

24-MONTH STEM OPT EXTENSION (STEM OPT) COVER SHEET

Follow the steps below to prepare your 24-Month STEM OPT extension application and to file your request to USCIS in a timely manner.

Read the Cover Sheet in full before filing your request to USCIS.

Step 1- Review the items you receive from the International Student Advisor for accuracy and understanding:

- Cover Sheet
- **New I-20** with the STEM OPT recommendation listed in page 2 along with your current OPT employers.

Step 2- File your completed STEM OPT application to USCIS in a timely manner.

- File the Form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization), up to 90 days before your current OPT employment authorization expires, and within 60 days of the date your designated school official (DSO) enters the recommendation for OPT into your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) record.
- You may not apply for STEM OPT extensions during the 60-day grace period of post-completion OPT.
- Be advised, filing online may require a Biometrics appointment. The ISS advisor will have limited ability to assist you with the online application.

Step 3- Review important STEM OPT F-1 status reminders.

- Travel is **not recommended** while your application is in pending status. Review our website for additional [travel guidance](#).
- Continue to work for **up to 180 days** after the end of your Post-Completion OPT end date while the STEM OPT application is pending with USCIS, as long as you have filed for STEM OPT in a timely manner.
- Familiarize yourself with the [STEM OPT Mandatory Reporting Requirements](#). You will be accountable to fulfill all reporting requirements from the day your application is filed to USCIS.
 - Report any changes to your contact information, and changes to your employment status within **10 business days** from any change.
 - Report mandatory requirements within 10 business days from the **reporting requirement due date**.
 - **Report** may include confirming certain information in your [SEVP Portal](#), and submitting the [STEM OPT employment and address update form](#) with the necessary supporting documentation to the ISS office.
- You will have an additional 60 days of **unemployment time**; therefore, you can have up to 150 unemployment days during your OPT STEM period only if you did not use the 90 days limit during OPT.
- Work for a minimum of 21 hours per week per employer, in a job that fits your STEM designated CIP code/major.
- Work for an employer who meets all the requirements established by [USCIS STEM OPT Employer Responsibilities](#).
- If at any time you have questions or need assistance, you can [Meet with an ISS Advisor](#) for guidance. For additional information, please refer to the [DHS STEM OPT Hub](#).

Keep in mind that you are solely responsible for understanding STEM OPT regulations including but not limited to application process, application deadlines, reporting requirements, unemployment limitations, etc.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
LONG BEACH
STEM OPT Filing Instructions

STEM OPT Documents:

Save your application documents, also known as “evidence”, in a valid format.

- One 2x2 [U.S. passport style photo](#) of you, no more than 30 days old.
- Copy of your most recent I-94 record. The I-94 record can be a copy of the front and back of the paper card, change of status I-797 Form or [Electronic I-94 Record](#).
- Copy of your OPT EAD front and back.
- Copy of your **newly issued STEM OPT I-20 properly signed by you and the DSO**.
- Copy of qualifying U.S. College Degree with [STEM OPT Designation](#). OR
- Copy of official transcripts for your qualifying U.S. Degree.
- Institution accreditation, **only if** this STEM OPT extension is based on a **previously earned** STEM degree.
- Copy of passport photo ID page with expiration date showing (valid for at least another 6 months).

STEM OPT Online Filing Instructions

[USCIS How to File a Form online](#): Use this link to review the full list of recommendations to properly upload evidence to your online application. Recommendations include: use files that do not exceed 6MB in size, do not encrypt or password protect files, use only these formats: PDF, JPG, or JPEG. If documents are in a foreign language, upload an English translation along with the original.

- A. Create your USCIS account.
 - Go to [USCIS Sign Up](#) page to create your USCIS Online account.
 - Review [How to Create a USCIS Online Account](#) for specific instructions.
- B. Log in to your USCIS Account to start your application and upload your application evidence.
 - In the welcome window click on “File a Form Online”, then click on “Start Form”.
 - Select the form you want to file: **Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)**
 - Read all information, disclaimers and acknowledgements carefully.
 - Select your appropriate eligibility category: **(c)(3)(C) STEM Extension**
 - Select your **reason** for applying: **Renewal of permission to accept employment**.
 - Use the PDF I-765 form reviewed by your DSO to answer the I-765 questions.
 - Upload the required evidence for your eligibility category.
 - **Very important:** When prompted, upload your **new STEM OPT I-20**. This I-20 will serve as your Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status for the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category.
 - **Skip uploading the institution accreditation**, if your STEM OPT extension is based on your latest STEM degree.
 - You may use the “Additional Information” window to upload any additional evidence not previously uploaded to the application such as the **job offer letter**.
 - Have your form filing fee ready. You may pay with a withdrawal from a checking or savings account or with a debit or credit card. **As of 4/1/2024 the fee will increase to \$470 for online filing.**
 - **Review and Submit:** check your application responses for accuracy and review alerts.
 - Save your online request as a **draft** if you cannot complete it the same day.
 - **Pay for your request:** You will not be able to make changes to your online request after you pay.

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STEM OPT Online Filing Instructions continued

C. Confirmation of online filing

- You will receive a **Receipt Notice of Action (Form I-797)** with your case number upon submitting your online request.
- You will have access to all case correspondence on your USCIS account.
- You can check your case status and update personal information on your [USCIS account](#).
- You may also use your case number to check the status of your application online at [Case Status Online](#).
- You should expect your **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)** to arrive by mail.
- Processing time may take an average of 90 days from your receipt date.
- Contact USCIS immediately if the correspondence you receive presents inaccurate information.