24-Month STEM OPT Extension

Presented by:

International Students and Scholars
Center for International Education
California State University, Long Beach

Updated: 9/22/2023
Audio Set up

- If you have a microphone, you will be able to ask questions verbally.
- If you don’t have a microphone, you will be able to type your questions.
- This session will be recorded.
This tutorial will help you:

- Learn the 24-Month STEM OPT extension Eligibility Requirements.
- Understand the application deadlines & process.
- Understand the key elements of Form I-983.
- Learn What is necessary to Maintain F-1 status including the Mandatory Reporting requirements.
- Review Frequently asked questions.
- Recognize key Resources.
What is the 24-Month STEM OPT extension?

• The 24-Month STEM OPT extension allows students with STEM designated degrees the opportunity to extend their current employment authorization for an additional 24-Months.
24-Month STEM OPT Eligibility
Eligibility is determined by 4 components:
QUALIFYING DEGREE

- Degree program must be at one of the following educational levels: Bachelor's; Master's; or Doctoral.
- The degree that serves as the basis for a second lifetime STEM OPT extension, however, must be at a higher educational level i.e. BS → MS
- The major field of study of the degree program must have a CIP code that appears on the DHS STEM OPT Designated Programs List.
- The STEM OPT extension may be based either on:
  - The degree that serves as the basis of the student’s current period of standard 12-month post-completion OPT,
  - A degree conferred no more than 10 years prior to the one that serves as the basis of the student’s current period of standard 12-month post-completion OPT.
### STEM Designated Degree Program List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIP Code Two-Digit Series</th>
<th>2020 CIP Code</th>
<th>CIP Code Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0308</td>
<td>Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0901</td>
<td>Animal Sciences, General.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0902</td>
<td>Agricultural Animal Breeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0903</td>
<td>Animal Health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01.0904</td>
<td>Animal Nutrition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.0301</td>
<td>Data Processing and Data Processing Technology/Technician.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.0401</td>
<td>Information Science/Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.0501</td>
<td>Computer Systems Analysis/Analyst.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.0701</td>
<td>Computer Science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.0802</td>
<td>Data Modeling/Warehousing and Database Administration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Your I-20

**PROGRAM OF STUDY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL</th>
<th>MAJOR 1</th>
<th>MAJOR 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MASTER'S</td>
<td>Computer Science 11.0701</td>
<td>None 00.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY**

| Required |

**ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES**

| Student is proficient |

**START OF CLASSES**

| 21 JANUARY 2014 |

**PROGRAM START/END DATE**

| 21 JANUARY 2014 - 20 MAY 2016 |
QUALIFYING EMPLOYER

The regulations require any job undertaken during a 24-month STEM OPT extension to be with an employer who meets the following conditions:

- The employer is enrolled in E-Verify
- The employer has an IRS Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- The employer has sufficient resources and personnel available to provide the training specified in the Form I-983
- The employer signs the Form I-983 Training Plan, agreeing to the wage, working conditions, supervision, site visit, and reporting obligations set forth on the form and in the regulations-
  - Employer will provide compensation to the STEM OPT student commensurate to that provided to similarly situated U.S. workers
QUALIFYING JOB

• The job must be directly related to the degree that qualifies the student for the STEM OPT extension.
• The job must assist the student in reaching his or her training goals.
• The job must be a paid job therefore volunteer or unpaid positions do not qualify.
• The job's compensation and working conditions must be "commensurate with terms and conditions applicable to the employer's similarly situated U.S. workers in the area of employment."
• The student on a STEM OPT extension cannot replace a full- or part-time, temporary or permanent U.S. worker
• Any job undertaken must be for at least 20 hours per week.
• The job must comply with "all applicable Federal and State requirements relating to employment."
Qualifying job cont.

- The job must be in the context of a **bona-fide employer-employee relationship**.
  - Self-employment does not constitute a qualifying job for purposes of a 24-month STEM OPT extension.
  - F-1 students seeking STEM OPT extensions may be employed by new “start-up” businesses so long as all regulatory requirements are met.
- According to DHS, the following do not constitute a bona-fide employer-employee relationship and are therefore not “apt” for the STEM OPT extension:
  - "multiple employer arrangements"
  - "sole proprietorships"
  - "employment through “temp” agencies"
  - "employment through consulting firm arrangements that provide labor for hire, and"
  - "other relationships that do not constitute a bona fide employer-employee relationship"

Very important!
Questions?
Application Process
# General Application Deadline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students in OPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apply as early as <strong>90 days</strong> before the end of your post-completion OPT authorization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You cannot apply during the 60 days grace period following the end of post-completion OPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File application within 60 days from the day the DSO request the extension and before OPT EAD expires.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24-STEM OPT Extension Timeline

Post Completion OPT
- Application Window
  - 90 days before post completion OPT expires

Period of 24-Months STEM OPT Extension

On-going Reporting—within 10 days
- Termination of employment
- Change of employer
- Change of name/address/contact info
- Material changes to I-983
- Report to CIE office by filling out the STEM Employment and Address Update Form. ccpe.csulb.edu/forms

GRACE PERIOD
- 60 Days grace period to depart the U.S. transfer to another school, or change to another visa category
- If you are simply remaining in the U.S. for the grace period, you cannot leave and re-enter the U.S.
### General process to apply for the 24-Month STEM OPT extension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Determine if you are eligible for the 24-Month STEM OPT extension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Student and employer complete and sign Form I-983 (Training Plan for STEM OPT Student) and all other application forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Submit the evidence of eligibility to the DSO by online submission @ [24-month STEM Optional Practical Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>• DSO recommends the STEM extension and provides new I-20 to student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Student prepares the application using the <strong>Cover Sheet</strong> provide by the DSO, <strong>Files</strong> the complete Application for Work Authorization an all supporting documents to USCIS in a timely manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>• USCIS reviews the application and makes a decision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prepare STEM OPT Application Forms

- Find the application forms for STEM OPT at STEM OPT | CSULB

→ Click on: Application Instructions
Submit Evidence of Eligibility

Use the STEM OPT Online Submission Tool to submit the following documents to the CIE

- 24-Month STEM OPT Calculator
- 24-Month STEM OPT Extension Request Form
- Form I-765
- Form I-983
- Employer Eligibility Form
- Job Offer letter
- Copy of U.S. Degree
- Copy of I-94 Record

We will not review checks/money orders or pictures, but you can use the tools available in our website to help you!

- Application Cost is $410
- Prepare a copy of your official transcripts while you wait for your I-20.

STEM OPT | CSULB
DSO reviews Evidence & issues a New I-20

- All students requesting the 24-Month STEM OPT will receive the following from the DSO:
  - Cover Sheet
  - I-20
- The Cover Sheet will include information about:
  - How to prepare your packet [including fees/pictures]
  - Reminders to maintain F-1 status
  - How to file your application to USCIS
  - What to expect after the application is filed
File your Application to USCIS

Follow the instruction on your Coversheet to prepare and file your application packet to USCIS.

You will have the option to file your application by MAIL or ONLINE.

You must file your packet within 60 days from the original STEM OPT request date.
Track the application review progress

- If you file online, use your USCIS account to track the progress.
- At any time, you may use the online tools to submit inquiries to USCIS about your application and review your case status.
- It is critical that you keep your mailing address updated at all times!

USCIS Contact Center
Dial 800-375-5283
Once your STEM OP is approved you will receive your new EAD by mail.

Review your EAD to ensure your name is spelled accurately and your approval dates are no more than 24 months in length.
The Form I-983
Form I-983

• Also called the Training Plan for STEM OPT Students
• Student and Employers Sign on it → DSO reviews it!
• A complete Form I-983 is required before a DSO makes the recommendation for the 24-Month STEM OPT extension, complete pages 1-4.
• Pg. 5 is due for submission ONLY when evaluation on student progress is due.
• Form I-983 stays with the DSO (it will not be mailed to USCIS).
• Material changes on Form I-983 must be reported in a timely manner.
# I-983 Form brief overview - CSULB

Click here to see the Form I-983 Instructions

## Key elements of page 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1: Student Information (Completed by Student)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name):</strong> Joe Han</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:</strong> CSU, Long Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned:</strong> CSU, Long Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designated DSO Name and Contact Information:</strong> Eugenia Kim, <a href="mailto:cie-student@csulb.edu">cie-student@csulb.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student SEVIS ID No.:</strong> N00XXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STEM OPT Requested Period (mm-dd-yyyy):</strong> From: 05/22/2017 To: 05/21/2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifying Major and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code:</th>
<th>Computer Science 11.701</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level/Type of Qualifying Degree:</td>
<td>Master's of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Awarded (mm-dd-yyyy):</td>
<td>05/22/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on Prior Degree?</td>
<td>Yes [X] No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment Authorization Number:** XXX-XXX-XXX

**SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT (including 3-digit suffix):** LOS214F00361000

**This is the unique School Code for CSULB**

**Write CSULB unless you are using a prior degree from another school**

**Copy this information exactly into Form I-983**

**USCIS # in your current EAD**

**Select NO, unless you are using a prior degree**

**CIP Code: 6-digit number next to the name of your major in your I-20**

**Indicate the period of time which you are requesting to work on STEM OPT:**

- If you are in OPT: day after EAD ends to-24 Months after.
Form I-983
Complete pages 1-4
Use complete Sentences & Answer each question fully!
Signatures in Form I-983

Students and employers may continue to physically sign the Form I-983 or input their own electronic signature. Valid electronic signatures:

- electronic signatures produced with software programs or applications
- digitally reproduced copies of a signature example: a scanned image of a physical signature.
When is a new Form I-983 Due?

- When 24-Month STEM OPT is requested
- When there are any **material changes** to the original training plan
- When the Student stops working for an employer
- When Student changes employer
Questions?
Maintaining F-1 Status
STEM OPT is approved now what...

1. Maintain your F-1 status by working as required by the regulations & follow through with all the Mandatory reporting requirements.
2. Avoid exceeding the unemployment time allowed.
3. It is never recommended that you travel while you have a pending application with USCIS.
# Mandatory Reporting Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>When to Report</th>
<th>How &amp; What to Report or Validate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-Going Reporting</td>
<td>Report any changes within 10 days</td>
<td>Use the STEM OPT Employment and Address Update Form to update: Address, contact information and Employment Status updates. Use Form I-983: Material changes to your training plan or when changing employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Month Validation Reports</td>
<td>Every 6 Months, within 10 days of due date</td>
<td>Use CIE Employment Update Form:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ 6-Month Validation Report</td>
<td>· Legal name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ 12-Month Validation Report</td>
<td>· Residential or mailing address.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ 18-Month Validation Report</td>
<td>· Employer name and address.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation on student</td>
<td>❖ 1st Self Evaluation—p.5</td>
<td>Form I-983 (page 5):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>After 12 months on STEM OPT</td>
<td>1. The student must evaluate his or her progress towards the training goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ 2nd Self- Evaluation—p. 5</td>
<td>2. The supervisor must sign the evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After 24 months on STEM OPT or when terminate employment</td>
<td>3. The student must send the evaluation to the CSULB DSO.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24-STEM OPT Extension Timeline

1. Post Completion OPT
   - Application Window: 90 days before post completion OPT expires

2. 6 Months
   - First Validation Report Due.

3. 12 Months
   - Second Validation Report Due.
   - First Evaluation of Student Progress Due (Form I-983 P.5).

4. 18 Months
   - Third Validation Report Due.

5. 24 Months
   - Final Evaluation of Student Progress Due (Form I-983 P.5).

6. STEM OPT Extension End Date

Period of 24-Months STEM OPT Extension

On-going Reporting-within 10 days
- Termination of employment
- Change of employer
- Change of name/address/contact info
- Material changes to I-983
- Report to CIE office by filling out the STEM Employment and Address Update Form. ccpe.csulb.edu/forms

GRACE PERIOD
- 60 Days grace period to depart the U.S. transfer to another school, or change to another visa category
- If you are simply remaining in the U.S. for the grace period, you cannot leave and re-enter the U.S.
HOW TO REPORT - First Step

Review the reporting reminders available in our website

Section: Maintaining F-1 status & Reporting Requirements

Maintain F-1 Status & Reporting Requirements

**Employment Requirements:**

- The job must be directly related to the degree that qualified you for the STEM OPT extension. The job must be a paid job, for at least 20 hours per week per each employer.

- Employer must be enrolled in the E-Verify program and have an IRS Employer Identification Number (EIN), there must be a ‘bona fide employer-employee’ relationship, and you may not be self-employed. Finally the employer must have sufficient resources and personnel available to provide the training specified in the Form I-983.

- The job’s compensation and working conditions must be ‘commensurate with terms and conditions applicable to the employer’s similarly situated U.S. workers in the area of employment.’

- Do not exceed the unemployment cap.

**Reporting Requirements:**

You will be required to submit several mandatory requirements throughout your time in STEM OPT. Follow the steps below to report on time. Remember that you will be out of status if you fail to report as required.

1. Understand the Mandatory requirements

2. Use the 24-Month STEM OPT Extension Calculator to calculate the due dates for each specific reporting requirements

3. Complete the STEM OPT employment and address update form and submit it to ISS within 10 business days from the deadline. Make sure you also submit all applicable supporting documents as indicated in the form i.e. Form I-983.

For additional help understanding your mandatory reporting requirements for student and employers click in the link below:

STEM OPT reporting requirements handout from Study in the States
HOW TO REPORT - Second Step

Use your SEVP Portal to review a summary of due dates & Ensure your information is accurate. You can access it at https://sevp.ice.gov/opt

Your STEM OPT Reporting Deadlines

While on STEM OPT, you must give your designated school official (DSO):

1. Validation reports to confirm that your address and employer information in SEVIS is correct. These are due every six months.
2. Two Evaluations of Student Progress (page 5 of the Form I-983). These are due:
   a. 12 months after your STEM OPT starts and
   b. 24 months after your STEM OPT starts.
3. Evaluation of Student Progress (page 5 of the Form I-983) when you stop working for a STEM employer before your STEM OPT authorization ends. These are due within 10 days after you stop working for the employer.

Your reporting deadlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What is Due</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jul 12 2019</td>
<td>Validation report for address and employer info</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 12 2020</td>
<td>Validation report for address and employer info</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 12 2020</td>
<td>Evaluation of Student Progress (Form I-983)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 12 2020</td>
<td>Validation report for address and employer info</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW TO REPORT

Submit a completed STEM OPT Employment and Address Update form and supporting documents to ISS- online.

Form and submission instructions available here:
https://www.csulb.edu/international/current-students/request-documents-or-signatures
**Allowable Unemployment Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you received...</th>
<th>You may be unemployed for...</th>
<th>For a total of...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-completion OPT only</td>
<td>Up to 90 days</td>
<td>90 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-month extension</td>
<td>An additional 60 days</td>
<td>150 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The SEVIS System will automatically terminate students who exceed the unemployment time!
- Each day (including weekends) during the period when OPT authorization begins and ends that the student does not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment.
- Unemployment time begins with the start date in the EAD card.
Travel Outside the U.S.

- Travel is **NEVER** recommended when your application is pending and your Post-Completion OPT EAD has expired.
- Travel may be ok before your OPT EAD expires but always ask an International Student Advisor first!

**How to Re-Enter Safely**

- Valid Passport (valid for at least 6 months)
- Valid F-1 Visa Stamp
- Freshly Signed OPT I-20 (No more than 6 months old)
- Unexpired EAD Card
- Letter from your Employer
- Contact information for the designated school official (DSO) at your school
- Ensure you have not exceeded unemployment time

More information about travel can be found at:  
http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2014/06/know-before-you-go-international-students-and-summer-travel
Frequently Asked Questions
Can you work while your application is still pending?

- USCIS may take up to 90 days to process your application. If you file your OPT STEM extension application in a timely manner, you will receive an extension of employment authorization while your application is pending for up to 180 days, or the date of the decision over your request, whichever date is earlier.

- You will not receive any special confirmation for this extension but your STEM OPT I-20 will show the authorization for employment continues after the end of your current EAD.
Can I take classes while in STEM OPT?

- So far only vocational and recreational classes are allowed in part time basis (up to 6 units per semester).
- Classes cannot lead to a certificate or degree.
- You must get authorization from a DSO prior to registration.
What are material Changes?

• Any change of the employer’s Employer Identification Number, (i.e., the company’s Federal Tax ID number) resulting from a change in the employer’s ownership or structure.
• Any reduction in student compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked.
• Any significant decrease in hours per week that a student engages in a STEM training opportunity.
• Changes to the employer’s commitments or student’s learning objectives as documented on the Form I-983.
What happens after STEM OPT?

- You have a 60-day grace period at the end of your STEM OPT extension.
- During this time you can depart the U.S., start a new academic program or change visa status.
Cap Gap???

• Students who are eligible for a Cap-Gap extension of post-completion OPT employment and F1-status may apply for a STEM OPT extension during the Cap-Gap extension period.
Resources

Support Services from ISS

**STEM OPT/OPT e-Newsletter**- Emailed twice per year

**Meet with an Advisor** or email your questions about the 24-Month STEM extension to an International Student Advisor in CIE-
student@csulb.edu

**Letter to the employer**- Request a letter from ISS to better explain STEM OPT to your employer.

**F-1 Student Information sessions**- participate in a LIVE Webinars
Resources cont....

• Review STEM OPT FAQs
• Browse SEVP's Study in the States STEM OPT Help Hub that contains resources to help students, schools, and employers.
• Visit U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) page on STEM OPT
Visit studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students
International Students and Scholars

Location
Foundation 185B

Contact
cie-student@csulb.edu

Web
www.csulb.edu/international
www.facebook.com/csulbiss
www.instagram.com/csulb_iss

Hours
Mondays – Thursdays
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Fridays
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm