OPT STEM Information and Application Tutorial

Center for International Education

California State University, East Bay
COVID-19 Updates- USCIS

- USCIS remains open for OPT/STEM I-765 application processing.
- STEM I-765 applications must be submitted from inside the USA. You must be physically present in the US when your application is received by USCIS.
- USCIS has not changed application timelines and deadlines due to COVID-19.
- USCIS has not changed the 150 day unemployment rule due to COVID-19.
- USCIS still requires a handwritten “wet” (pen ink) signature on the paper version of the I-765. NO DIGITAL or ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES will be accepted.
- USCIS now allows your application to be submitted online at www.uscis.gov.
OPT STEM Tutorial

Please note this presentation is for instructional purposes only.

An OPT STEM application to USCIS is your own personal application (you are signing the I-765, not us). You alone are responsible for timely filing with the required documentation, understanding F-1 regulations regarding OPT STEM and maintaining F-1 status.

This presentation is not legal advice. If you have more detailed questions, we recommend consulting an immigration attorney.
OPT STEM Extension

• It is your responsibility to understand the details and requirements of your F-1 status.
• You must maintain your F-1 status while on OPT STEM
• Read this entire tutorial carefully to understand:
  - Eligibility
  - Timelines
  - Procedures
  - Requirements
  - Validation reports
OPT STEM Overview

Students in F-1 status who are currently on OPT can extend their work authorization an additional 24-months if they meet certain criteria. Students who extend their OPT are required to maintain their status under the OPT STEM regulations.
OPT STEM Extension Eligibility

Requirements:

- You must be a recipient of a U.S. Bachelor’s, Master’s or Doctoral degree in a STEM designated degree program
  - Compare your I-20 CIP to this [STEM Designated Degree List](#)
- You are currently authorized for Post Completion OPT (12 months) and have not exceeded 90 days of unemployment
- Employed or have a job offer related to your field of study from an employer who is registered in the [E-Verify Program](#).
- Employer must have an EIN number and must be willing to complete [Form I-983](#), abide by all [employer obligations](#), including Dept of Homeland Security Site visits.
- You must apply up to 90 days before your OPT EAD expires.
  - Your application must reach USCIS before the expiration date on your EAD. You cannot apply for STEM during your 60 day grace period
- Can apply based on any previous STEM degree from an SEVP, accredited U.S. institution within the past 10 years.
- Reminder- Only 2 OPT STEM Extensions may be granted per lifetime
Types of Employment

All employment must be related to your major

• Must be a bona fide employee of the employer completing the Form I-983. The employer signing the I-983 must be the same entity to employ you and provide the practical training experience required by the I-983.
• Temp/Staffing Agencies, 3rd party worksites
  - Staffing and temporary agencies may employ students but only if they will be the entity that provides the practical training to you
  - OPT STEM participants may engage in a training experience that takes place at a 3rd party worksite as long as all of the training obligations are met.
    • A STEM OPT Employer may not assign its training responsibilities to a non-employer third party.
• Volunteer/Unpaid positions and Self Employment are **NOT** permitted on 24 Month STEM Extension.
Unemployment during OPT STEM

- If your OPT STEM application is received by USCIS before your post completion OPT expires, you can continue working for up to 180 days after the expiration date of your OPT EAD.
- Students who receive OPT STEM are given an additional 60 days of unemployment for a total of 150 days over their entire post completion OPT period
  - Any leftover unemployment days (90) from your Post Completion OPT can be added to the 60 days from the OPT STEM, not to exceed 150 days
- Example: If you used 30 days of unemployment while on Post Completion OPT, then you have 120 days of unemployment once you receive your OPT STEM EAD

Warning: SEVIS may terminate students who have used all unemployment dates!
Application Timeline

- You may apply as early as 90 days before your OPT EAD end date
- You must submit your STEM I-20 Request to CIE at least 2 weeks before your current OPT EAD expires
  - Some employers take longer than others to complete and sign the I-983 so plan accordingly
- USCIS **MUST** receive your application before the expiration date of your Post Completion OPT EAD.
- USCIS processing time range from 3-5 months
  - There is nothing you can do about the USCIS processing times, other than to apply as early as possible!

Reminder: You can continue to work for up to 180 days while your OPT STEM application is pending with USCIS.
Application Process Overview

1. **Complete the I-983 with your employer**
   You and your employer must complete and sign the I-983. This is also a good time to confirm your employer is enrolled in E-Verify.

2. **Request OPT STEM I-20 from CIE**
   The I-20 will be emailed to you with 3-5 business days after submitting complete supporting documents.

3. **Prepare, collect & mail your application materials to USCIS or submit your application online.**
   A complete application must be received by USCIS before the end date of your current OPT EAD. You must be in the U.S. to file for OPT STEM with USCIS.

4. **Receive your STEM EAD**
   Average processing time with USCIS is 3-5 months. Reminder you can continue to work for up to 180 days while the STEM application is pending.

5. **Maintain your F-1 status while on OPT STEM**
   You must report all employment changes, address changes and contact information as well as validation and evaluation reports.
Complete Form I-983

- **ICE Form I-983** is a formal training plan
- It must state the student’s learning objectives and affirm the employers commitment to helping the student achieve those objectives.
- You and your employer must complete and sign Form I-983 and then submit pages 1-5 (page 5 will be blank) to CIE.
- You must have an I-983 for each employer during your OPT STEM Extension

Resources

- CIE’s [I-983 Helpful Hints Sheet](#)
- [Study in the States](#)
  - [OPT STEM Hub](#)
  - [Detailed Tutorial](#)
Signatures on the Form I-983
During COVID

The I-983 requires hand written (ink) signatures. During COVID, CIE will accept you and your employer e-signatures on the I-983.

Acceptable signatures include Adobe Docu-signatures (verified), Apple Pen signatures and handwritten signatures that have been scanned and pasted into the signature field.

CIE will NOT accept an I-983 where a person’s name is simply typed into the signature line.

NOTE: This ONLY applies to the I-983. The I-765 must be printed then signed and dated in black ink pen.
Complete I-983

STEP 1: Download fillable PDF Form I-983.

STEP 2: For detailed instructions on how each field should be completed, please review the SEVP STEM Hub and CIE’s helpful hints.

STEP 3: Note who is responsible for completing each section of the Form I-983:

- Sections 1 & 2: Completed by Student
- Sections 3 & 4: Completed by Employer
- Section 5: Completed by Student and Employer
- Section 6: Completed by Employer
- Evaluations: Leave these blank for now
Complete I-983

STEP 4: Complete Form I-983, paying attention to these important reminders:

a. Pay attention to the questions and answer the whole question

b. Your Designated School Official (DSO) is your **International Student Advisor**.

c. The STEM OPT Requested Period begins the day after your current EAD card ends and continues up to 24 months later.

d. Classification of Instruction Program (CIP) code is found on page 1 of your I-20, next to your major/program of study.

e. Based on Prior degree- if you are applying for this 24 month extension based on your most recent CSUEB degree, check “no”.

f. Employment Authorization Number is the 9-digit “A” number/USCIS # on your EAD card.
Complete I-983

STEP 5- Continue to complete the I-983

- All fields related to your employer must be completed on page 2.
- Pages 3-4 contain the details of the required training plan to be determined by you and your employer. To avoid rejection of your I-983, think carefully about each question and answer fully and completely.
  - Responses should include the relationship between your degree and your role with your employer.
  - Need to list learning objectives and goals.
  - List and explain methods of oversight, measures and assessments (simply listing daily/weekly checkin’s isn’t sufficient).
- One sentence responses will result in rejection of your I-983.
- If you need additional space, you can use the “Additional Remarks field or attach a separate sheet.
USCIS Paper Form I-765

- **USCIS Form I-765** is the form used to obtain an EAD card. The form and instructions are free to download.
- You must download the latest version (edition) from the link above. If you send a previous edition, your application can be rejected or denied by USCIS.
- All information printed on your EAD card will come from the I-765 form.
- We recommend you type as much of the form answers as possible then print and sign the form.
- No electronic signatures are permitted on this form.
- Our suggestions for completing the form are on the next slides.

Note- we are not immigration attorneys. These are suggestions. You are welcome to complete as you see fit. You will be signing the form.
USCIS Online Form I-765

- You can file your STEM OPT application online at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).
- The online I-765 has the same questions as the paper form but will be presented in a different order.
- We strongly suggest that you complete the paper form for CIE advisors to review.
- You can save a copy of the online I-765 before you submit your application.
- Please see our [USCIS I-765 Online Filing Process](http://www.uscis.gov) for information on the process.
Form I-765

Top Portion: leave this entire section blank

Part 1: Reason for Applying
- Check the “1.a.” box for “Initial Permission to accept employment”.

Type Form and Print- type as much as possible, then complete any blanks and your signature in BLACK ink
## PART 2. Information About You, pg. 1

### #1 Name

Please write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20. This is how your name will appear on your EAD. Split long first names into first and middle.

### #2-4 Other Names Used

Enter your previous names, including nicknames you have used in official records or documentation.
### U.S. Mailing Address

This is where you would like the Receipt Notice and the EAD card to be mailed. **This is very important!**

- **Should be valid for 3-5 months**
- **If you have plans to move during this time, use a reliable friend or family member’s address you have (indicate this in #5.a.)**

**#5.a.** If the mailing address belongs to someone other than yourself, put their full name (First Name Last Name) here.

**#5.b-5.e** Write a valid mailing address in the U.S.

**#6** If you listed a mailing address that is NOT your current physical living address, select “No” and complete

**#7.a-7.d** List your current physical address.

- Physical address should reflect where you actually live.
Other Information

8. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any)

9. USCIS Online Account Number (if any)

10. Gender
    - Male
    - Female

11. Marital Status
    - Single
    - Married
    - Divorced
    - Widowed

12. Have you previously filed Form I-765?
    - Yes
    - No

13.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?
    - Yes
    - No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 13.a., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 13.a., provide the information requested in Item Number 13.b.

13.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known).

PART 2, pg. 2, continued...

Other Information

8. Use the USCIS # listed on your current EAD

9. Most F-1 students do not have a USCIS Online Account Number, leave this blank.
   *If you have a USCIS online account number, use that number here

10-11. The responses to these questions should be straightforward. Please complete them accurately.

12. Check Yes

#13.a.-17.b. Social Security Number (SSN)

#13.a.
- Check “Yes” if you have been issued an SSN and enter your SSN with one letter in each box in #13.b.
#13.a.-17.b. Social Security Number (SSN)

#13.b.
- Complete your SSN

#14.
- Check “Yes” if you want a replacement SSN card and complete #15-17.b
- Check “No” if you do not want a new or replacement SS card and skip to #18
PART 2, pg. 2-3 continued...

The responses to these questions are straightforward. Please complete them accurately.

**#18 Countries of Citizenship, pg2**
- List all as applicable (*use Part 6 of the I-765 if needed*)

**#19-20 Place of Birth, pg3**
- List the name of the country as it was named when you were born, even if it’s name has changed
- Make sure your Date of Birth is in the correct format of MONTH -DAY -YEAR. *(01/31/1998 not 31/01/1998)*
PART 2, pg. 3 continued...

Information About Your Last Arrival

#21.a. I-94 Number
Use your current I-94 number. This is at the record number found on the electronic I-94 record or on the top left corner of the paper Form I-94 card

#21.b-e. Passport Information
Enter the information directly from your passport; use the information of the most recently issued passport (this should match the country on your I-20)

#21.c. Travel Document
Leave it blank
#22 Date of Last Entry into the U.S.
Your most recent entry date can be found on your passport admission stamp, electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card.

#23 Place of Last Arrival into the U.S.
Name of the Port of Entry city from your most recent entry. This information can be found on your passport admission stamp, travel history section of your electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card (usually as a code, i.e. “SFR” for San Francisco).

#24 Immigration Status at Last Entry
Status in which you entered the U.S. If you entered with an I-20 as a student, write “F-1 Student.”

#25 Current Immigration Status
Current status should be “F-1 student.”

#26 SEVIS ID
Your SEVIS ID appears on the top left side of your I-20 and starts with N00...
PART 2, pg. 3 continued...

#27 Eligibility Category
Use the code (c) (3) (C) for STEM OPT Extension. DO NOT USE a different code!

#28
28a- list your current degree
28b- List your employer’s name as they have listed it on E-Verify
28c- Employer’s E-Verify number (this is not the EIN)

29-31.b Other Eligibility Categories
Should be left blank
PART 3. Applicant’s Statement, pg. 4

#1.a. Select 1.a. to indicate that you have read and understood the questions.

#2 Leave Blank

#3-6 Provide your information as requested

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Applicant’s Statement

1.a. I can read and understand English, and I have read and understand every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question.

1.b. Leave blank

2. Leave blank

Applicant’s Contact Information

3. Applicant’s Daytime Telephone Number
   1234567890

4. Applicant’s Mobile Telephone Number (if any)
   1234567890

5. Applicant’s Email Address (if any)
   pioneerpete@gmail.com

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NOTE: Read the Penalties section of the Form I-765 Instructions before completing this section. You must file Form I-765 while in the United States.
PART 3, pg. 5 continued...
Applicant’s Declaration and Certification

• Read the entire declaration carefully.

Applicant’s Signature

#7.a.-7.b. Hand sign your name and provide the date of the signature

• SIGNATURE MUST BE IN BLACK INK. NO ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES ACCEPTED
• Be conservative and use a signature smaller than normal.

Your signature MUST be in BLACK ink. NO electronic signatures are accepted!
PARTS 4 and 5, pgs. 5-6

- These sections are not applicable to you, since you’ve completed the form yourself. This section is for those who use an interpreter or other paid preparer to complete the form.
Part 6. Additional Information

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet, indicate the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)  
1.b. Given Name (First Name)  
1.c. Middle Name

2. A-Number (if any) ▶ A-

3.a. Page Number  3.b. Part Number  3.c. Item Number

3.d. N000000000, OPT, 06/15/18-06/14/19, Full Time, Bachelor's

4.a. Page Number  4.b. Part Number  4.c. Item Number

4.d. N0000000000, CPT, 09/20/18-12/15/18  
Part Time, Master's

Previous SEVIS IDs: N0048798787, N0009898989, (these are examples only)

The above are examples only!

List your previous employment and SEVIS #’s

PART 6, Additional Information, pg. 7

#1.a.-1.c. Provide your name again as listed in Part 2, 1.a-1.c. (this may auto-populate when you print)

#2. USCIS # from your EAD

#3.a-3.c. Reference Pg. 3, Part 2, Item 26 (CPT and Previous SEVIS) or Pg. 2, Part 2, Item 12 (OPT)

#3.d. List all previously used SEVIS numbers—including from all previous F-1 programs in the U.S including high school, short stays, community colleges, or previous I-20s at CSUEB

#3.d. List your current OPT and any previous CPT, write your SEVIS Number, CPT or OPT, Dates and Degree Level

• We recommend to include copies of all previous CPT and OPT I-20s and EAD cards with your application.
You are done with the I-765!

• Review all the information on the form for accuracy. You must submit **ALL 7 pages** of the I-765, even the blank pages.
• Make a copy of your completed I-765 application to keep for your records, in case there is a problem with the application.
• We recommend you email a unsigned copy to CIE for review.
  • Reminder, we will provide suggestions and review for completeness (not accuracy) but ultimately the submitted form is your responsibility.
• Check the edition (version) date on the form is current. The date is listed at the bottom left hand side of the page.
• Signature should be in black ink. No electronic signatures are permitted.
• Any questions you were not able to type the answer, write the answer using a black pen after printing the form to sign it.
Request OPT STEM I-20

1. Complete the [Form I-983](#) with your employer
2. Log into your SEVP Portal and confirm all information is accurate
3. Complete the CIE “OPT STEM I-20 Request Form” & “Reporting Responsibilities” in our [OPT STEM Handout](#)
4. Complete (without signature) [USCIS I-765](#)
5. Email CIE the following documents
   a. Completed and signed OPT STEM Request Form & Reporting Responsibilities
   b. Completed and signed I-983
   c. Completed I-765 if you would like us to review for completeness (this is not required)
6. CIE will email you a list of required corrections, if necessary
7. CIE will email your OPT STEM Request I-20 and any suggestions for the I-765
STEM OPT I-20 processing time is 3-5 business days. Check your I-20 and notify CIE if there are any errors on your I-20.

**School Attestation**
Make sure there is a CIE Advisor signature. Check the date—USCIS must receive your application within 60 days of the ISSUE date listed on page 1.

**Student Attestation**
You should sign and date the I-20 after you print it. Students 18 and older do not need a parent’s signature.
OPT STEM I-20

Page 2 of the I-20 will list your current Post Completion OPT and the request for OPT STEM extension.

**Employment Authorization Dates**
Check 24 month STEM OPT start and end dates. Verify employer name for accuracy.

We recommend that you download, save then print the I-20 for better quality.
Required documents for Mailing OPT STEM application

- **Photos**: 2 U.S. Passport Photos- do not use the same photos as your current EAD
- **USCIS Fee**: Check, Money Order, or Credit Card payment made payable to: “U.S. Department of Homeland Security.” Write your SEVIS ID in the memo line.
- **Form G-1145** to confirm receipt and obtain case number in advance of paper notification:
- **I-765**: The original completed and hand signed I-765. *No electronic signatures are permitted.*
- **STEM OPT Request I-20**: Copy of your STEM OPT I-20 (pages 1-3)
  - Remember this I-20 is only valid for 60 days. Don’t forget to sign it!
- **Previous I-20**: Copy of your previous OPT and/ or previous STEM OPT I-20s.
- **EAD**: Copy (front and back) of any previous EAD’s
- **Passport**: Copy of passport biographical page and F-1 visa stamp, if applicable.
- **I-94**: Print out of electronic I-94 record (or photocopy of both sides of paper Form I-94)
- **Degree Proof**: Copy of your Diploma or a sealed Final Transcript showing the major and degree level that makes you eligible for the STEM extension.
Required documents for submitting OPT STEM application online

- **Photos**: 1 U.S. Passport Photos- do not use the same photos as your current EAD
- **USCIS Fee**: You will pay this at the end of the application via pay.gov
- **I-765**: You will complete this online
- **STEM OPT Request I-20**: Copy of your STEM OPT I-20 (pages 1-3)
  - Remember this I-20 is only valid for 60 days. Don’t forget to sign it!
- **Previous I-20**: Copy of your previous OPT and/or previous STEM OPT I-20s.
- **EAD**: Copy (front and back) of any previous EAD’s
- **Passport**: Copy of passport biographical page and F-1 visa stamp
- **I-94**: Print out of electronic I-94 record (or photocopy of both sides of paper Form I-94)
- **Degree Proof**: Copy of your Diploma or transcript showing degree completion

NOTE: You do NOT need to submit proof of school accreditation unless you are filing based on a previous degree. Most of you will mark “No” on the I-983 next to “Based on a Prior Degree”.
USCIS Form G-1145 - E-Notification of Application Acceptance from USCIS (Text message and Email)

- Optional but recommended
- Simple
- May get Receipt #
- Free
- Doesn’t guarantee a response
Application Fee

Currently application fee is $410.00

Please check the USCIS I-765 website to verify the amount

Recommended: USCIS Fee calculator to be certain you are using the correct form edition and submitting the correct fee.

You are welcome to print and include the Fee Calculator page.
### USCIS Fee Calculator

**Calculate Your Fees**

**I-765, Application for Employment Authorization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell us more about your Form I-765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reason for Filing**
- Permission to accept employment

**Filing Category**
- Foreign Students

- Foreign Students
  - (c)(3)(B)

**Part 2. Information About You**
27. (c)(3)(B) -- F-1 Student Seeking Optional Practical Training (OPT) in an Occupation Directly Related to Studies: Post-completion Optional Practical Training

**Your Fees**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biometrics</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-765</td>
<td>$410.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$410.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Payment - Option 1: Check

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Four Hundred and Ten and 0/100

Today's Date

410.00

Your Signature

NOT A LEGAL CHECK
FOR TEACHING USE ONLY

*If you are using someone else's check, make sure they sign the check
*You can use a Money Order or cashier’s check but it is harder to track
* “For” or “Notes” - for your personal note, we recommend you put your
SEVIS number but it is not required.
Payment - Option 2: Credit Card

* Make sure address on form matches credit card billing address

* Check information for accuracy

* Recommend you type and hand sign in black pen ink.

* If you use this form, it must be placed first in your application packet.

USCIS Form G-1450

* Make sure address on form matches credit card billing address

* Check information for accuracy

* Recommend you type and hand sign in black pen ink.

* If you use this form, it must be placed first in your application packet.
Passport Style Photos

- Must meet specifications of US Passport Style Photos
- The photos must be taken within the past 30 days in the US. Do not take them at home!
- Background should be plain white or off-white
- Head should be centered within frame and photo should show full face
- Make sure you have a natural expression

Most places that take passport photos are already familiar with the specifications.
I-94 & Passport Copies

Print out your most recent I-94 and include a copy with your application

- Enter Traveler Info
- Most Recent I-94 Results

Send a copy of the following passport pages with your application

- Bio Page
- Most recent F-1 visa
- Most recent entry stamp

Remember: your passport must be valid for at least 6 months into the future! Check your expiration date!
Previous I-20’s

We recommend you include

- Most recent I-20 showing Post Completion OPT
- Any previous OPT I-20’s for different degree
- No need to mail copies of ALL I-20’s
Prepare your application for USCIS

- You will be emailed a supplementary handout with your I-20.
  - Mailing instructions and application order will be listed in the handout
- We recommend mailing via UPS/FEDEX for tracking purposes.
  - Filing addresses are located on the Direct Filing Addresses for Form I-765
Application Sent! What now?

- You may or you may not get an email/text from using the G-1145
- USCIS will mail Form I-797C Notice of Action to you
  - Indicates your application is received, contains your receipt number
  - This does not allow you to work but does allow you to remain in the USA
  - Allows you to “Check your case status” at www.uscis.gov
  - Verify your name, date of birth, and address on the I-765 receipt notice.
- If you do not receive a receipt notice 6 weeks after you mail your application, request a receipt letter by USCIS online tools www.uscis.gov/tools
- If you do change your mailing address, you will need to update on USCIS Change of Address page
Rejected or Denied Applications

If your application is rejected or denied by USCIS for any reason, please contact CIE before you re-submit your application or respond to your RFE. You may need an updated I-20 as part of your response/application.

**Rejection** - If there is an error in your application that is noticed at the USCIS Lockbox, USCIS will return the entire application to you. If this happens, contact CIE.

**RFE** - If there is a problem with your application, USCIS will send you a “Request for Evidence (RFE)”. This means you need to send additional documents.
Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

USCIS takes approximately 3-5 months for processing.

- Review card to make sure the information is accurate. If not, contact CIE.
- Present your EAD to employers as proof of your legal work authorization
- The EAD is a required document for entry into the US during OPT STEM.
- Email a copy to CIE upon receiving the card
Reporting Requirements

Required Reporting (within 10 days of the change)

- Report address changes
- Report phone and/or email address changes
- Report employer changes
- Report employer updates
- 6-Month Validation Reports
- Date of departure from the U.S. if you leave prior to OPT STEM end date and want to end your OPT
- Change of status to another immigration status

Download SEVP’s [STEM OPT Reporting Requirements one-pager](#)!
The SEVP Portal

- You can update your address, email and phone number in the SEVP Portal.
- You will not be able to update employer information in SEVP Portal
  - You will need to submit a new I-983 to CIE to update employer information
  - Updates made by CIE can take up to 24 hours to reflect in your SEVP Portal
- Your validation reporting schedule is in your SEVP Portal
Evaluations & Validation Reports

Validation Reports

• You must submit a validation report to CIE every 6 months starting from the date the 24-month STEM begins and ends when your EAD expires or your F-1 status ends
• 4 validations in total over 24 months
  - Mark your calendar to report 6 months from your EAD card start date
• Failure to report could affect your SEVIS status

Annual Evaluations

• You must submit Form I-983 page 5 to CIE at each 12 months along with your validation report
• You also must submit the evaluation when you leave an employer

Review CIE’s [OPT STEM 24-Month Reporting](#) page for reporting method and requirements
Report Material Changes to Form I-983

Material changes to the I-983 must be submitted to CIE via an updated I-983. Material Changes may include, but are not limited to:

- Change in your employer address or supervisor
- Any changes to the employer’s Employer Identification Number resulting from a change in the employer’s ownership or structure
- Any reduction in your compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked
- Any significant decrease in hours per week that you engage in a STEM training opportunity.
- Changes to the employer’s commitments or your learning objectives as documented in your I-983
Changing Employers While on OPT STEM

If you change employers during your 24-month STEM OPT, follow the instructions listed on our [Changing Employers while on OPT STEM](#) page.

If your STEM application is still pending with USCIS, please follow the instructions in the link above and contact CIE for further instructions.
Travel while on OPT STEM

Documents required to return to the USA

- A valid EAD card
- An endorsed I-20 (Endorsement only valid for 6 months)
- A valid F-1 visa
- A valid passport
- A letter from your employer (recommended)

Please review CIE’s Travel page for any updates and form links

Travel while OPT STEM is pending, but before STEM OPT Cards is Received

- There is a higher risk with traveling while your application is pending after your Post Completion EAD expires
- If your OPT STEM application is denied while outside the U.S., and your Post Completion EAD has expired, you will not be able to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status and will not be able to reapply
Completing OPT & Grace Period

- You have a 60 day grace period following the end of your OPT STEM EAD. Your options include:
  - Exit the U.S. within 60 days
  - Obtain a new I-20
    - [Transfer your SEVIS record](#) to a new program or request a Change of Level I-20 if you are continuing your studies at CSUEB
    - Work with an immigration lawyer regarding a Change of Status application to a new visa status.
- The only additional extension of OPT is OPT [Cap-Gap](#), for students who have an accepted H-1B application.
REMINDERS

- All signatures on USCIS forms need to be in black ink, no electronic signatures allowed
- You must sign your I-20 before submitting as part of your application
- Application must be submitted within 60 days of CIE Advisor’s signature on page 1
- You are responsible for checking I-765 Form Edition
- You are responsible for checking application fee amount
- You must be INSIDE the USA to apply for STEM OPT
- If your application gets rejected and returned to you, please let us know so we can issue you a new OPT request I-20.
- If you plan on submitting online, please review our [USCIS I-765 Online Filing Process](https://www.uscis.gov/i-765)