24-Month OPT Extension for students with STEM degrees

The **24-Month OPT STEM Extension** allows students who earn degrees in certain Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields to apply for an additional 24 months of OPT, giving them a total of 36 months.


*Note that the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code is printed next to “Major 1” in the Program of Study area on your CSUEB I-20.*

**Requirements for 24-month STEM extensions:**

- Applicant is in an Active period of post-completion OPT at the time of requesting the OPT extension for STEM recommendation on the I-20
- Applicant has completed a degree in a **STEM eligible field** from a U.S. accredited institution with SEVP certification within the last 10 years and has not already utilized this degree to apply for a OPT STEM extension
- Or applicant is currently engaged in a STEM eligible Master’s or PhD program, has completed all degree-required coursework and lacks only the thesis or dissertation to complete the degree;
- Applicant files the **I-765 Application for Employment Authorization** with required fee to USCIS to request the STEM extension prior to the completion of the Active Post-Completion OPT period
- Applicant is working in a paid position, at least 20 hours a week for an E-Verified employer
- Applicant has filed a completed Form **I-983** with all attestations and supporting documentation to CIE to request the 24 Month OPT Extension
- Applicants current EAD expiration date provides eligibility for filing of the request

**Eligibility and When to Apply:**

**Application Period:**
The I-765 and supporting documents must be sent to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regional office having jurisdiction over your address of residence. The earliest USCIS may receive the application is 90 days before the end date of your initial period of OPT and the latest is the date your EAD expires.

**Extension of Work Authorization:**
Students who timely file an application for the 24-Month OPT extension will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.

**Travel:**
Although you may continue to work while the OPT extension application is pending, you will not be able to return to the US after a trip abroad after the first EAD has expired and before you receive the EAD for the 24-Month extension. As always, you will need to have a valid passport valid for 6 months into the future and a valid F-1 visa in your passport to return from a trip abroad in F-1 status.

**Unemployment:**
Student may not have more than 150 days of unemployment time during the entire period of Post-completion OPT (regular Post–completion OPT and 24 Month Extension OPT). This will constitute a violation of your F-1 status.
OPT Grace Period: Under 24-Month STEM OPT regulations, students may not apply for a STEM OPT extension after they have entered the 60 day grace period following the expiration of their Post Completion OPT EAD. Please plan ahead!

Types of Employment: Volunteer/unpaid and self-employment are NOT allowed. STEM-eligible employers must have e-Verify & EIN numbers and the student must have a "bona fide employer-employee relationship". If a student uses a temporary or staffing agency to place them in a training opportunity, the agency cannot complete and sign the Form I-983. Only the E-verified employer that provides the actual training relevant to the student’s qualifying STEM degree is authorized to sign the complete the Form I-983. Please see Study in the States website for more information.

Required Training Plan and Form I-983: Requires responsibility of the employer to provide a training plan related to the field of study, and attestations to wages and compensation being commensurate with "similarly situated U.S. workers". Also requires 6 Month validation reports, annual evaluations, and submission of a new I-983 in case of material changes to the original I-983 are now required. Employers must agree to Department of Homeland Security site visits, as well as provide attestations to wages and working conditions. See employer’s responsibilities at Study in the States STEM OPT Hub.

Application Procedure
You have the choice of coming to CIE to complete the application or Requesting an I-20 to be mailed to you and you will mail the application to USCIS. Processing time is 3-5 business days!

In Person at CIE
If you would like CIE to mail your application, first we recommend emailing your I-983, I-765, and I-20 request form for review then call 510 885 2880 to schedule an appointment with an international student advisor and bring the required documents as stated below.

- Completed Form I-983. This form needs to be completed and signed by yourself and your employer.
- Completed CIE Request for 24 Month STEM OPT I-20 form
- Completed OPT STEM Validation & Reporting Requirements and Statement of Understanding
  - Completed I-765 Form
    - Your residential address on the I-765 needs to be your current residential address. If you move, you must notify CIE and USCIS of your address change. Note: the US Postal Service does not forward mail from USCIS.
    - #16 write (c) (3) (C)
    - Your signature cannot touch the line or any of the surrounding words. Make it small!
- Completed Form G-1145 (If you would like E-Notification that your application has been accepted at a USCIS Lockbox)
- Your diploma OR Official transcript with degree posted
- Your current EAD
- Your original Post Completion OPT Request I-20
- Your passport
- Printout of your I-94 (available at www.cbp.gov/i94)
- Letter from your employer (on letterhead paper) stating how your employment relates to your degree and including company E-Verify number
- Check for $410.00 made payable to The Department of Homeland Security
- 2 passport style photographs taken in the United States within the past 30 days
Mailing Application to USCIS yourself
If you are not local or if you would like to mail the application yourself, you will have to mail or email the completed Form I-983, Request for 24 Month STEM OPT I-20 form, OPT STEM Validation & Reporting Requirements and Statement of Understanding and a copy of your completed I-765 to your international student advisor for processing. Please note processing time is 3-5 business days.

- Form I-983 does not get mailed to USCIS as part of your application
- Your application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of your I-20 being issued by CIE.

Application Order
1. G-1145 (If you wish to include it)
2. Original Completed I-765
3. Copy of your new signed 24-Month OPT Extension request I-20
   a. Remember to sign your I-20. You will mail a copy with your application and keep the original.
4. A copy of your diploma OR Official transcript with degree posted
5. A copy of your current EAD
6. A copy of your original Post Completion OPT Request I-20
7. Copy of the Bio Page, Visa Page and entry stamp from your Passport
8. Printout of your I-94
9. Employment verification letter
10. Check and 2 photos in an envelope with your name and SEVIS number written on the front

Mailing the Application:
The I-765 and supporting documents must be sent to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regional office having jurisdiction over your address of residence. Based on your current residential address, mail your application to one of the following addresses. We recommend you use an express mail mail courier:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USCIS Phoenix and Dallas Lockbox facilities</th>
<th>Mail your application to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>USCIS Phoenix Lockbox</strong></td>
<td><strong>USCIS Phoenix Lockbox</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If you live in:</strong></td>
<td><strong>For Express Mail (FEDEX, UPS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS)</strong></td>
<td><strong>PO Box 21281 Phoenix, AZ 85034</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USCIS Dallas Lockbox</strong></td>
<td><strong>For Express Mail (FEDEX, UPS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If you live in:</strong></td>
<td><strong>USCIS Dallas Lockbox</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia</td>
<td>USCIS Attn: AOS 2501 S. State Hwy, 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS)</strong></td>
<td><strong>PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Processing Time: USCIS have up to 90 days to process your I-765 application. They will mail your receipt notice within 3-5 weeks to the address you specified on your I-765 form. You may check your application status https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do
24-Month STEM OPT Extension I-20 Request Form

Name ___________________________ Last (Family/Surname) ___________________________ First ______ Middle ______

Net ID ___________________________ Date of Birth ______/_____/_______

SEVIS ID Number ___________________________ Date of Current EAD Expiration (mm/dd/yy) ______/_____/_______

Degree Major ___________________________ Degree Level (circle one) Bachelor’s Master’s

Residential U.S. Mailing Address ________________________________ Apt. ________________
City ________________ State: ______________ Zip Code: ______________

☐ I request the Center for International Education office to mail the new I-20 to me at my address as listed directly above. Be sure this address is current.

☐ I will pick up my I-20 from The Center for International Education office when it is ready or I will call 510 885 2880 to schedule an appointment with an International Student Advisor to bring the additional required documents and complete the application.

Additional Employer Information

Employer’s Name ________________________________ Employer’s E-Verify Number ________________

Paid Position (Circle) Yes No Job Title: ________________

Previous Employer Information (Complete if you are changing Employer’s while your application is Pending with USCIS)

Employer’s Name ________________________________ Employment End Date (mm/dd/yy) __________

2 Sentences describing how your job is related to your major:

1. _______________________________________________________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________________________________________________

I certify that I understand the responsibilities required for maintaining F-1 Status during my period of STEM OPT authorization as stated on the 24-Month STEM OPT Handout and I will validate my STEM OPT employment information every 6 months, upon any changes within 10 days, and submit an updated Form I-983 upon any changes.

_________________ _____________ __________________        __________________________________
Signature          Date       Phone Number                          Personal Email
OPT STEM Validation & Reporting Requirements (24-Months)

Students with an approved 24-month OPT extension must make a validation report to CIE every six months starting from the date the extension begins and ending when

1. The student's F-1 status ends or
2. The student changes educational levels at the same school or
3. The student transfers to another school or
4. The 24-Month OPT extension ends

The validation report must include:

- Your full name
- Your NETID and/or SEVIS number
- Your Residential Address
- Your email address
- Your phone number
- Your employer (company) name
- Your employer (company) address
- Employer (company) E-Verify Number
- Your job title
- Your employment start date (mm/dd/yyyy)
- One or two sentences on how your job is related to your major
- Whether Employment is Full Time or Part Time
- End date of previous employer if any (mm/dd/yyyy)
- Copy of your EAD card
- E-Verify Number of Company
- Updated completed I-983 Form if objectives have changed

In addition to the validation reports, students on a STEM extension must notify the CIE within 10 days of:

1. Any change of name or residence or mailing address
2. Any change of employer, giving the name, address and E-Verify number of the new employer
3. Any change to the name and address of this employer
4. The student’s objectives stated in the currently filed I-983 Mentoring and Training Plan Change
5. Any interruption of employment

Please email the above information to cie@csueastbay.edu. Please do not submit offer letters.

Your SEVIS record is subject to TERMINATION if the above isn’t reported in a timely fashion.

Student’s Name: ______________________  Today’s Date: ____________________

Signature: ______________________      Net ID: ______________________

Personal Email: ______________________

Phone Number: ________________
24-MONTH OPT STEM EXTENSION STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

By submitting this OPT application, I agree that the information provided in this application is true and accurate. I understand the rules and regulations concerning my participation in OPT and confirm all of the following:

• With this application, I certify that I have read all pages of this application in full and have submitted all required documents to CIE. If my application was not complete, the time needed to process my application will be delayed. I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure my application is complete.
• My application will be filed in a timely manner. I understand that my STEM OPT application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date on which CIE issued my STEM OPT I-20. In addition, my application must arrive at USCIS before my original period of OPT expires. If it arrives after the date when my OPT expires, I understand that my application may be rejected by USCIS because it was not properly filed in a timely manner.
• I certify that my STEM extension employer is E-Verified and that my degree is eligible for a STEM Extension.
• I understand that if my home address, contact information, employment information, or immigration status changes, I will update CIE within 10 days of the change.
• I understand that USCIS does not forward mail. If I have any change in home address, in addition to reporting it to CIE, I will update it directly with USCIS.
• Students on the STEM OPT extension are required to report their employment every 6 months. I understand and agree to meet this requirement in a timely manner. I understand that failure to do so may result in auto-termination of my STEM OPT.
• I will provide CIE with a copy of my EAD card when I receive it and report employment upon receiving it. I understand that failure to report upon authorization may result in the auto-termination of my STEM OPT by SEVIS.
• I agree to seek employment directly related to my degree of study as listed on my I-20 and understand this is my responsibility to determine whether or not a prospective job is directly related to my degree.
• If my 24-month application is approved, I understand that during the entire period of regular OPT and my STEM extensions, I cannot accrue more than a total of 150 days of unemployment.
• I understand that if I decide to travel while on OPT I must have a valid I-20 signed by a DSO within six months before reentering the U.S., an unexpired EAD, a valid passport, a valid employment letter, and a valid F-1 visa stamp to be readmitted to the U.S.
• I understand that if I choose to begin a new program of study during my OPT STEM Extension, my OPT will end when the SEVIS record for the new program is activated. I will consult with my international student advisor if I have any questions about the timing of this process.
• If I have any questions about the status of my OPT STEM Extension application after I have mailed it to USCIS, I will contact USCIS to resolve my application issues and understand that CIE cannot provide me with updates on my application status at that point.
• If I receive a Request for Evidence from USCIS on my OPT application, I agree to mail the documents requested to USCIS in a timely manner, otherwise my application will be rejected.
• I understand that failure to comply with any of the above conditions could result in loss of my F-1 status.
• I have spoken with my employer about the Form I-983 and understand my employer’s responsibilities during my STEM OPT employment. I understand CIE cannot assist with completion of the form I-983, nor holds responsibility for the employer’s reporting responsibilities, and simply keeps the form in my immigration record as per the federal rule.
• I am individually responsible for meeting and maintaining the requirements of STEM OPT. I am aware that the information in this application serves as a guide, but that I am additionally responsible for knowing STEM OPT requirements as listed in official USCIS and DHS sources. I will not consult unofficial sources such as online blogs.

______________________________                _____________
Student Signature                                                               Date

-KEEP A COPY OF THIS PAGE FOR YOUR RECORDS-