to make changes to my Training Plan?**

If you need to make material changes to your Training Plan, you and your employer must both sign the modified version of the Training Plan and file the updated version with your DSO as soon as possible. [Material changes](#) may include, for example, a significant decrease in hours per week that you will be engaging in the practical training or a reduction in compensation without a reduction in hours worked.

You and your employer need to sign your self-evaluation on an annual basis. You will be required to do a mid-point evaluation during the first 12-month interval of your STEM OPT extension and a final self-evaluation prior to the conclusion of your STEM OPT extension.

### **Will my training be evaluated during my STEM OPT opportunity?**

Yes. You and your employer need to sign your self-evaluation on an annual basis. You will be required to

do a mid-point evaluation during the first 12-month interval of your STEM OPT extension and a final self-evaluation prior to the conclusion of your STEM OPT extension.

**Did the STEM OPT extension rule change H-1B visa policies?**

No. The STEM OPT final rule did not change H-1B visa policies.