

What is a STEM Extension? A 24-month extension of post-completion OPT for students with a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree.

Am I eligible for Stem Extension? A qualified student may apply for an extension of OPT while in a valid period of post-completion OPT. The extension will be for 24 additional months, for a total of 36 months of OPT. The following requirements must be met:

1. The student has not previously received a 24-month OPT extension after earning a STEM degree.
2. Student must currently be participating in a standard OPT based on a bachelor's or master's degree that is listed in the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program. For a complete list of CIP codes and majors please go to: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>
3. Student must currently be working for, or have a job offer from a U.S. employer for a position that is directly related to the student's major area of study.
4. The employer must be an E-verify registered company. The employer should provide an E-verify identification number or, if the employer is using a designated agent to perform the E-verify queries, a valid E-verify client company identification number, and the employer is a participant in good standing in the E-verify program, as determined by USCIS.

How do I submit an application? A student meeting the eligibility requirement may file for a 24-month extension of employment authorization by filing form I-765, application for employment authorization, with the appropriate fee, prior to the expiration date of the student's current OPT employment authorization. If a student timely and properly files an application for a 24-month OPT extension, but the form I-765, Employment Authorization Document, currently in the student's possession, expires prior to the decision on the student's application for 24-month OPT extension, the student's Form I-765 is extended automatically pursuant to the terms and conditions specified in 8 CFR 274a.12 (b)(6) (iv).

Application & Supporting Documents Checklist: Please gather the following items and contact your Southern Utah University immigration advisor to apply.

- Complete I-983 form with your employer
 - <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students-and-the-form-i-983>
- Complete form I-765
 - <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
- Make photocopies of:
 - Passport
 - Visa
 - I-94 (look up here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>)
 - OPT I-20
 - EAD card (front and back)
- Letter from current employer requesting OPT extension (see example at end of this document), must be original letter on company letterhead.
- Copy of diploma or original transcripts (ISSS department will get your transcript from SUU)
- Copy of two passport photos taken in the last six months. Please make sure to sign (pencil) the back and include your I-94 number. **DO NOT USE THE PICTURES ON CURRENT EAD CARD.**
- Money Order in the amount of \$410.00, made payable to the Department of Homeland Security.
- Make sure to share the below documents as PDF documents through a secure file share. <https://my.suu.edu/secure/upload/ortonj>

Once all of the required documents have been received and reviewed, ISS will create a new I-20 and mail it to you. Once you have received the new I-20 you should send the following items to the USCIS Service Center:

- Photocopies of your Passport, visa, I-94 (front and back) and your new OPT I-20 (make sure you sign the original I-20, send only a photocopy, do not send your original I-20).
- Original completed form I-765 (make sure you sign it)
- Photocopy of your current EAD card, front/back of Letter from current employer requesting OPT extension (please see example), must be original letter on company letterhead.
- Copy of diploma or original transcripts
- Original passports photos taken in the last six months.
- Original check or money order in the amount of \$410, made to Department of Homeland Security (In the memo line of check write I-765 and your I-94 number).

Please remember to make a copy of all documents for your records. We highly recommend that you send your package by certified mail, return receipt requested. Please send your package to the following place:

If you live in:		File your application at:
Alaska	Montana	USICS Phoenix Lockbox For U.S. Postal Services (USPS) Deliveries: USCIS P.O. Box 21281 Phoenix , AZ 85036 For Express Mail and Courier Service Deliveries: USCIS Attn: A.O.S. 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S. Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034
Arizona	Nebraska	
California	Nevada	
Colorado	North Dakota	
Guam	Ohio	
Hawaii	South Dakota	
Idaho	Utah	
Illinois	Washington	
Indiana	Wisconsin	
Iowa	Wyoming	
Kansas	Commonwealth of the	
Northern	Mariana Islands	
Michigan	Minnesota	
Missouri		
Alabama	New Jersey	USICA Dallas Lockbox For U.S. Postal Services (USPS) Deliveries: USCIS P.O. Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266 For Express Mail and Courier Service Deliveries: USCIS Attn: A.O.S. 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067
Arkansas	New Mexico	
Connecticut	New York	
Delaware	Pennsylvania	
District of Columbia	Puerto Rico	
Florida	Rhode Island	
Georgia	South Carolina	
Kentucky	Oklahoma	
Louisiana	Texas	
Maine	Virginia	
Maryland	U.S. Virgin Islands	
Massachusetts	West Virginia	
Mississippi		
New Hampshire		

Additional Information I Should Know

Employment Authorization period of the 24-month OPT extension begins on the day after the expiration of the initial post-completion OPT employment authorization and ends 24 months thereafter, regardless of the date of the actual extension is approved.

Periods of Unemployment during post-completion OPT 214.2 (f)(10)(ii)(E)

During post-completion OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment. Students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any post-completion OPT carried out under the initial post-completion OPT authorization. Students granted a 24-month OPT extension may not accrue an aggregate of more than 120 days of unemployment during the total OPT period comprising any post-completion OPT carried out under the initial post-completion OPT authorization and the subsequent 24-month extension period.

Additional reporting obligations for students with an approved 24-month OPT 214.2 (f)(12)(ii)

Students with an approved 24-month OPT extension have additional reporting obligations. Compliance with these reporting requirements is required to maintain F-1 status. The reporting obligations are:

- Within 10 days of the change, the student must report to the DSO a change of legal name, residential or mailing address, employer name, employer address, and /or loss of employment.
- The student must make a validation report to the DSO every six months starting from the date the extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status ends, the student changes educational levels at the same school, or the student transfers to another school or program, or the 24-month OPT extension ends, whichever is first.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this material or the process of STEM extension, please feel free to contact our office at 435-586-1995 or via email at ortonj@suu.edu.

Employer Sample Letter

(Letter should be an original and on company letterhead.)

Office of International Affairs
Southern Utah University
351 W. University Blvd.
Cedar City, UT 84720

Date

RE: Student Name

To Whom It May Concern:

The following is a request for an OPT extension for student name who is employed by company name at company address. Student name has been employed at company name since date and is under the supervision of supervisor name and he/she can be contacted at contact info. The employee's title is title and his/her responsibilities are list of responsibilities.

Our company e-verify number is e-verify number. Therefore, we kindly request an OPT extension for student name. Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,