

[LSUHSC/NO STEM OPT Instructions](#)

Recipients of certain science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) **MAJOR** fields as determined by the CIP Code can apply to USCIS for a 24 month extension of post-completion OPT (for a total eligibility of up to 36 months). An individual is eligible for two 24 month STEM OPT extension in a lifetime. A minor field of study cannot serve as the basis for a 24 month STEM OPT extension.

To see if your Major (as listed on your I-20) is in the STEM list, go [here](#).

To be eligible for the 24 month STEM OPT extension:

- The current period of OPT must have been authorized for completion of a STEM degree at the bachelor's, masters or doctoral degree level
- A student cannot have accumulated more than 90 days of unemployment during the initial OPT authorized period
- At the time of application, the student must have a job or job offer from an employer registered in E-Verify. A list of E-verify employers is available [here](#).
- The employment must be directly related to his/her STEM CIP Code
- The student and employer must provide a completed and signed [Form I-983](#) to the LSUHSC Designated School Office (DSO) via email and the original by regular mail. **Form instructions can be found [here](#).**
- The student must agree to make periodic “validation” reports using [Form I-983](#) to the DSO

Important STEM OPT Facts:

- A student who has timely applied for a STEM OPT extension can continue working for up to 180 days beyond the expiration of the prior post-completion OPT EAD while the STEM extension application is pending
- The employment authorization period for the 24 month STEM OPT extension begins on the day after expiration of initial post completion OPT employment authorization and ends 24 months thereafter, regardless of the date the actual extension is approved
- A student is **not** allowed to travel outside the U.S. after initial OPT expiration and before the STEM OPT extension authorization is received
- A student can change employers during the 24 month STEM extension period. However, **all employers** a student will work for during the STEM extension period must be registered in E-Verify and must complete and sign Form I-983 **BEFORE** employment begins.
- The student must report all work locations and changes to employment reported to the LSUHSC/NO DSO via email and using Form I-983. **Students using OPT STEM may NOT begin work for an employer for whom there is not a completed and signed I-983 on file with the DSO.**
- A student authorized for the 24 month extension must work at least 20 hours per week for an E-Verify employer. **Positions MUST be paid.**
- A student may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to his/her degree program, all employers must be enrolled in E-Verify and have a completed and signed Form I-983 on file with the LSUHSC/NO DSO.
- A student may not file for the STEM extension at the same time the initial 12 month period of post completion OPT is filed

- During any initial post completion OPT or STEM OPT extension, the student is required to timely notify the LSUHSC/NO DSO of impending travel abroad via email to obtain necessary form I-20 travel endorsements. Upon return from travel abroad, the student must timely provide via email copies of all new documentation (i.e. I-94, visa, passport, etc) to the LSUHSC/NO DSO via email.

Procedure to request 24 month STEM OPT extension from DSO:

The student must complete and submit to the LSUHSC/NO DSO via email the following documents:

- the “LSUHSC/NO 24 Month STEM Extension Request Form” (Page 4)
- Completed and Signed [Form I-983](#) (both via email AND regular mail of original)

Procedure of DSO after request is received:

After a review of the request and verification of eligibility, the DSO will:

- Recommend the STEM extension in SEVIS
- Print a new form I-20 containing the recommendation
- Mail the form I-20 to the student with I-765 filing instructions

Student Procedure to Obtain 24 Month STEM OPT Extension:

- The student must complete and submit form I-765 with applicable fee (www.uscis.gov under forms, form I-20 issued by the DSO, as well as other STEM OPT Extension required documents as outlined in the I-765 filing instructions **prior** to current OPT employment authorization expiration and no more than **60 days** following the SEVIS recommendation. ***As of April 2021, Form I-765 requesting STEM OPT can be filed online (with uploaded evidence) using a MyUSCIS account. ISO continues to recommend filing on paper absent compelling reason (critical timeline) to use the online system. ***

Notifications Required During Pendency and Following Approval of 24 Month STEM OPT Extension:

During the 24 month STEM OPT extension, **the student must report** to the DSO via email within 10 days of **any change** in the following:

- Legal name
- Address
- Contact information
- Employer name or EIN number
- Employer address
- Loss of employment or reduction in hours
- Reduction in compensation not related to reduction in hours
- Any material changes or deviations from the training plan submitted on the Form I-983
- The student must submit a “STEM OPT Evaluation On Student Progress Report Form” ([Form I-983](#), Page 6/7) to the DSO during the first 12 months starting from the date the 24 month extension begins and again before the end of the OPT STEM period. This report is due to the DSO via email within 10 business days of each report due date.

Employers of students granted the 24 month STEM OPT extension must also agree to report within 5 business days the termination or departure of a student if the termination or departure is prior to the end of the authorized period of OPT. The employer is requested to make this report to the DSO via email. Departure is defined as “when the employer knows the student has left employment or if the student has not reported for work for a period of five consecutive business days without consent of the employer, whichever comes earlier”. **The email notification provided by the employer should include the student’s name, SEVIS ID number and the date employment ended.**

Reporting Requirements of DSO:

The DSO must update SEVIS with changes received from students and employers within 21 days of receiving the notification as follows:

- Changes to the student’s name
- Changes to the student’s address
- Initial employer listing the employer’s name, start date (m/d/y), employer’s address
- Change to a new or additional employment listing the name of employer, start date (m/d/y), employer’s address
- If the student is unemployed during the 24 month STEM OPT extension authorized, the unemployment start date
- After receipt of required “Evaluation on Student Progress”, (Form I-983, Page 6/7) the DSO must update SEVIS no sooner than 15 days before and no later than 31 days (a.k.a. 15/31 day reporting period) a reporting due dates. **If an “Evaluation on Student Progress” is not received from the student in a timely manner, the DSO will be unable to report participation and the record is subject to termination.**

Cap Gap Extensions

(not available to LSUHSC-New Orleans employees)

Students in a valid period of F-1 Post Completion OPT whose OPT end date is before October 1st AND whose **cap subject** employer has **timely** filed (during the H1B acceptance period, beginning **April 1st**) a **change of status** H1B petition on their behalf with a **10/01 start date** have continuing work authorization until a decision is made on the H1B petition. If the H1B approved, work authorization is automatically extended until September 30th. If the H1B is denied, revoked or withdrawn during the cap gap period, the student's OPT authorization ends 10 days after the date of the denial, revocation or withdrawal (not the date the notice is received). The student retains the option of using their 60 grace period which begins on the date of denial, revocation or withdrawal.

Students in valid F-1 status (D/S) as indicated on their I-20 who are no longer in their approved OPT period when the H1B petition is filed (**beginning April 1st**) but are still in valid F-1 status during a grace period that will end before October 1st whose **cap subject** employer has **timely** filed (during the H1B acceptance period, beginning April 1st) a **change of status** H1B petition on their behalf with a **10/01 start date** do NOT receive additional or continuing work authorization, only their F-1 duration of status is extended until a decision is made on the H1B petition filed on their behalf. If the H1B is approved, F-1 status is extended until September 30th. If the H1B is denied, revoked or withdrawn during the cap gap period, the student retains the option to use their 60 grace period which begins on the date of denial, revocation or withdrawal.

LSUHSC/NO
24 Month STEM Extension Request Form

Last Name: _____, First Name: _____ SEVIS ID#: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____ Email: _____

Initial Post Completion OPT Expiration Validity Dates (M/D/Y): _____ thru _____

Brief Summary of Duties indicating how the employment is related to your STEM degree:

Employer's Name (as listed in E-Verify): _____

Employer's E-Verify #: _____

Employment Start Date (M/D/Y): _____

- I do not have any petitions pending with USCIS.
- I currently have the following petition(s) pending with USCIS (provide all relevant I-797 receipt notices):

By signing below, I certify I **have not** accumulated more than 90 days of unemployment during the initial 12 month post completion OPT authorized period as indicated on my EAD card. I also certify that I will make required notifications timely as outlined **AND** agree to submit the required "Report on Student Progress" timely.

Student Signature

Date

LSUHSC/NO
24 Month STEM Extension
Student Notification Certification Form

I, _____, having submitted a request for a 24 Month STEM Extension, agree to make appropriate and timely notification (within 10 days) of changes as outlined below to the LSUHSC/NO Designated School Official (DSO) via email:

- Student's name
- Student's address
- Student's contact information (telephone numbers, email address, etc)
- Student's title
- Student's salary
- Employer name or EIN number
- Employer address
- Employer contact information
- Supervisor's name
- Supervisor's contact information
- Loss of employment
- Reduction in hours
- Reduction in compensation not related to reduction in hours
- Any material changes or deviations from the training plan submitted on the Form I-983

Student Signature

Date