OPT STEM EXTENSION REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

To be eligible for the 24-month STEM OPT Extension, you must:

− Be in valid F-1 status on Post-Completion OPT, based on a STEM-eligible degree - **(MSE)** (https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf)

− Not have acquired more than 90 days of unemployment during current Post-Completion OPT period

− Have no previous 24-month STEM OPT Extension granted (only one extension per student, regardless of degree level)

− Be employed by, or have a job offer from, an employer who is registered in the E-verify employment verification system (*E-verify: is a database operated by DHS in partnership with the Social Security Administration. It allows participating employers to electronically verify eligibility of newly hired employees*)

− Agree to make reports to CALUMS ISA office within 10 days of any changes in employment status regarding your employment, or every 6 months if no change has occurred

STEP 1: How to Apply for F-1 STEM OPT I-20 Extension

To request the 24-month STEM OPT I-20 Extension recommendation from the DSO, you must submit the following documents to the **CALUMS International Student Advisor (ISA):**

1. A completed (CALUMS) 24-month STEM OPT Extension Request Form

2. Copy of your current valid Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card

3. Letter, on company letterhead, signed by your employer verifying: (See the Template)

   o **That the employer is enrolled in E-Verify** (provide E-Verify number, if possible)
   o Employer's name and complete address (including zip code)
   o Supervisor's name, title, and contact information (e-mail and phone number)
   o Employment start and end date
   o Position title and description of how the employment is directly related to your primary field of study

Send Offer Letter To:
CalUMS
Attn: International Student Advisor
721 North Euclid ST.
Anaheim, CA 92801

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1126 North Brookhurst Street, Suite 200, Anaheim, CA 92801   Tel : 714.533.3946   Fax : 714.533.7778

4. A completed Form I-983 signed by you and your employer for every employer Students (Completed by the student and employer)

   o In Section 1, SEVIS School Code : LOS214F18380000
   o DSO Name and Contact Information: CINDY SZETO / 714-533-3946 / 721 N Euclid ST, Anaheim CA 92801
   o Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code : 45.0603

5. Copy of completed Form I-765 (typed) Application for Employment Authorization. (Please download the I-765 Form from the USCIS website www.uscis.gov.)

   o You are applying for: *"Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attached previous employment authorization document)."*

   o Number 21: ***(c) (3) (C)***
   o Number 28.a : Degree "*Master of Science in* Economics" or *MSE*
   o Number 28.b : Employer's Name as listed in E-Verify: *put employer's name*
   o Number 28.c :Employer's E-Verify Company ID Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number: *put E-Verify number here*
   o Applicant's Signature: *DO NOT sign over the upper line or under the lower line*

Once all documents from above are submitted and eligibility is determined, the International Student Service Advisor will issue a new Form I-20 with a recommendation for 24-month STEM OPT Extension.

It takes approximately 10 days for the DSO to issue the new Form I-20 for you.

When you have the Form I-20 with the STEM OPT I-20 Extension recommendation in hand, you will need to mail the documents listed in the following section to the appropriate USCIS Service Center.

Please make a copy of the entire packet before you mail it out.

STEP 2: Receiving the Form I-20 from the ISO

Please refer to the **24-month STEM OPT Extension Request Form (new I-20)** for mailing information. If you would like us to mail your Form I-20 form, please fill out DOC (Document Request Form) and make payment for $27.00 (OPT STEM Application I-20 + certified mailing fee)

STEP 3: Submitting your STEM OPT Extension Application to USCIS

After you receive the new Form I-20 with the 24-month STEM OPT Extension recommendation, mail

the following documents to the correct USCIS Processing Center. **Please note that the Processing Center (Lockbox) address where you mail your documents depends on the address and State you write on the Form I-765, Section 3.**

When filing Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, use the table below to determine which lockbox you should send your application to:

(https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-information/uscis-phoenix-and-dallas-lockbox-facilities)

If you live in...	Mail your application to:
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 Northern Mariana Islands.	USCIS Phoenix Lockbox **For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):** USCIS P.O. Box 21281 Phoenix, AZ 85036 **For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:** USCIS Attn: NFB AOS 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034
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	USCIS Dallas Lockbox **For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):** USCIS P.O. Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266 **For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:** USCIS Attn: NFB AOS 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067

HERE IS WHAT YOU MUST SEND TO USCIS (in this order):

1. Cashier's Check or Money Order for $410 made payable to *US Department of Homeland Security (Provide your "full name" and SEVIS ID on the top right hand corner in pen / Provide I-94# on the memo line)*

2. 2 passport photos (put your name, date of birth, and SEVIS # in pencil on back of each photo)

3. Completed **original** G-1145 Form (can be downloaded from USCIS website, www.uscis.gov)

4. Completed **original** I-765 Form for employment authorization (Please keep a photocopy for your records.)

5. Form I-983 Training Plan for STEM OPT (Completed by the student and employer)

6. Photocopy of new Form I-20 with 24-month STEM OPT Extension recommendation, pages 1 and 2 (remember to sign the I-20 form)

7. Photocopies of all previously issued Forms I-20 forms, pages 1 and pages with travel signatures/employer recommendations (page 2 or 3)

8. Photocopies of all previously issued EAD cards

9. Photocopy of F-1 entry visa stamp in passport (received from US Consulate abroad)

10. Photocopy of most recent I-94 record (either I-94 paper card - front and back; or PDF retrieved from www.cbp.gov/i94)

11. Photocopy of identity page(s) in passport (which include name, passport number, photo, birth date, and issue/expiration date of passport)

12. Photocopy of STEM degree (official transcript, and / or copy of your diploma with level and program of study)

13. Letter from STEM OPT eligible employer as mentioned above (See the Template)

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STEP 4: Wait for the EAD card

Within one month of sending the application to the USCIS, you should get a standard receipt notice. It takes approximately 90 days from the date USCIS receives your application, to receive your EAD card.

If approved, CALUMS requires all students to submit a copy of their new updated EAD card (front and back), and approval notice, immediately.

Application Timelines

- **IMPORTANT:** Your complete application and required documents must be **mailed and received** at the USCIS Processing Center **within 60 days from the date the ISO Advisor issued/signed the Form I-20** with the STEM OPT Extension recommendation. We strongly recommend that you **express mail** the application to USCIS and keep a photocopy of the full application for your records.
- You may submit your application for STEM OPT Extension to USCIS no earlier than 90 days prior to the expiration date of your current OPT authorization/EAD card.
- The complete application must be received at the USCIS processing center before your current OPT authorization/EAD card expires.
- The 24-month STEM OPT Extension begins on the day after the approved OPT end date printed on your current Employment Authorization (EAD) card.
- The student's employment authorization is automatically extended for up to 180 days if the 24-month STEM Extension application remains pending after the current post-completion OPT EAD expires. *(This allows for continued employment at the STEM OPT employer while the application is pending. However, travel outside the U.S. is not recommended. See below for details.)*

NOTE: **Processing times** vary at each USCIS Center, but generally it takes approximately 3 months to receive a new EAD card from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

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Travel while on 24-month STEM OPT Extension

During the 24-month extension, you must carry the following documents in order to return to the U.S.:

- STEM OPT Employment Authorization (EAD) card
- STEM OPT Form I-20 form with a valid travel signature **(valid for 6 months)**
- valid F-1 entry visa stamp in passport (issued by US Consulate abroad, to enter the U.S. in F-1 status for STEM OPT)
- valid passport
- letter from your E-Verify employer confirming your STEM OPT employment

If you are missing any one of these documents, you risk being denied entry to the United States. If your current OPT EAD card is **expired** and you **do not yet have the STEM OPT Extension EAD card,** you should *NOT* **travel** outside the U.S.

Periods of Unemployment while on 24-month STEM OPT Extension

During the 24-month STEM OPT Extension, maintenance of **your F-1 status depends on your employment.** You are not permitted to accumulate more than a total of 150 days of unemployment for the entire period of OPT (including the first 12 months of OPT prior to the STEM OPT Extension). The limits of unemployment time are 90 days for the first 12-months of OPT and **60 days during the 24- month STEM OPT extension.** Accumulating more than 150 days of unemployment during the OPT period is a violation of your immigration status that could result in termination of your practical training.

What constitutes Qualified Employment while on 24-month STEM OPT Extension?

- Paid employment, full or part-time for one or more employers, contracting activity, employment
- through an agency or through a consulting firm, as long as **all employers are registered with EVerify and the employment is at least 20 hours/week** (variable schedule, within a month, must
- average out to at least 20 hours/week)
- **AND**
- Employment in a position directly related to the student's STEM degree on which the STEM OPT is based and/or earned at California University of Management and Sciences.
- Valid Form I-983 completed for each employer and position

Alumnus/ae Responsibilities While on Authorized STEM OPT

After an F-1 student is granted the 24-month STEM OPT Extension, the student must report to his or her DSO **(within 10 days)** any change in:

- Alumni/ae's Legal name
- Alumni/ae's Residential or mailing address
- Alumni/ae's E-mail address and phone number
- Employer name
- Employer address
- Employer contact phone number
- Supervisor's name and contact information (phone, email address)
- Dates of employment (beginning and ending dates) at each employer
- Verification of how the job is related to the degree/field of study
- Loss of employment (**within 5 business days**)

How to Report a Change of E-Verify Employer during 24-month STEM OPT Extension

Within **10 days** of change, you are required by law to report a change of your employer to the DSO. You must submit a letter from your new employer **and** an updated Form I-983 to the ISO so that we can update your SEVIS record and issue an updated Form I-20 with your new employer information printed on Page 2 of the I-20.

Please refer above to the requirements of the employer letter. Send e-mail with the updated information to the isa@calums.edu and attach both the updated Form I-983 and a new employer letter.

If your employment is terminated, your employer and/or you must report this termination to the DSO within 5 business days.

Validation Report Required Every 6 Months

● During the 24-month STEM OPT extension, you are required by law to send a **Validation Report** to the DSO every 6 months starting from the date the 24-month extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status is completed or the 24-month extension ends, whichever is first.

The **Validation Report** must include the student's:

- Full legal name
- SEVIS identification number
- Current mailing and residential address
- Current U.S. telephone number
- Current e-mail address
- Name and address of the current employer
- Current Position Title
- How your position relates to your field of study
- Supervisor's name, e-mail address, and telephone number
- Date you began activity with the current employer
- Number of days of unemployment

● This Validation Report is required even if there have been no changes in your employer, living address, or other required reporting information.

Student Self-Evaluation Required Every 12 Months

During the 24-month STEM OPT extension, you are required by law to send a **Self-Evaluation Report** on the Form I-983 to the DSO every 12 months starting from the date the 24-month extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status is completed or the 24-month extension ends, whichever is first.

The 12-month **Self-Evaluation Report** can be found on page 5 of the Form I-983 and the 24-month Self-Evaluation Report can be found on page 5 of the Form I-983.

Students who have changed employers during the STEM OPT Extension period are required to submit a new Form I-983 at the time of the employment change.

NOTE: The requirement to report any updates while on OPT continues if the student's 24-month STEM OPT Extension is extended further by the automatic H-1B OPT Cap-Gap extension.

Please visit
https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-andemployment/stem-opt or feel free to contact us if you have any questions concerning the F-1 STEM OPT Extension Process.