International Student Center
24- Month OPT STEM Extension Guide

To apply for the 24-month OPT STEM extension, you must submit an application to USCIS similar to your application for Post-Completion OPT. The OPT STEM extension application MUST be received by USCIS by the end date on your current EAD card, but less than 90 days before that date. Unlike the application for Post-Completion OPT, if you do not receive the new EAD card before the current EAD card expires, you are allowed to continue working for up to 180 days while the application is pending.

You will need a new I-20 from the ISC that is endorsed for your OPT STEM extension, as a copy must go with your application to USCIS. Before requesting this I-20 from the ISC, please read the information below.

To request this new I-20, please submit the OPT STEM Extension Record Form (last page of this guide) and your I-983 Training Plan, completed by you and your employer. Please submit these items to the ISC at least 3 weeks before your Post-OPT ends, as processing will take 5-7 business days. You may submit these items in-person at the ISC Reception Desk or by email to isc.reception@sdsu.edu. Retain copies of these documents for your records and give a copy of the I-983 to your employer.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the 24-month OPT STEM extension, you must meet the following requirements:
- You are currently on approved Post-Completion OPT.
- You apply for the OPT STEM extension before the current Post-Completion OPT expires.
- You have earned a degree (bachelor's or higher) in a STEM field or completed all coursework towards that degree (you can still be working on thesis or dissertation).
- You have previously applied for no more than one OPT STEM extension based on a lower degree level.
- Your employer is registered in the E-Verify program and has an E-Verify number.
- You must be in a bonafide employer-employee relationship with the STEM OPT employer.
- Employment during the STEM extension must be paid, and you must work a minimum of 20 hours per week for each employer.

List of STEM degrees: [https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension)

Periods of Unemployment

While on the OPT STEM Extension, you are allowed a maximum total of 150 days of unemployment from the start date on your current EAD for Post-Completion OPT through the end date of your OPT STEM Extension.

I-983 Training Plan

The I-983 Training Plan must be completed by you and your employer. You will complete Page 1 and your employer completes Pages 2-4. The following information may be useful when completing the I-983:
- SEVIS School Code: SND214F0014200
- Designated School Official Name and Contact: ISC Advisor with whom you are working, their email address, and 619-594-1982
- Student SEVIS ID: Found on the top of your I-20 (N00...)
- STEM OPT Requested Period: 2 years from end of Post-OPT (Example: if the end date on your Post-OPT EAD card is 12/30/2018, then your STEM OPT will be From 12/31/2018 To 12/30/2020)
- CIP Code: On page 1 of your I-20, next to the name of your major listed there
- Based on Previous Degree? Check “No” (unless this is based on a degree you earned before your most recent program at SDSU)
- Employment Authorization Number: "USCIS Number" found on your EAD card
- Information for your Employer is at [https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/employers-and-the-form-i-983](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/employers-and-the-form-i-983)

Updated May 2019
After the ISC receives your completed OPT STEM Extension Record and I-983, it will take 5-7 business days to process the new STEM OPT I-20 and send it to you. After you receive the new I-20, please read the information below.

**Application Filing Period**

USCIS must receive your application before the End Date on your EAD card for Post-Completion OPT but CANNOT receive it more than 90 days before your Post-Completion OPT ends. It also must be within 60 days of the date your new I-20 was created.

**Don’t forget to sign and date your I-20 at the bottom of page 1 and make a copy of both pages to include in your application to USCIS!**

**Document Checklist for Mailing the STEM OPT Application to USCIS**

Put items in this order for mailing:

- Payment to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” for $410 (check, money order, or Form G-1450)
- Typed G-1145 (optional)
- Note for I-765 Application (on ISC Forms webpage)
- Typed and signed I-765 application (all 7 pages), signed in black ink
- Copies of your signed and dated STEM OPT I-20 Pages 1 and 2 — you must get the new I-20 from the ISC first!
- Copies of both sides of EAD card for Post OPT
- Copies of most recent I-20 for Post OPT (pages 1 and 2)
- Copy of passport biographic page
- Copy of most recent F-1 visa in passport
- Printed copy of most recent I-94
- Copy of your SDSU diploma if you have graduated or, if you have not yet graduated, a copy of your SDSU transcript (unofficial transcripts are acceptable) that shows your STEM academic program (NOTE: For students in the MBA in Information Systems, include the copy of your diploma and the transcript)
- 2 U.S. passport photos taken in the U.S. within the past 30 days (lightly write your name and SEVIS Number on back and paperclip to other application documents)

**USCIS Mailing Addresses**

If your mailing address (Part 2, 5a-5e) on Form I-765 is in California:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) First-Class and Priority Mail Express deliveries:</th>
<th>Express Mail (Fed Ex and UPS):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USCIS</td>
<td>USCIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.O. Box 21281</td>
<td>Attn: NFB AOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix, AZ  85036</td>
<td>1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ 85034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your mailing address (Part 2, 5a-5e) on Form I-765 is outside of California:

Send your package to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox Facility (either Phoenix or Dallas), which can be found on the USCIS website at [www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-information/uscis-phoenix-and-dallas-lockbox-facilities](http://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-information/uscis-phoenix-and-dallas-lockbox-facilities)
Maintaining your F-1 Immigration Status while on the OPT STEM Extension

While on the OPT STEM Extension, you remain in F1 student status and you must follow the reporting requirements below from USCIS and the Department of Homeland Security:

**EVERY 6 MONTHS (3 times)**
You must report your “OPT STEM Participation” to the ISC (your employment and U.S. address/phone number information) every 6 months from the date your OPT STEM Extension begins on the ISC’s OPT Update Form ([http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/internationalstudents/optupdate.aspx](http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/internationalstudents/optupdate.aspx)). Please select “Employment on the OPT STEM Extension”. If you receive an Automatic Email Reminder from the ISC, then you are required to report your information again, even if you recently submitted your information to us. Please remember that the time you must report is based on your OPT STEM dates, *not* the ISC email date...so do not report early or late. If you do not receive the Automatic Email Reminder, then you have not given the ISC your current email address and will need to submit it to the ISC on the OPT Update Form.

*Example of 3 SEVIS Reportable Dates: If your Post-Completion OPT ends on 12/30/18, then your OPT STEM begins 12/31/18. Your 3 Reportable Dates would be 6/30/19, 12/30/19, and 6/30/20.*

**EVERY 12 MONTHS (2 times or more)**
You must report your participation following the instructions above and also submit a Self Evaluation 12 months from the date your OPT STEM Extension begins and the Final Evaluation at the end of your STEM Extension. The evaluations are on Page 5 of the I-983 Training Plan and must be signed by you and your supervisor. Use the top part for the first 12 months and the bottom part for the final 12 months or if you are leaving your employer before the end of STEM OPT. You can upload the evaluation as a PDF directly to the ISC’s OPT Update Form when reporting your employment information. You do not need to submit Pages 1-4 of the I-983 if you are working for the same employer; please only submit Page 5.

*Example of 2 Self Evaluation Dates: If your Post-Completion OPT ends on 12/30/18, then your OPT STEM begins 12/31/18. Your 2 Self Evaluations are due on 12/30/19 and 12/30/20.*

**IF YOU CHANGE EMPLOYERS WHILE YOUR OPT STEM APPLICATION IS PENDING**
You must send the ISC a new OPT STEM Extension Record form (the last page of this guide), the I-983 Training Plan completed by you and the new employer, and a copy of the I-797 Receipt Notice from USCIS for your OPT STEM Extension Application. You will also need to send a completed Final Evaluation if the change happens after your Post-OPT ends. Please email the three (or four) documents to the ISC at isc.reception@sdsu.edu and state that your application is pending and you are changing employers.

**IF YOU CHANGE EMPLOYERS AFTER YOUR OPT STEM APPLICATION IS APPROVED**
You must submit the new information to the ISC on the ISC’s OPT Update Form ([http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/internationalstudents/optupdate.aspx](http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/internationalstudents/optupdate.aspx)) with the Final Evaluation and new I-983 Training Plan. Please select “Employment on the OPT STEM Extension”. You and your old employer must complete the Final Evaluation (bottom part of page 5 of the I-983 Training Plan) and you and your new employer must complete a new I-983 Training Plan. You can upload those documents as PDF’s to the ISC’s OPT Update Form.

**IF YOU CHANGE YOUR U.S. ADDRESS, CELL PHONE NUMBER, or EMAIL ADDRESS**
For a change in your U.S. Address or U.S. Cell Phone, you should update your SEVP Portal Account with the new information. For a change in your personal email address, submit the new information on the ISC’s OPT Update Form.

*As a reminder, all changes in OPT employment information and personal information must be submitted within 10 days of the change.*

**EMPLOYMENT WHILE OPT STEM EXTENSION APPLICATION IS PENDING**
While your OPT STEM Extension application is pending, you may continue to work with your expired EAD card for Post-OPT for up to 180 days.
OPT STEM Extension Record Form

Name: ___________________________________________ Red ID: ____________________________

Phone Number: ___________________________ Email: ________________________________________

U.S. Address: ____________________________________________________

(Make sure your personal information in your SEVP Portal Account matches the information you write above)

Major: ___________________________________________ Degree: ______________________________

Employment Information

Job Title or Position _________________________________________________________________

Employer Information - Company Name __________________________________________________

Company Headquarters Address Company Address Where You Work
(Include Street Address, City, State and ZIP Code for both - if same address, then only complete Headquarters)

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

Supervisor Information:
Name of Supervisor(s) ________________________________________________________________

Phone Number and Email Address ______________________________________________________

Explain how employment is related to field of study (Do not just write a job description. You must include how your job relates to your degree at SDSU):

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

SEVIS Reporting Dates

3 Reportable Dates: __________________, ___________________, __________________
You are required to report your employer and personal information (report your STEM OPT participation) every 6 months from the beginning of your OPT STEM Extension, even if there is no change. Please list the three dates at which you must report your participation. For help with determining these dates, please see the OPT STEM Extension Record Form, Page 3.

Annual Self-Evaluation Dates: ___________________ and ___________________
You are required to do a self-evaluation every 12 months from the beginning of your OPT STEM Extension. These evaluations are on Page 5 of the I-983 Training Plan and need to be submitted to the ISC. For help with determining these dates, please see the OPT STEM Extension Record Form, Page 3. If you end employment during the STEM Extension, you are also required to submit a completed/signed Final Evaluation for that employment to the ISC.

OPT STEM Extension Statement of Understanding

I fully understand all the eligibility and reporting requirements stated in the San Diego State University International Student Center’s OPT STEM Extension Guide. I am only allowed to work in my field of study for E-Verified companies in a non-voluntary position. I must report personal address/phone number/email and employment changes and update the ISC with this information on the dates stated above, as well as within 10 days of any change. All periods of unemployment combined can be no more than a total of 150 days for my 3 years of OPT.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________