**International Student And Scholar Services (ISSS)**
Website: https://isss.unc.edu
General office email: isss@unc.edu

# STEM OPT Reporting Resource Guide

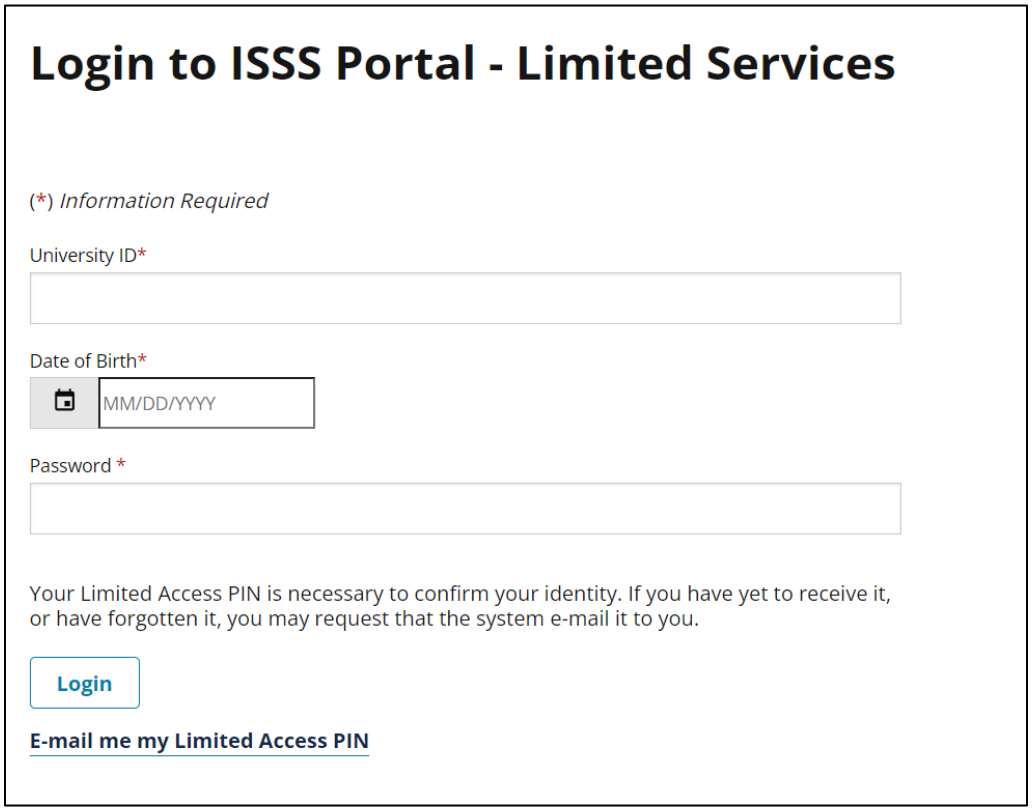
## Table of Contents

**Limited Services access in the ISSS Portal** ..... 2
STEM OPT Reporting in the Limited Services Portal ..... 3
**STEM OPT Reporting Requirements** ..... 4
**Form I-983** ..... 5
Follow the Form I-983 Instructions ..... 5
Common Errors on the Form I-983 ..... 5
**Tips on Reporting OPT Employment** ..... 7
Reporting Employment Location ..... 7
Changing Worksites for the Same Employer ..... 7
Establishing a Direct Relationship between Employment and Major Area of Study ..... 7
**SEVP Portal** ..... 7
Information Reported Through the SEVP Portal ..... 7
Changes to Email Address ..... 8
SEVP Portal Resources ..... 8

# Limited Services access in the ISSS Portal

Students participating in the STEM Extension of Optional Practical Training may use **Limited Services in the ISSS Portal** to report changes to their contact information, address, employment as well as submit requests for a travel signature, SEVIS record transfer and to notify ISSS about their departure from the U.S.

To access Limited Services in the ISSS Portal, students will need their University ID (PID), Date of Birth and PIN (as the password).

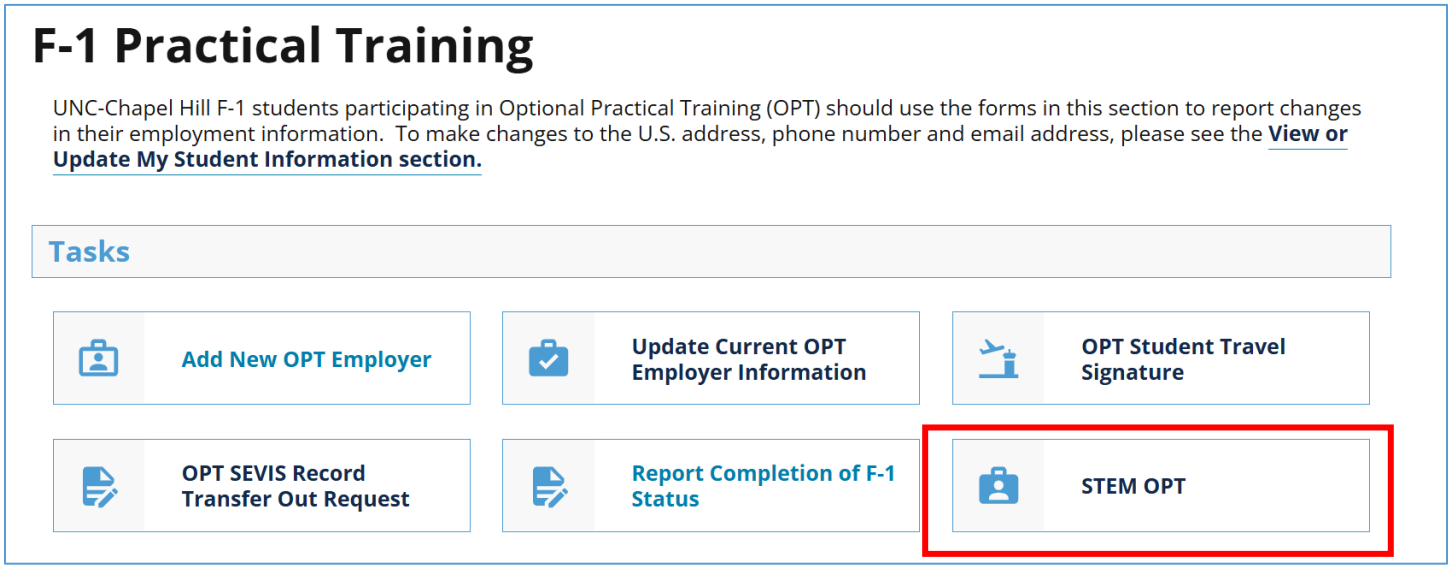


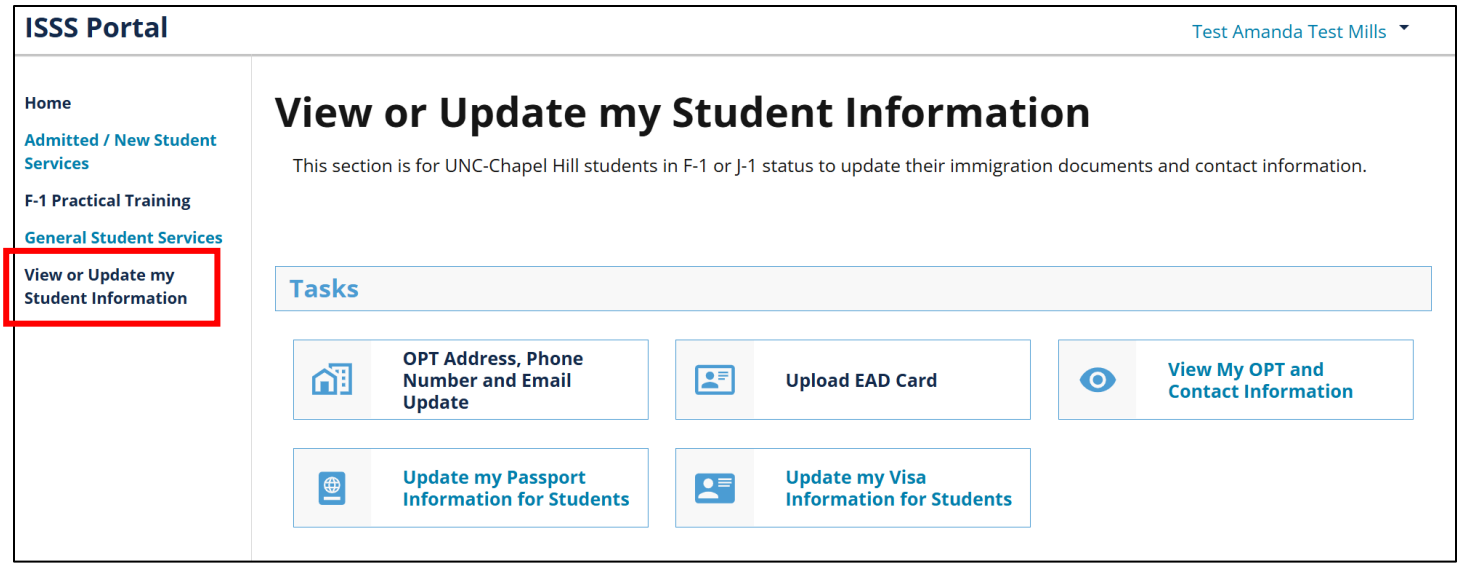

The Limited Access PIN is necessary to confirm a student's identity. Students may request to have their PIN be sent to their **email address on file** by clicking "E-mail me my Limited Access PIN" at the bottom of the login page. **We encourage students to update their primary email address to their personal email,** since access to their UNC email account will be discontinued shortly after program completion.

If students are experiencing technical issues logging into Limited Services in the ISSS Portal, they should contact ISSS at isss@unc.edu for assistance.

# STEM OPT Reporting in the Limited Services Portal

All of the electronic forms needed to update employment information while on STEM OPT will be located in the STEM OPT section in the F-1 Practical Training Menu. Updates to contact information or passport/visa information will be under the "View of Update My Student Information Menu":



# STEM OPT Reporting Requirements

Students participating in the STEM Extension of OPT have several reporting requirements. Listed below are the most common types of reporting situations and how students can report these changes in Limited Services in the ISSS Portal while participating in STEM OPT:

| Event or Update | How/What to report |
|---|---|
| **Approval of STEM OPT** | Upload a copy of your EAD card to ISSS as soon as it is received.<br><br>The card can be uploaded in the **Upload STEM OPT EAD Card** form that can be found under the **"F-1 Practical Training"** menu. |
| **Changes to contact information: Address, Phone number, Email address** | Complete the **OPT Address, Phone Number and Email Update** form to update changes to address, phone number and/or email address.<br><br>Note: Changing your email address will update the email address used to access the SEVP Portal.<br><br>Both forms can be found under the **"View and Update my Student Information"** menu in Limited Services in the ISSS Portal. **Report within 10 days of the change.** |
| **Passport and Visa update, or change to biographical information** | Complete the **Update my Passport Information for Students** or **Update my Visa Information for Students** form and upload a copy of your new passport or visa stamp. Forms can be found under **"View and Update my Student Information"** menu. |
| **Employment Information** | Students must report the beginning of new employment **no later than 10 days after the start date** and submit any updates to employment information **no later than 10 days after the change occurs.**<br><br>For all jobs held while on STEM OPT, F-1 students must report the employer's name and physical location of work, the start date of employment and the end date of employment (if applicable). Students must also explain how each job is directly related to their major or program of study at UNC-Chapel Hill.<br><br>Complete the **Add a New STEM OPT Employer** form under the **"F-1 Practical Training"** menu under "**STEM OPT**" to report the beginning of new employment.<br><br>Complete the **Update STEM OPT Employer Information** form under the **"F-1 Practical Training"** menu under "**STEM OPT**" to report any changes to the employment information, including the change in physical location or the end date of employment.<br><br>Please note: A new Form I-983 will be required when adding an employer or changing an existing employer. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ending Employment with an Employer** | Complete the **Update STEM OPT Employer Information** form and submit a signed final self-evaluation (Page 5 of Form I-983) for your former employer. |
| **STEM OPT Validation Reports** | Complete and submit the appropriate STEM OPT validation report form in the Limited Services Portal. These reports are due at the 6-month, 12-month, 18-month and 24-month period after your STEM OPT authorization period begins. |
| **Annual Self-Evaluations** | These evaluations are due after the first 12 months and at the end of the 24-month STEM OPT extension period. The student and supervisor should complete and sign the appropriate self-evaluation on Form I-983 to upload with the corresponding STEM OPT Validation report. |
| **Change of Status** | Submit the **Report Change of Status or Early Completion of F-1 STEM OPT** form. You will also need to submit proof of your change in immigration status (ie, a I-797 approval notice, a copy of your latest Form I-94, etc.), showing your new status and its effective date |
| **Formal Departure from U.S. before end of STEM OPT** | Submit the **Report Change of Status or Early Completion of F-1 STEM OPT** form along with a completed final self-evaluation (Page 5 of Form I-983), if you were working. |

# Form I-983

Students participating in STEM OPT are required to complete a Form I-983 Training Plan for each STEM employer. The training plan is a living document and should be updated whenever there are **material changes** to the document.

## Follow the Form I-983 Instructions

When completing the Form I-983, students should take special note of the Form I-983 instructions. Students and their employers should follow these instructions carefully, to ensure that their Form I-983 meets all requirements.

## Common Errors on the Form I-983

Below is a list of fields that are often incorrectly completed on the Form I-983 and the appropriate item that should be indicated in that respective field:

### Section 1

- **Student Name:** Enter your name in the following format: Last Name, First/Given Name
- **Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:** Please list the school name as it appears on the Form I-20 under the section "School Information."
- **SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT:** This code is found on the Form I-20 under "School Information." ***The SEVIS School Code for UNC-Chapel Hill is ATL214F10290000.***
- **Designated School Official (DSO) Name and Contact Information:** Indicate your assigned International Student Advisor's information.
- **STEM OPT Requested Period**: Insert start date that immediately follows the end date of your Post-Completion OPT, and the end date that is 24 months from that date.
- **Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code**: Please input the full name and CIP code of your qualifying STEM major as listed on your Form I-20
- **Based on Prior Degree?:** Check "Yes" if your STEM OPT participation is based on a previously-obtained STEM degree, and is not the same degree upon which your current Post-Completion OPT was granted. Check "No" if your STEM OPT participation is based on our most recently obtained degree, and that is the degree upon which your current Post-Completion OPT is based.
- **Employment Authorization Number:** This is the USCIS #, as listed on your post-completion OPT EAD.

## Section 3

- **Start Date of Employment:** If you will continue working for the same employer as your employer on Post-Completion OPT, then indicate the start of the STEM OPT period as the Start Date of Employment. If this is a new employer during the STEM OPT period, then indicate your actual start date with the employer.
- **Salary Amount and Frequency:** Make sure to list the amount here and the frequency (per year, per month, etc)

## Section 5

- **Site Address:** Enter the exact and complete address for where the STEM practical training will take place. This address should contain any relevant suite or building names/numbers and match the address reported on the STEM OPT forms submitted in the Limited Services Portal.
- **Goals and Objectives:** Students and employers must provide **all** 3 items in this field:
    1. Describe the specific skills, knowledge, and techniques the student will learn or apply
    2. How the student will achieve the goals set out for his or her training
    3. The training curriculum including the timeline.

## Evaluation on Student Progress

Students are required to complete an annual self-evaluation during the STEM OPT period and provide a completed self-evaluation whenever they end employment with an employer. **Students submitting an initial request for STEM OPT, must leave the evaluation page blank.**

- **Range of Evaluation Dates:** These fields are completed differently based on the student's circumstance.
    - Submission of Self-Evaluation for 12-month STEM report:
        - **From:** STEM OPT period start date, or your employment start date, whichever is later.
        - **To:** 12-months after your STEM OPT start date minus one day.
    - Submission of Self-Evaluation for 24-month STEM report:
        - **From:** 12 months after the STEM OPT start date, or your employment start date, whichever is later.
        - **To:** Last date of STEM OPT Period.
    - Submission of Final Self-Evaluation when ending employment prior to the end of the STEM OPT period:
        - **From:** STEM OPT period start date, or your employment start date, whichever is later. This date may vary if you've previously submitted a 12-month self-evaluation.
        - **To:** Last day of employment

## Material Changes to the Form I-983

Employers and students participating in STEM OPT are required to submit a new Form I-983 whenever there are material changes to the information outlined in the training plan. Material changes include, but are not limited to:

- Change in worksite location
- Any change of the employer's Employer Identification Number, (i.e., the company's Federal Tax ID number) resulting from a change in the employer's ownership or structure.
- Any reduction in student compensation 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.
- Changes to the employer's commitments or student's learning objectives as documented on the Form I-983.

Students should submit an updated Form I-983 to reflect materials changes as soon as possible, once the change occurs. Changes to worksite locations must be reported to ISSS through a new Form I-983 and completed Update STEM OPT Employer Information form in Limited Services in the ISSS Portal **within 10 days** of relocating.

# Tips on Reporting OPT Employment

## Reporting Employment Location

Students are required to report their employment address. When reporting this information on the Update STEM OPT Employer Information form, students must indicate their **physical location of work** and the reported address must match the worksite listed in section 5 of the Form I-983.

## Changing Worksites for the Same Employer

Students should update their worksite location only after they've begun working at the new site. Student must report their new worksite location by submitting a new Form I-983 and completed Update STEM OPT Employer Information form to ISSS **within 10 days** of beginning work at the new location.

## Establishing a Direct Relationship between Employment and Major Area of Study

Students on OPT are required to explain how their job is directly related to their degree/field of study which should be articulated on the Update STEM OPT Employer Information form. Below are a few examples provided by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to describe the relationship in detail:

1. **Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering**: I work full time as an Electrical Engineer at ABC Corp., a government contractor. In my job, I analyze client requirements for electrical systems and provide them with cost estimates of such systems. My work requires understanding of electrical circuit theory, which I studied in-depth at the University of ABC.

2. **Bachelor's degree in Business:** I work full time as a Loan Officer at a mortgage company, Happy Homes, where I meet with clients and evaluate, authorize and recommend approval of loan applications. On a daily basis, I use the knowledge I gained in my credit analysis, sales and marketing classes that I took as part of my major program of study.

3. **Master's degree in Music**: I am working at a hospital playing the harp in patient rooms. I also conduct hands-on harp beginner workshops for long-term patients. On average, I work at the hospital 35 hours a week. My duties directly utilize the skills and knowledge I acquired from my coursework and degree in music therapy.

4. **PhD in Computer Science**: I am employed as a Computer and Information Research Scientist at ABC Research Institute. I work as part of a team of scientists and engineers that designs experiments to test the operation of various software systems. My work builds on research in complex algorithms and machine learning, which I studied as part of my dissertation.

5. **Master's degree in Kinesiology:** I am working 25 hours a week in a health food store as a consultant for Self-Made Inc., designing and teaching exercise classes that are incorporated into a customer's overall nutrition and exercise plan. My designs and customer instruction draw upon my studies and classwork in exercise therapy and physical reconditioning.

# SEVP Portal

The SEVP Portal is a tool created and managed by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) that allows F-1 students participating in the STEM extension of OPT to view and report certain information in their F-1 SEVIS record. Any information updated in the SEVP Portal is immediately sent to the student's SEVIS record and becomes a permanent part of the student's immigration record with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

## Information Reported Through the SEVP Portal

The SEVP Portal allows students to view and report the following information:

- Physical Home Address
- Mailing Address

- Telephone Number

The following items are fields within the SEVP Portal that require either a new Form I-983 or a completed self-evaluation, therefore, although these fields may be edited for existing employers in the SEVP Portal, students should submit the appropriate form in Limited Services in the ISSS Portal to have these fields updated by their International Student Advisor:

- Employer Name
- Employer Address
- Job Title
- Supervisor Name and Contact Information
- Full/Part-Time work indicators
- Employment End Date
- Relation to Field of Study

## Changes to Email Address

Students are permitted to change the email address used to access their SEVP Portal account. In order to update the email address used to access the SEVP Portal, students must submit the OPT Address, Phone Number and Email Update form in Limited Services in the ISSS Portal. Once updated, ISSS will report the new email address to SEVIS. Several days after the information is updated in SEVIS, the student will receive two emails (one to their previous email address and one to the new email address). The emails will provide instructions on how to activate or reset a portal account using the new email address.

## SEVP Portal Resources

The following resources are provided by SEVP to assist students with navigating the SEVP portal:

1. SEVP Portal Help Hub
2. SEVP Portal User Guide