

International Employees in F-1 Status on STEM OPT

Hiring Department Reporting Requirements

International students in F-1 nonimmigrant status authorized for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) may be eligible to apply for a [24-month STEM OPT Extension](#) if they have earned a [qualifying STEM degree](#) and their employer is enrolled in the USCIS [E-Verify program](#). CU Boulder is an E-Verified employer and therefore may hire international students eligible or authorized for the 24-month STEM OPT Extension.

Employer Reporting Requirements for Departments Hiring Employees in F-1 Status on STEM OPT

The responsibility to comply with the [STEM OPT Extension Reporting Requirements](#) primarily falls on the student in F-1 status. However, there are several reporting requirements employers must fulfill as well:

☐ **Complete and Certify the Form I-983**

The STEM OPT employer must work together with the student to complete the [Form I-983](#) and designate an Official with Signatory Authority to certify that information in the document is true and correct. The form is not complete until the employer has signed and certified it in the designated areas. Employer instructions to complete the I-983 are detailed below.

☐ **Evaluation on Student Progress**

The STEM OPT employer must review the student's annual self-evaluation on their own progress and sign it to attest to its accuracy.

☐ **Material Changes to an Existing Form I-983**

Employers must work with the STEM OPT student to report to the Designated School Official (DSO) at their previous institution any [material changes](#) to, or material deviations from, the student's formal training plan, by filling out a new Form I-983.

☐ **Loss of Employment**

The employer and student both must notify the DSO at the student's previous institution when the student's employment is terminated for any reason before the end of the STEM OPT authorization. The employer must report such a change in employment to the DSO no later than **five business days** after the student's employment terminates or the student has departed the United States.

We encourage the Hiring Department to request contact information for a DSO at the student's previous institution from the student in case of an unexpected loss of employment.

Form I-983 Instructions

The [Form I-983](#) is a formal training plan between the student in F-1 status and their employer that must clearly articulate the STEM OPT student's learning objectives and affirm the employer's commitment to helping the student achieve those objectives. Students authorized for STEM OPT and their employers are subject to the terms and conditions of the 24-month STEM OPT Extension regulations, effective on the training start date requested for the associated STEM OPT period, as indicated on the Form I-983. The Form I-983 is not submitted to USCIS with the student's STEM OPT application, but the International Office at the student's previous institution uploads it to a federal government database when recommending STEM OPT. The Form I-765 is used to request employment authorization and an [Employment Authorization Document](#) (EAD) from USCIS.

ISSS at CU Boulder is providing the instructions below as a courtesy to CU Boulder hiring departments. However, the student and the hiring department should ultimately defer to instructions/corrections provided by the International Office at the student's previous institution. If a student is on another institution's F-1 program, the student and employer should make any requested edits that come from the student's F-1 institution.

Section 1: Student Information (Completed by the Student)

- If the student has questions regarding these fields, they should contact a Designated School Official (DSO) from the university that recommended them for the STEM OPT Extension.

Section 2: Student Certification (Completed by Student)

- If the student has questions regarding these fields, they should contact a Designated School Official (DSO) from the university that recommended them for the STEM OPT Extension.

Section 3: Employer Information (Completed by Employer)

Employer's E-Verify Name

- The Regents of the University of Colorado

Employer Address

- This should be determined by the hiring department completing section 3 of the Form I-983. This will likely be the department's address.

Employer ID Number (EIN)

- 84-6000-555
- **NOTE:** Scholars in F-1 status may also ask the hiring department for CU Boulder's E-Verify number in order to complete their I-765 application for employment authorization. **The E-Verify number is different than the EIN.**
 - Once the scholar has completed the [Non-CU Sponsored Scholar Check-In Form](#), please reach out to the ISSS scholar advisor assigned to your department to request the CU Boulder E-Verify number.

NAICS Number

- 611310

Number of Full-Time Employees at CU Boulder

- Approximately 7,000+

OPT Hours Per Week

- Number of hours the employee will work per week must be greater than 20.

Start Date of Employment

- The start date of employment is the date when the student will begin the *STEM OPT training* with the employer. If this is the Form I-983 that the student will submit with their STEM OPT Extension application, the start date of employment should match the requested start date listed in Section 1 of the Form I-983.
- **If the student receives any company benefits (health insurance, dental insurance, 401K, etc.):** List those benefits below the salary. "Standard company benefits" can be written in lieu of a complete list of additional benefits if applicable.

Section 4: Employer Certification (Completed by Employer)

Employer Certification

- The Chair of the department or the Director of the employing unit is the only individual authorized to sign these attestations on behalf of CU Boulder. The official should review the certification and affirm the statements by

providing a signature. *In Section 6, Employer Official Certification of the Training Plan Form, the student's direct supervisor should sign.*

Section 5: Training Plan for OPT STEM Extension Students (Completed by Employer)

Site Name:

- Name of on-campus building or departmental unit

Site address

- The physical address where the student will be working while on the STEM OPT Extension.

Name of Official

- The student's direct supervisor's name. This may or may not differ from the Official with Signatory Authority in Section 4, depending on if the department chair/unit director is also the student's supervisor.

Official's Title, Email, and Phone Number

- Direct supervisor's job title, email, and phone number

Federal regulations require each STEM OPT student to prepare and execute with his or her prospective employer a formal training plan that identifies learning objectives **and** a plan for achieving those objectives. The STEM OPT student and their supervisor must work together to finalize the plan.

Take care to address all parts of the questions being asked in Section 5 of the Form I-983.

Section 6: Employer Official Certification (Completed by Employer)

- The student's direct supervisor should review the attestations and sign the Employer Official Certification of the Training Plan form
- For the material change certification (attestation #4 under section 6 on page 4 of the Form I-983), please note that material changes in the plan can include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - Any change of Employer Identification Number (EIN) resulting from a corporate restructuring;
 - Any reduction in compensation from the amount previously submitted on the Form I-983 "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students," that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked;
 - Any significant decrease in hours per week that a student engages in a STEM training opportunity, and;
 - Any decrease in hours below the 20-hours-per-week minimum required under this rule.
- Students can confirm with their DSO at their previous institution if they are uncertain whether a change is considered a material change and requires a new Form I-983.

Evaluation on Student Progress (I-983 Instructions Continued)

Student evaluations are a shared responsibility of both the student and the employer to ensure that the student's practical training goals are being satisfactorily met. **The student is responsible for conducting a self-evaluation** based on their own training progress. **The direct supervisor must review and sign the self-evaluation** to attest to its accuracy.

When first applying for the STEM OPT Extension, page 5 of the Form I-983 must be left blank as the evaluations are only completed once a student is in their STEM OPT authorization period.

These evaluations are required at the following times:

- **Evaluation on Student Progress (top of page 5 of Form I-983)** required after completion of 12 months of the STEM OPT period. Enter start and end dates for first 12 months of STEM OPT training period.
- **Final Evaluation on Student Progress (bottom of page 5 of Form I-983)** due within 10 days of the conclusion of 24-month STEM OPT period OR if the STEM OPT training ends early, the student must submit to their DSO the final evaluation within 10 days following the conclusion of the training opportunity.

The direct supervisor must provide a signature, print their name, and enter the date of signing to show concurrence with the evaluation information that the student has provided.

Failing to submit a final evaluation is considered a violation of the terms of the Form I-983 and may jeopardize the student's nonimmigrant status.

NOTE: It is the student's responsibility to submit their required evaluations in a timely matter. This includes providing a final evaluation within 10 days of completion if the student leaves a job before the 24-month STEM extension ends. However, the employer still must inform a DSO of any termination of employment within five business days of the last working day.

Non-CU Sponsored Scholar Check-In Form

All international employees who are in F-1 status on another institution's F-1 program must complete a [Non-CU Sponsored Scholar Check-In Form](#) so ISSS can maintain accurate records.

Scholars must complete the Non-CU Sponsored Scholar Check-In Form before ISSS Advisors can release CU Boulder's E-Verify number to the scholar. The E-Verify number is a required field on the student's I-765 application for employment authorization.

Additional Resources

- [Study in the States Employer: STEM OPT Reporting Requirements](#)
- [STEM OPT Reporting Requirements Handout](#) (Study in the States)
- [Form I-983 Training Plan Resources](#)
- [Students & the Form I-983](#) (Study in the States)
- [Employers & the Form I-983](#) (Study in the States)