

# STEM POLICIES

---

Students graduating from programs designated by Columbia as STEM fields are eligible to apply for an Optional Practical Training (OPT) extension. These designations are based on the University's assessment of the curriculum aligning with the criteria for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields as per the [Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\) codes](#). However, it is crucial to understand that applying for an OPT extension does not guarantee eligibility. The final approval or denial of OPT extension applications and the determination of whether a student's field of study qualifies as STEM are exclusively decided by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The following programs are currently designated as STEM fields:

- **MPA in Economic Policy Management** – under Econometrics and Quantitative Economics (45.0603).
- **MPA in Development Practice** – under Sustainability Studies (30.3301).
- **MPA in Environmental Science & Policy** – under Environmental Studies (03.0103).
- **Combined curriculum of the International Finance & Economic Policy Concentration and the Data Analytics & Quantitative Analysis Specialization** – applicable to both the MIA and MPA degree programs, under Econometrics and Quantitative Economics (45.0603).
- **Combined curriculum of the Energy and Environment Concentration (E&E) and the Data Analytics and Quantitative Analysis Specialization (DAQA)** – applicable to both the MIA and MPA degree programs, under Environmental Studies (03.0103).
- **Combined curriculum of the Economic and Political Development Concentration (EPD) and the Data Analytics and Quantitative Analysis Specialization (DAQA)** – applicable to both the MIA and MPA degree programs, under Sustainability Studies (30.3301).

No additional programs or combinations have been authorized as STEM-designated at this time. New full-time SIPA students may enroll in any of these accredited STEM programs, adhering to the standard program requirements without further STEM-specific prerequisites.

**Special considerations for combined curricula:**

- The core requirements of the MIA or MPA degrees do not include specific stipulations for graduating with a STEM-designated degree under the IFEP/DAQA, E&E/DAQA, or EPD/DAQA combinations. All students who complete these combinations, irrespective of their focus area, will receive a STEM-designated degree.
- IFEP, E&E, and EPD students cannot count DAQA specialization courses as part of their Concentration requirements. IFEP-Economic Policy/DAQA students must fulfill specific IFEP requirements and achieve nine (9) credits from DAQA's focus areas—Quantitative Analysis or Computational and Data Analysis.

- Per DAQA policy, students who pass the [SIPA U6501 proficiency examination](#) must take a substitute DAQA course, completing nine credits in the specialization.

## Additional Resources

- [Visit Columbia's International Students & Scholars Office site for resources on STEM OPT Extension.](#)