# Step-by-Step Guide:
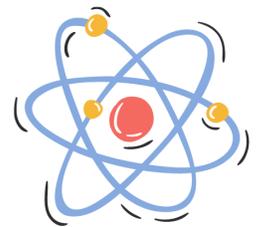# Form I-983 Training Plan for STEM and OPT Students

## Background

A STEM OPT student and their employer must complete and sign the Form I-983, training plan, as part of the documents required to apply for a STEM OPT extension.

Only E-verified enrolled employers can participate in this program. The STEM OPT employer must be enrolled in and using the E-Verify program at the STEM OPT worksite.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has begun performing employer site visits to confirm the information reported on the student's Form I-983.

This document guide is intended to provide general tips to facilitate your completion of this important form.

## Completing the Form

When completing Form I-983, it is important to remember that this form is intended to be a training plan and reflect the STEM OPT student's learning objectives over the 24-month STEM period as it relates to their STEM degree. The form confirms the employer's commitment and resources to helping the student achieve and evaluate those objectives.

It is strongly recommended to type this form. Be sure that all the forms must be typed with all sections completed (if the field does not apply, fill in "N/A"; do not leave blank).

*Below are suggestions for answering key questions on the Form I-983, using an engineering student as an example.*

## Student's Role

In this section, it is helpful to break the student's training into 3- to 4-month simple phases and outline specific roles and objectives for each phase that will enhance the student's knowledge of his/her STEM degree. The roles can include verbs, such as assisting, observing, learning, participating, coordinating, or reviewing.

*\*This material is not intended to substitute as legal advice.*
**Last updated: February 2021**

Here is an example:

> "Phase 1: The student will assist his supervisor to analyze and develop plans, design calculations, and cost estimations, and make recommendations to create holistic designs. Throughout this phase, the student will apply and expand his knowledge of theoretical concepts such as _____ and practical skills learned from his Engineering degree coursework."

## Goals and Objectives

For this section, you can briefly you should explain 2 main goals and objectives of the student's role and how the training will facilitate the student's learning about his/her STEM degree and the specific methods of achieving this, such as training seminars, on-the-job training, observation methods, research, and meetings with clients, governmental agencies, and staff.

For example:

> Goal 1: "The student will understand and apply engineering rules to plan and design programs to create environmentally conscious plans, as related to his Engineering degree.  This will be accomplished by attending training seminars, observation methods, guided research, and hands-on training."

## Employer Oversight

In this section, you could explain how the student will receive on-site supervision, such as through, discussion and feedback from the supervisor and monthly scheduled meetings with experienced experts in the field.

If a related policy/program is already in place, a description of this program or policy may suffice to answer the question.

## Measures and Assessments

In this section, you could explain how you will measure and confirm whether the student is acquiring new knowledge and skills, such as specific tests for the knowledge gained, assessment meetings with their supervisor, and written evaluations of performance after assignments of the training program.

If a related policy/program is already in place, a description of this program or policy may suffice to answer the question.

## TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS
### Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Optional Practical Training (OPT)

| SECTION 1: STUDENT INFORMATION (Completed by Student) | |
|---|---|
| Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name): | Student Email Address: |

| Name of School Recommending STEM OPT: | Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned: | SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT (including 3-digit suffix): |
|---|---|---|

| Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information:<br>Name, Address, Phone, Email | Student SEVIS ID No.: | STEM OPT Requested Period (mm-dd-yyyy):<br>From: Day after current OPT expiration date<br>To: 24 months later |
|---|---|---|

Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code:   Major AND CIP code found on I-20

Level/Type of Qualifying Degree:   Bachelors / Masters / Ph.D.

Date Awarded (mm-dd-yyyy): Typically found on transcript or diploma

Based on Prior Degree?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   Yes = before most recent degree, in other words not the degree used for Post- OPT.
No = most recent/current degree. Most students will check this.

Employment Authorization Number:   XXX-XXX-XXX on EAD card (NOT the receipt number beginning with YSC, etc)

**Designated School Official (DSO)**:

● Name and Contact Information: DHS instructions say to include "name, address, e-mail, & phone number."

**Based on Prior Degree?:**

● Most students will check "No" since they are using their most recent degree;
● "Yes" is only used if applying on the basis of a previously obtained STEM degree (not the degree used to apply for post-completion OPT).

**Employment Authorization Number:**

● Students sometimes incorrectly put the receipt number beginning with EAC, WAC, etc.. but it should be USCIS # or A# which is on the Post OPT EAD card.

**Student Signature required at the bottom of this page:**

● Each school may have its own policy on signatures, whether to accept ink signatures only and will not accept digital.

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**Last updated:  February 2021**

**SECTION 3: EMPLOYER INFORMATION (Completed by Employer)**

| Employer Name: | | Street Address: | | Suite: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employer Website URL: | | City: | State: | ZIP Code: |

| Employer ID Number (EIN):<br>xx-xxxxxxx<br>Enter EIN, <u>not</u> e-verify # | Number of Full-Time Employees in U.S.: | North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code: |
|---|---|---|

| OPT Hours Per Week (must be at least 20 hours/week): | Compensation:<br><br>A. Salary Amount and Frequency: _____ |
|---|---|
| Start Date of Employment (mm-dd-yyyy):<br>date student will begin the STEM OPT training with the employer,<br>not original start date with employer if worked on CPT or OPT | B. Other Compensation (Type and Estimated Amount or Value):<br><br>1. _____<br>2. _____<br>3. _____<br>4. _____ |

**SECTION 4: EMPLOYER CERTIFICATION**

I declare and affirm under penalty of perjury that the statements and information made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that the law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willfully falsifying or concealing a material fact, or using any false document in the submission of this form.

**Employer Website URL:**

- If the company doesn't have one, then put N/A.

**Employment Identification Number (EIN):**

- An EIN is 9 digits xx-xxxxxxx. This is different than e-verify which is about 4-7 digits.

**North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code:**

- Is usually about 4-6. This is sometimes skipped by students and employers because they might not be familiar with it.

**Start Date of Employment:**

- DHS instructions say to _**enter the date when the student will begin the STEM OPT training with the employer.**_ **Not** the original start date that the student started working with the employer which is a common mistake.

**Signature of official required:** on this page by employer official

- Compensation is commensurate to similarly situated US workers;
- The student will not replace temporary or permanent US worker;
- Have sufficient resources to provide student training.

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| SECTION 5: TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS (Completed by Student and Employer) | |
|---|---|
| Student Name *(Surname/Primary Name, Given Name)*: | |
| Employer Name: | |

**EMPLOYER SITE INFORMATION**

| Site Name: | Site Address (Street, City, State, ZIP): |
|---|---|
| Name of Official: | Official's Title: |
| Official's Email: | Official's Phone Number: |

*Note: for the remaining fields in this section, employers who already have an internal/pre-existing training plan in place may fill in the details based on that plan.*

Student Role: Describe the student's role with the employer and how that role is directly related to enhancing the student's knowledge obtained through his or her qualifying STEM degree.

Goals and Objectives: Describe how the assignment(s) with the employer will help the student achieve his or her specific objectives for work-based learning related to his or her STEM degree. The description must both specify the student's goals regarding specific knowledge, skills, or techniques as well as the means by which they will be achieved.

**"Site location":**

- "Enter the exact address of the worksite where the STEM practical training will take place," which may be the same or different than the employer name and address on the previous page.

**"Official":**

- Referred to does not have to match the "Signatory Authority" on p. 2, but the person does have to work for the student's employer (not their client).

**"Student Role":**

- Make sure this addresses the student's role and "how that role is directly related to enhancing the student's knowledge obtained through his or her qualifying STEM degree."

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