

## 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, allowing a total of 36 months.

The degree programs that qualify for a STEM extension from May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 are listed at <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf>

\*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. Your application must be received by USCIS within 60 days of the OPT STEM recommendation by CIE.

#### 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.

**Processing Time:** USCIS are currently taking 3-5 months to process OPT STEM applications. They will mail your receipt notice within 4-6 weeks to the address you specified on your I-765 form. You may check your application status <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>

### **Mailing Application to USCIS yourself**

To request an I-20 from CIE, please EMAIL the following documents:

1. **Completed Form I-983**
2. **Request for 24 Month STEM OPT I-20 form,**
3. **OPT STEM Validation & Reporting Requirements and Statement of Understanding**
4. **Copy of your completed I-765** to your international student advisor for processing.
5. **CIE advisors will review your request, make recommendations for your I-765 and email you a scanned copy of your I-20.**
6. Print out the scanned copy of your I-20, SIGN and Date the copy and mail the copy to USCIS as part of the application materials listed below. CIE will mail your original I-20 to your when the University reopens

### **Application Order**

1. **Form G-1145** – optional but recommended
2. **I-765**- Original Completed Signed I-765. Include all 7 pages. No electronic signatures allowed. Make sure you are using the current version.
3. **I-20**- Copy of your new signed 24-Month OPT Extension request I-20
  - a. Remember to sign your I-20.
4. **Degree Proof**- A copy of your diploma **OR** **original** official transcript with degree posted in sealed envelope
5. **EAD**- A copy of your current EAD (front and back)
6. **Previous I-20**- A copy of your most recent Post Completion OPT I-20
7. **Passport**- Copy of the Bio Page, Visa Page and most recent entry stamp from your Passport
8. **I-94**- Printout of your most recent I-94
9. **Employment Verification Letter**- recommended but optional
10. **Payment and Photos**- Check and 2 photos in an envelope with your name and SEVIS number written on the front. \*\*\*If you are paying by credit card, form G-1450, it **MUST** be the first form on the application. It **MUST be placed** before G-1145\*\*\*. We recommend using <https://www.uscis.gov/feecalculator> to verify the correct fee amount.

**NOTES**

- Form I-983 does not get mailed to USCIS as part of your application
- Your application must be received by USCIS within 60 days of your I-20 being issued by CIE.
- NO STAPLES- remove all staples before sending your application

**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 courier:

<b>USCIS Phoenix and Dallas Lockbox facilities</b>													
<b>If you live in:</b>	<b>Mail your application to:</b>												
Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands	<p><b>USCIS Phoenix Lockbox</b></p> <table> <tr> <td><u>For Express Mail (FedEx, UPS)</u></td> <td><u>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS)</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>USCIS</b></td> <td><b>USCIS</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Attn: NFB AOS</b></td> <td><b>P.O. Box 21281</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S</b></td> <td><b>Phoenix, AZ 85036</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Suite 100</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Phoenix, AZ 85034</b></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<u>For Express Mail (FedEx, UPS)</u>	<u>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS)</u>	<b>USCIS</b>	<b>USCIS</b>	<b>Attn: NFB AOS</b>	<b>P.O. Box 21281</b>	<b>1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S</b>	<b>Phoenix, AZ 85036</b>	<b>Suite 100</b>		<b>Phoenix, AZ 85034</b>	
<u>For Express Mail (FedEx, UPS)</u>	<u>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS)</u>												
<b>USCIS</b>	<b>USCIS</b>												
<b>Attn: NFB AOS</b>	<b>P.O. Box 21281</b>												
<b>1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S</b>	<b>Phoenix, AZ 85036</b>												
<b>Suite 100</b>													
<b>Phoenix, AZ 85034</b>													
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	<p><b>USCIS Dallas Lockbox</b></p> <table> <tr> <td><u>For Express Mail (FedEx, UPS)</u></td> <td><u>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS)</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>USCIS</b></td> <td><b>USCIS</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Attn: NFB AOS</b></td> <td><b>P.O. Box 21281</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>2501 S. State Hwy, 121 Business</b></td> <td><b>Phoenix, AZ 85036</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Suite 400</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Lewisville, TX 75067</b></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<u>For Express Mail (FedEx, UPS)</u>	<u>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS)</u>	<b>USCIS</b>	<b>USCIS</b>	<b>Attn: NFB AOS</b>	<b>P.O. Box 21281</b>	<b>2501 S. State Hwy, 121 Business</b>	<b>Phoenix, AZ 85036</b>	<b>Suite 400</b>		<b>Lewisville, TX 75067</b>	
<u>For Express Mail (FedEx, UPS)</u>	<u>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS)</u>												
<b>USCIS</b>	<b>USCIS</b>												
<b>Attn: NFB AOS</b>	<b>P.O. Box 21281</b>												
<b>2501 S. State Hwy, 121 Business</b>	<b>Phoenix, AZ 85036</b>												
<b>Suite 400</b>													
<b>Lewisville, TX 75067</b>													

# I-765 Guidelines for OPT Applications

These directions are meant to help you with best practices in completing the Form I-765 for an OPT or STEM OPT Extension application. **Please note, this is not legal advice!!**

## **General Guidelines**

You can find the Form I-765 and official instructions to complete the form here: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> . Make sure you are using the current version.

**We STRONGLY recommend you type as much as possible (besides your signature) as the data entry for this form is done via machine reading. Your signature and any answers you were not able to type, should be completed in BLACK INK. Reminder- no electronic signatures accepted.**

If you need more space for a response, use Part 6 Additional Information. Make copies of Part 6 or attach separate sheets of paper if needed. Include your name, Alien Registration Number (A-Number) if applicable, and the corresponding Page, Part and Item Numbers for your response at the top of each sheet. Sign and date each sheet.

Guidance here is only given for those items that can be somewhat confusing in nature. Please fill all fields, regardless of whether suggestions are given here!

## **Part 1**

Item 1. OPT STEM: Select 1.a.- Initial permission to accept employment

## **Part 2**

- **Item 2:** Share any other way your name is given on your legal documents. This includes “FNU,” multiple last names you may sometimes use, or previous names you used if you changed your name for any reasons, such as marriage.
- **Item 5:** This is the address where USCIS will mail your documents related to this application only. If using anyone else’s address, BE SURE to put their name in the “In Care Of Name” field, to ensure delivery. Do not use CSUEB address
- **Item 6:** Check YES if you currently in the same address you just gave as the place to send your documents, in item 5. If you check yes, you do NOT have to complete Item 7. If you check NO, please complete item 7.
- **Item 7:** Please give the address where you currently live. USCIS will NOT mail documents here, and it’s okay if this will change over the course of your application processing. Just use the address where you live today.
- **Item 8:** Your A-Number will be on your EAD card (called a “USCIS number”).
- **Item 9:** USCIS Online Account Number should be blank
- **Items 13 – 17:** Provide your SSN. You can then check NO for Item 14, and skip down to item 18.
- **Item 21a:** Your I-94 number is found on your most recent I-94 entry record. You can access your most recent I-94 by using this link and going to “Get Most Recent I-94”: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home> Please be sure that you use the I-94 from your most recent entry to the US!
- **Item 21.c:** Blank
- **Item 24:** “F-1 student” unless you changed your status from within the US, and have not left the US since then.
- **Item 25:** “F-1 student.”
- **Item 26:** You can find your SEVIS ID number at the top left of your I-20. It starts with N00

- **Item 27:** This item is asking you to give the regulatory citation of the kind of work permission you are applying for.
  - STEM OPT Extension: **(c)(3)(C)**
- **Item 28a:** Please list your degree level and major
- **Item 28b:** Employer's name as listed in E-Verify- this has to match!
- **Item 28.c:** Be sure that this number is 5-7 digits long. Employers and students often confuse this request for an EIN tax ID number for the company, or the individual student's E-Verify ID. You will need to ask your company for this number, as it is not public knowledge.
- **Items 29 – 31:** Skip these, as they are for other immigration categories only.

### **Part 3**

- **Item 1a.** Check this box
- **Item 3-5:** Complete your contact information
- **READ THE STATEMENT IN FULL AS THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE AGREEING TO WHEN YOU SIGN THE FORM**
- Sign in **Item 7.a.** in **black ink** – this should be an original signature, and cannot be electronic, typed or stamped.

### **Parts 4-5**

Should be blank if you are completing the form yourself

### **Part 6**

Complete this section! You will have to include your Post Completion OPT information as well as any CPT and different SEVIS information.

- You have been approved for **CPT** in the past
- You have been approved for **OPT** in the past
- You have used a different SEVIS ID in F-1 status in the US (for example, you attended school for a while, left the US to take a break from school, and returned with a new I-20, you would have a SEVIS ID from your first period of attendance that is different than your current SEVIS ID). Your SEVIS ID is on the top right corner of your I-20, and starts with N00..

**Item 1.** You need to complete this section because one or more of the above statements apply to you

**Item 2.** You will need to complete Part 6, Item 2 (A-Number), if you are applying for STEM OPT; your "A-Number" will be on your EAD card (called a "USCIS number").

**Items 3-7.** For each of the items listed above (i.e. CPT, OPT, different SEVIS ID numbers), complete one box in Part 6, starting with 3.a. We suggest using the following to complete the Page number, Part Number, and Item number, as this information is required specific to Category (c)(3)(B) (per the [I-765 instructions](#), page 4):

**For 3a-c, 4a-c, and/or 5a-c, etc., list the following:**

## For previous OPT applications

### Page 2, Part 2, Item 12

- **OPT:** Please list your past OPT approvals. We suggest this format: **OPT Authorizations.** (as a title to the section). SEVIS #, OPT, Start date – End date; Degree level (Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD)

*For example: N0000000000, OPT, 09/08/17-10/07/18, Bachelor's (Full Time)*

## For previous CPT and SEVIS Numbers

### Page 3, Part 2, Item 26

- **CPT:** Please list your CPT approvals. We suggest this format: **CPT Authorizations.** (as a title to the section). SEVIS #, CPT, Start date – End date; Part-time or Full-time; Degree level (Bachelor's, Master's). You can find your CPT details on the I-20 that was approved for each period of CPT.

*For example: N0000000000, CPT, 07/07/17-09/07/17, Bachelor's, Part Time (or Full Time)*

- **Previous SEVIS ID's:** Please list your other SEVIS ID's you have used in the past. We suggest this format: **Previous SEVIS ID's** (as a title to the section). SEVIS ID: N00.....; program start date – program end date; Degree level (Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD).

*For example: Previous SEVIS ID N0000000000, 09/08/13-05/20/16, Bachelor's*

**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  Bachelor's  Master's

Residential 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.

**Employer Information**

Employer's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Employer's E-Verify Number \_\_\_\_\_

Paid Position  Yes  No Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**Previous Employer Information**

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

**DUE TO COVID, YOUR STEM I-20 WILL BE SCANNED AND EMAILED TO YOU.**

## **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 information has changed

**You are also required to submit the evaluation page of the I-983 at 12 months and 24 months AND upon leaving a specific employer.**

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

1. Any change of your name, residence, mailing address, or phone number- you can update via your SEVP Portal.
2. Any change of employer- required information here: <http://www.csueastbay.edu/cie/f-1-students/employment/changing-employers-while-on-opt-stem.html>
3. Any change to the name and address of employer or the student's objectives stated in the currently filed I-983 Mentoring and Training Plan Change
4. Any interruption of employment with an evaluation page from employer

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

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

TODAYS DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ NETID: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSONAL EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_



## 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-