

## Differences Between 12 Month OPT and STEM OPT EMPLOYMENT

Employment Permitted Under Post Completion OPT	Employment Permitted Under STEM OPT (only eligible if in current employment with an offer to extend, or have new offer for extension period)
Allows for Paid and Unpaid positions	Must be a paid position
All jobs combined must total more than 20 hours per week or more	Cannot be self employed
Employer does NOT have to be registered with E-Verify	Each (if multiple) must equal 20 hours or more per week
Must be in a position related to the major listed under "program of Study" on I-20	Each employer must be registered with E-Verify
Allows for Employment with a TEMP AGENCY, Contract Employment, Short Term employment and "gigging"	Must be a paid position
External Fellowship payments permitted in Academic Environment	If unemployed, STEM provides 150 days of unemployment IN TOTAL between Post Completion OPT and the STEM extension. If 90 days of unemployment were used in first OPT, then STEM would only allow for 105 days
Allow maximum of 90 days of unemployment over 12 months of OPT	Must be a position related to the STEM program major listed under "Program of Study" on the I-20. Employee is responsible for drawing a connection between your position and the skills or knowledge learned in your STEM degree. If employee applied for STEM OPT based on a previously earned degree, the employment on STEM OPT must be related to that degree's major field of study.
Allows for Self Employment	Position MUST pay a salary, and be supervised directly by the employer. Employee may NOT be paid by a third party or staffing agency, or work at a location other than the employer's place of business. For more information, see "The Employer's Training Obligation: Staffing and Temporary Agencies" on the USCIS Website ( <a href="https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-extension-for-stem-students-stem-opt">https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-extension-for-stem-students-stem-opt</a> )
May Volunteer or work in an unpaid position	In an academic environment, you cannot be paid through an external fellowship. For example, you may not use STEM for a post-doctoral position where you are not paid directly by the institution
	Employee Must not begin work for any new employer without first submitting to the UMass IPO Office a new, completed 1-983 Training Plan for that employer. ( <a href="https://www.umass.edu/ipo/iss/stem-opt">https://www.umass.edu/ipo/iss/stem-opt</a> )