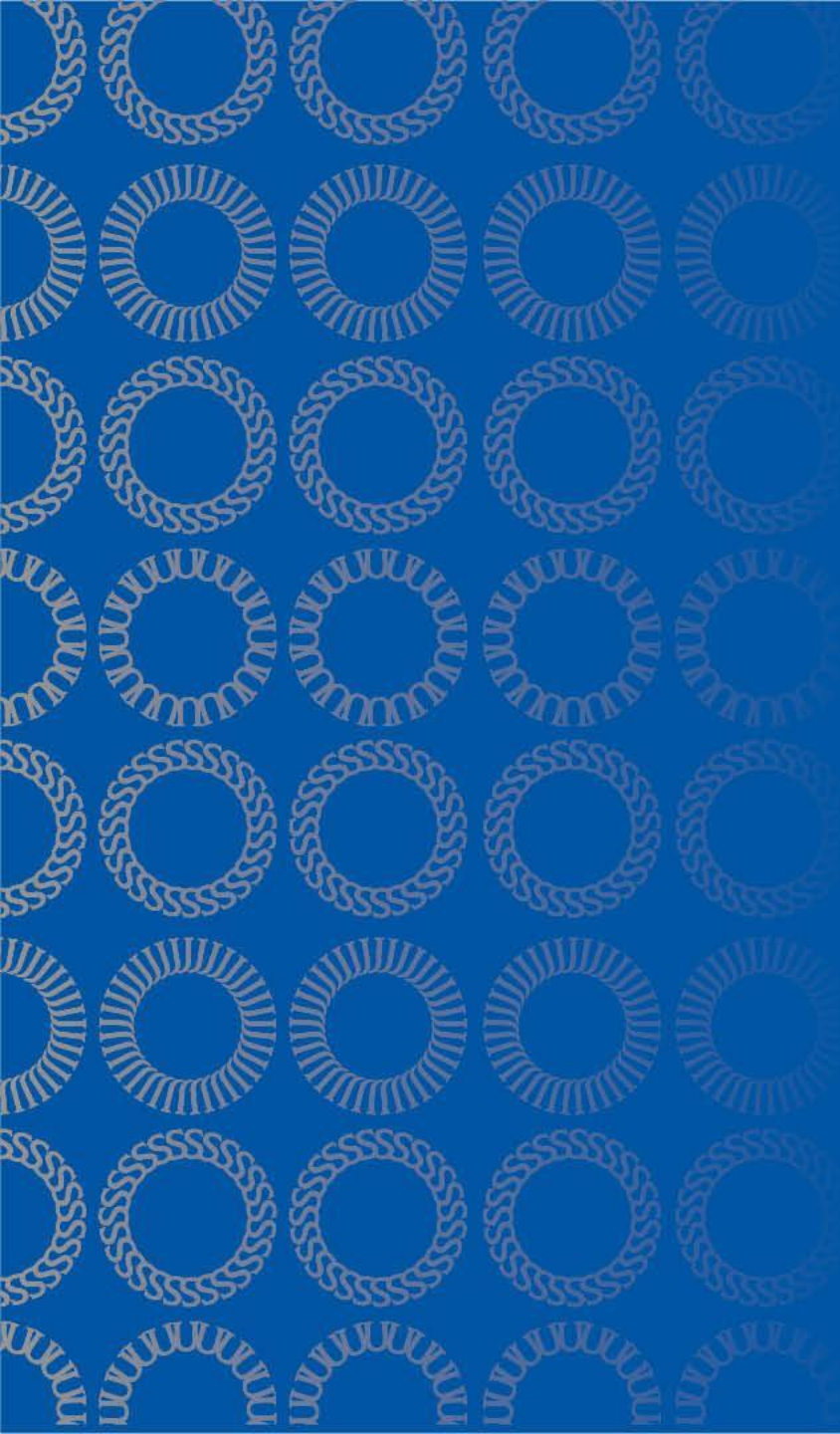




STEM Optional Practical Training Extension (STEM OPT)

SJSU | INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
AND SCHOLAR SERVICES

STEM OPT Extension

“24-month extension of post-completion OPT for a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree.”

- You must meet ALL of the following criteria on the next slide to be eligible to apply for STEM OPT Extension.
- *If you do not meet all of them, then you are not eligible to apply for STEM OPT.*
- For more information: [Study in the States STEM OPT HUB](#)

STEM OPT Eligibility

You must meet **ALL** of the following criteria to be eligible to apply for STEM OPT extension.

- Been granted and currently active on post-completion OPT.
- Have not exceeded 90 days of unemployment on your current post-completion OPT.
- Earned a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in [STEM \(Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics\)](#) from a SEVP-certified school. See the list of [SJSU eligible STEM majors](#). You can find your CIP code on page 1 of your I-20.
- Work for an employer that is enrolled in USCIS' E-Verify employment eligibility verification program. Contact your employer for the requisite E-Verify Company ID number. *Therefore, self employment is not allowed on STEM OPT.
- The employer must guarantee you a minimum of 20 hours of work per week and provide you formal training and learning objectives. You must engage in paid employment that is directly related to your STEM degree.
- Have not previously used STEM OPT more than once. You cannot have more than one STEM OPT extension based on the same degree.
- Be physically present in the U.S. when requesting the STEM OPT I-20 from ISSS and submitting your application to USCIS.

When to Apply

STEM OPT Extension

100 days before Post-Completion End Date:

First day to submit STEM OPT I-20 request to ISSS in iSpartan.

90 days before Post-Completion End Date:

First day to submit STEM OPT I-20 request to ISSS in iSpartan.

14 days before Post-Completion End Date:

Final day to submit STEM OPT I-20 request to ISSS in iSpartan

- You may submit the STEM OPT I-20 request to ISSS in iSpartan up to **100 days** BEFORE your Post-Completion OPT ends.
- ISSS is unable to do your STEM OPT recommendation until **90 days** before your Post-Completion OPT ends.
- You need to submit the STEM OPT I-20 request to ISSS in iSpartan no later than **14 days** before your Post-Completion OPT ends.
 - Please be mindful of submitting your STEM OPT I-20 request in iSpartan. We need time to review, get corrections (if needed) and process the I-20, so you do not miss your filing deadline.
- **STEM OPT applications can take up to 3 months (sometimes longer) to get approved by USCIS. Therefore, we recommend that you apply early.**

You must get a new I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation BEFORE filing your STEM OPT application with USCIS.

STEM OPT Process

1. **Update your personal information (telephone number, and/or living address) and current employment information using your [SEVP Portal](#).**
 - a. Your SJSU email address will become inactive one year after you graduate from SJSU, which may affect your access to your SEVP portal. To request a change of your email address to a non-SJSU (personal) email address, you can submit the [SEVP Portal Access Request](#) to request this change.
2. **Pay the one time \$300 administrative STEM OPT fee to ISSS.**
 - a. A payment link is on the [ISSS STEM OPT webpage](#).
3. **Complete the [Form I-983](#), Training Plan for STEM OPT Students.**
 - a. Review [SEVP's Form I-983 instructions](#).
 - b. Review [ISSS I-983 Completion Guide](#).
 - c. Work with your employer to complete this form.
4. **Student requests a STEM OPT I-20 from ISSS. **You will need this I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation from ISSS to file your STEM OPT application with USCIS.****
 - a. Submit the [STEM OPT I-20 Request](#) in iSpartan.
 - i. If you are having problems accessing, go [here](#). You may have to log-in using limited services.
 - b. Complete the e-form. Uploading proof of payment of ISSS STEM OPT fee, I-983 training plan, post-completion OPT EAD card (front and back), and I-94 record of arrival.

STEM OPT Process

5. ISSS Receives STEM OPT I-20 Request

- a. Once submitted to ISSS, processing time is 5-7 business days.
- b. ISSS Advisor (DSO) will review your eligibility for STEM OPT as well as your I-983 for completeness.
 - i. They will email you directly if they have further questions or need additional information, when reviewing your request.
- c. ISSS Advisor (DSO) will recommend STEM OPT in your SEVIS record and issue you a new I-20 with the STEM OPT recommendation on page 2.
 - i. DSO will email you the I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation.
 - ii. **You will need this new I-20 to file your STEM OPT application with USCIS.**

STEM OPT Process

6. Student files Form I-765 and supporting documents with USCIS.

- a. **Do not file your application with USCIS until you have the I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation from ISSS.**
- b. USCIS must receive your STEM OPT application *within 60 days of the date your STEM OPT was recommended by ISSS or by your Post-Completion OPT end date (whichever is first)*, **or your STEM OPT application will be denied.**
 - i. DSO will tell you when your STEM OPT recommendation was done, when they email you the I-20.
- c. Review documents that USCIS requires you to submit to file your application.

Process for Online Filing I-765 (STEM OPT)

You will need to file the I-765 online.

****USCIS is no longer allowing for students to mail in their I-765 application.***

- Save all required documents for STEM OPT application on your computer.
- Create a [USCIS Online Account](#) using your personal email address or login to your existing [USCIS Online Account](#).
- File I-765 for STEM OPT.
- Upload supporting documents in online application.
- Receive same day notification, receipt number, that application has been filed with USCIS.
- Monitor the progress of your application through your USCIS Online Account.

****Do not file with USCIS until you have the I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation from ISSS.***

Required Documentation for Filing Online

For filing the online I-765 STEM OPT Application to USCIS

- **2 x 2 Photo of You**
 - You will need to get a new passport style color photograph taken.
 - Review the [Department of State photo guidelines](#).
 - Photos need to be current, taken within the last 30 days, and not previously used for a previous application submitted to the U.S. government (such as passport, visa, OPT/STEM).
 - These photos should not be taken by you or your friend. You will need to go to a place that takes passport style color photographs. (CVS, Walgreens, UPS Store).
 - **Form I-94**
 - Retrieve I-94 at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>
 - If you have a paper I-94, include a copy both sides of the card
 - If you changed your status to F-1 and have not left the US since getting F-1 status, you will need to submit a copy of your I-797A approval notice.
 - **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)**
 - Copy of post-completion OPT EAD (front and back sides).
 - **Form I-20 ****
 - I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation from ISSS.
 - **College degree**
 - Official transcript from SJSU or diploma showing degree completion.
-
- **Institutional accreditation**
 - This is not required. This is ONLY required if your STEM is based on a degree that was completed prior to your SJSU STEM degree.

****For any I-20 that you are uploading,** make sure that you have done the following. Please print, (hand) sign and date page 1 of the I-20. Once you have signed and dated page 1 of the I-20, make a copy to submit with your OPT application to USCIS.

***Filing code is (c)(3)(C) for STEM OPT Extension.**

Additional Information for Filing Online

For filing the online I-765 STEM OPT Application to USCIS

Additional Information

Complete this section to give additional useful information that you would like USCIS to know.

**You are required to indicate any current or previous employment authorizations that have been authorized in your SEVIS record (CPT, OPT, STEM OPT from SJSU and/or other schools) (See next slide for details).*

Additional information may also include:

*Passport information: Only if your I-94 information or F-1 visa has your old passport number on it, then enter the expired passport information here.

*SEVIS ID number: If you have had a different SEVIS ID number, other than the number listed on your current I-20.

Additional Information for Filing Online

For filing the online I-765 STEM OPT Application to USCIS

Additional Information Continued

Give the details of your currently authorized post-completion OPT

Also, If you had previous CPT authorization:

Section: Select “Evidence”

Question: “Previously authorized CPT or OPT”

Additional Information: Enter the type of employment authorization, indicate if part-time or full-time, degree level, authorization dates, and any receipt numbers (IOE or YSC) associated with the authorization.

Example for CPT: CPT; Full-time; Master’s; Authorized (05/31/2020 - 08/15/2020).

Example for OPT: Post-Completion OPT; Full-time; Master’s; Authorized (01/21/2021 - 01/20/2022); IOE123456789.

Review and Submit Online to USCIS

For filing the online I-765 STEM OPT Application to USCIS

- **Review your application**
 - This is where you can check your application before you submit.
 - Check to make sure that you have spelled things correctly as well as entered any dates in the US format of MM/DD/YYYY.
- **Your application summary**
 - This is a summary of all the information that you provided in your application.
- **Your statement**
 - You must read and agree to the statements that are listed in this section.
- **Your signature**
 - Type in your full legal name, for the digital signature.
- **Pay and submit**
 - The final step to submit the Form I-765 is to pay the required application fee.
 - The filing fee is non-refundable and subject to change. Please go to <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> for the current filing fee.

STEM OPT Process

7. USCIS processes STEM OPT application.

- a. Within 2-3 weeks of USCIS receiving your STEM OPT application, a paper receipt (Form I-797c) will be mailed to the mailing address that you provided as your mailing address in your application (form I-765).
 - i. You will be able to access your receipt notice in your USCIS online account.
 - 1. Review the receipt for any errors in your name or date of birth. If there are errors, please contact ISSS.
 - ii. As long as your application was received within a timely manner by USCIS, your employment authorization is automatically extended for up to 180 days while your STEM OPT application is pending.
 - *You will need to provide a copy of your STEM OPT filing receipt to your employer for them to extend your employment authorization.**
- b. Processing of your STEM OPT application can take 2-3 months, sometimes longer.
 - i. If you receive a RFE 'Request for Evidence' or RFI 'Request for Information' from USCIS, please contact ISSS.

Premium Processing

- If you want an expedited adjudication, USCIS offers **Premium Processing** for an additional fee. If you want to add Premium Processing you will need to file the [Form I-907](#) in your USCIS Online Account.
- You may file the [Form I-907](#) either concurrently with your I-765 OR at a later time as long as your I-765 application is still pending.
- If you add Premium Processing, USCIS will take adjudicative action within **30 business days**.
 - Business days **excludes** weekends and federal holidays;
 - You can use a [Business Day Calculator](#) to understand when you can expect an update from USCIS.
- Adding Premium Processing does NOT guarantee approval within 30 business days. If you receive a Biometrics Appointment, the Premium Processing clock will stop and will only restart again after you have attended your Biometrics Appointment.
- You can learn more about premium processing in our [FAQ](#) section on our [STEM OPT webpage](#).

Biometrics Appointment

Biometrics should be valid for 3 years, so it is unlikely if you did a Biometrics appointment for your Post-Completion OPT application that you will get another appointment notice. We wanted to provide this information, in case you do.

- Students may receive a Biometrics Appointment Notice to provide their photograph and/or fingerprints at a USCIS Application Support Center.
- Students should carefully monitor their USCIS Online Account for updates (check both the “Case Status” tab and “Documents” tab for updates). The Appointment Notice will generally be available in the USCIS Online Account first. The physical appointment notice may take 2-3 weeks to be delivered.
- Refer to the Biometrics Appointment Notice for documents to bring with you to the appointment. In general, you will need to take the Biometrics Appointment Notice and your Passport.
- Within 1-2 days after attending the Biometrics Appointment, the USCIS Online Case Status should state that USCIS will continue to process your case as at the date you attended the appointment, and nothing further is pending.
- Appointments may be rescheduled in the USCIS Online Account, however, this must be done at least one day prior to the scheduled date.
- If you miss your scheduled appointment due to unavoidable circumstances, reach out to ISSS immediately.

How to find your Biometrics Appointment Notice in the USCIS Online Account.



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services



My Account

My Account ▼

Resources ▼

Sign Out

Your Cases

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Submitted on May 5, 2026 | Receipt #

Download PDF ▼

Case Status

Case History

Documents

USCIS Notices

File	Date Sent	Action
Appointment Scheduled.pdf	May 15, 2026	N/A
Receipt Notice.pdf	May 5, 2026	N/A

Your uploads

While I-765 is Pending

What you can do while your application is pending with USCIS.

1. Continue to work.
 - a. Processing time with USCIS Potomac Service Center is 2-3 months, sometimes longer.
 - b. If you file Form I-765, in a timely manner*, your employment authorization is automatically extended for up to 180 days while your STEM OPT application is pending.
2. Check processing time online.
 - a. Click [here](#) to check I-765 application processing times at Potomac Service Center.
 - i. Under <Forms> select 'I-765', for <Form Category> select 'Based on a request by a qualified F-1 academic student [(c)(3)]', for <Field Office or Service Center> select 'Service Center Operations (SCOPS)>', click the 'Get Processing Time' button.
3. Use [USCIS Case Status Online](#) to check the status of your application.
4. Give employer copy of I-797c filing receipt for STEM OPT, so they can extend your employment authorization.
5. If you receive an RFE 'Request for Evidence' or RFI 'Request for Information', please contact ISSS.
6. Do not travel abroad while your I-765 is pending.



Maintaining Status on STEM OPT

- Report employment and any changes in employment within 10 days of the change directly to ISSS, via iSpartan at the [STEM OPT Employment Update Report](#).
 - This includes material changes on your I-983 which can be salary, employer address, Supervisor/Manager.
 - **Do not use your SEVP portal for making changes to your employment.** You are required to report directly to ISSS via the e-form which is linked above.
- All employment must be for an e-verified employer, related to your major field of study, paid, and more than 20 hours per week.
- Reporting requirements at the following times: 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, 24 months.
 - We recommend that you create a reminder on your calendar one month before your reporting is due.
- Do not exceed 150 days of unemployment, applied to the entire period of standard Post-completion and STEM OPT.
- Maintain a valid travel signature (endorsement) on your I-20.
 - Validity of 6 months, when on STEM OPT.

Reporting Changes in Employment

Must be reported directly to ISSS, since we have to review a new I-983.

1. Report employment and any changes in employment within 10 days of the change directly to ISSS, via iSpartan at the [STEM OPT Employment Report Form](#).
 - a. **Do not use your SEVP portal for making changes to your employment.** You are required to report directly to ISSS via the e-form which is linked above.
2. All employment must be for an e-verified employer, related to your major field of study, paid, and at least 20 hours per week.
3. Changes in employment, include the following:
 - a. Change in employer.
 - i. You cannot work for a non e-verified employer on STEM OPT.
 - b. Any material change on the I-983. This may include: salary, employer address, manager (page 3), etc.
 - i. Per [SEVP Form I-983 instructions](#), "Material changes in the plan can include (but are not limited to) the following: any change of EIN resulting from a corporate restructuring; any reduction in compensation from the amount previously listed on the Form I-983 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; and any decrease in hours below the 20-hours-per-week minimum required for STEM OPT.

Use the following e-form to report any change in employment while on STEM OPT to ISSS: [STEM OPT Employment Report Form](#)

Required Reporting Responsibilities

Throughout the duration of your STEM OPT period, you are required to confirm your continued participation in STEM OPT, every 6 months.

Mandatory reporting requirements at the following times (calculate from your STEM OPT start date):

- ❖ **6 months** - Provide a validation report (confirming name, address, employment information, even if there are no changes in your employment.
- ❖ **12 months** - Provide a validation report (confirming name, address, employment information AND Annual evaluation on student progress (the top part of page 5 of the I-983).
- ❖ **18 months** - Provide a validation report (confirming name, address, employment information, even if there are no changes in your employment.
- ❖ **24 months** - Provide a validation report (confirming name, address, employment information AND Final evaluation on student progress (the bottom part of page 5 of the I-983).

We recommend creating a reminder on your calendar, one month before your 6 month reporting/s are due, so you will be reminded to complete this.

Use the following form to complete your required reporting every 6 months while on STEM OPT to ISSS:
[STEM OPT Employment Report Form](#)

Unemployment on STEM OPT

Important

If you accrue more than 150 days of unemployment or you forget to complete the required reporting to ISSS every 6 months, then you are considered not to be maintaining status. A SEVP official may terminate your SEVIS record.

STEM OPT

- With the approval of your STEM OPT, once your STEM OPT goes into effect, you will get an additional 60 days of unemployment, for a total of 150 days.
 - 90 days during the initial period of post-completion OPT plus the additional 60 days during the extension period.
- Unemployment is cumulative.
- **It is your responsibility to keep track of number of unemployment days, so you do not exceed 150 days.**

SEVIS employment counter

- Change of employment must be reported to ISSS via iSpartan: [STEM OPT Employment Update Form](#)
 - Do not use your SEVP portal to report changes in employment on STEM OPT.
- Report information to ISSS via iSpartan within 10 days of the change.
- This includes any change that is on the I-983 (salary, manager, employer name, employer address, etc.)

Travel While on STEM OPT

You will need the following documents to re-enter the US and should present these to the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer when entering the US. We recommend that you have the following documents in your carry-on, in case you need to access them at the Port of Entry:

1. I-20 with valid travel signature on page 2. Travel signatures are valid for 6 months, when on OPT/STEM OPT.
2. Valid passport.
3. Valid F-1 visa.

You should have the following documents also ready to show the CBP Officer in case they ask to see them:

1. EAD card.
2. Employment Letter.

Do NOT travel abroad with a PENDING STEM OPT application!

1. If your STEM OPT is denied after your Post-Completion OPT EAD end date, and you are not in the U.S., then you do not have an option to re-enter the U.S.
2. You may miss your Biometrics Appointment (If one has been scheduled) if you are abroad.

***If you decide to depart the U.S. while your STEM OPT application is pending, make sure that you have a I-797c filing receipt confirming your STEM OPT application has been received by USCIS.**

Inform ISSS if you are leaving the U.S. prior to your OPT end date with no plans to return and resume OPT. Ending My F-1 Status

Requesting an Updated I-20

We recommend that you request an updated I-20, once the following has occurred:

1. STEM OPT has been approved.

Replacement/Updated I-20

1. After ISSS has confirmed reported employment or changes in employment have been updated in your SEVIS record.

Replacement/Updated I-20

Traveling overseas?

- Request a travel signature I-20.
 - Travel signatures on page 2 of the form I-20 are valid for 6 months when on STEM OPT.

Travel Signature/I-20 Request

Unable to access iSpartan to submit e-form? Please go [here](#) for further instructions.

End of STEM OPT

At the end of your STEM OPT, you have a 60 day grace period after your STEM OPT ends to do one of the following:

1. Get a new I-20 from SJSU to pursue a new degree program;
2. Transfer I-20 to another U.S. school to pursue a new degree program;
3. Leave the U.S.

If you have any questions about these options, please [schedule an appointment](#) with an ISSS Advisor.

iSpartan (ISSS Student Portal)

iSpartan - You will use this portal to submit requests to ISSS. *(Recommend using Google Chrome or Firefox as your web browser).*

SEVP Portal Access Form

- Submit this form, if you want to change your SEVP portal account email to a non-SJSU email address.

STEM OPT I-20 Request

- Need this I-20 from SJSU with STEM OPT recommendation, **before** you can file your STEM OPT application with USCIS.

STEM OPT Employment Update Report

- Use the e-form to report the following:
 - Required employment reporting every 6 months;
 - Any changes to STEM employment. This includes changes to the I-983, salary, work location, supervisor, etc.

Replacement/Updated I-20 Request

- To request an updated I-20 after your STEM OPT has been approved.

Travel Signature/I-20 Request

- To request an updated travel signature from ISSS.

Unable to access iSpartan to submit e-form? Please go [here](#) for further instructions.

THANK YOU!

Email: international-office@sjsu.edu

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