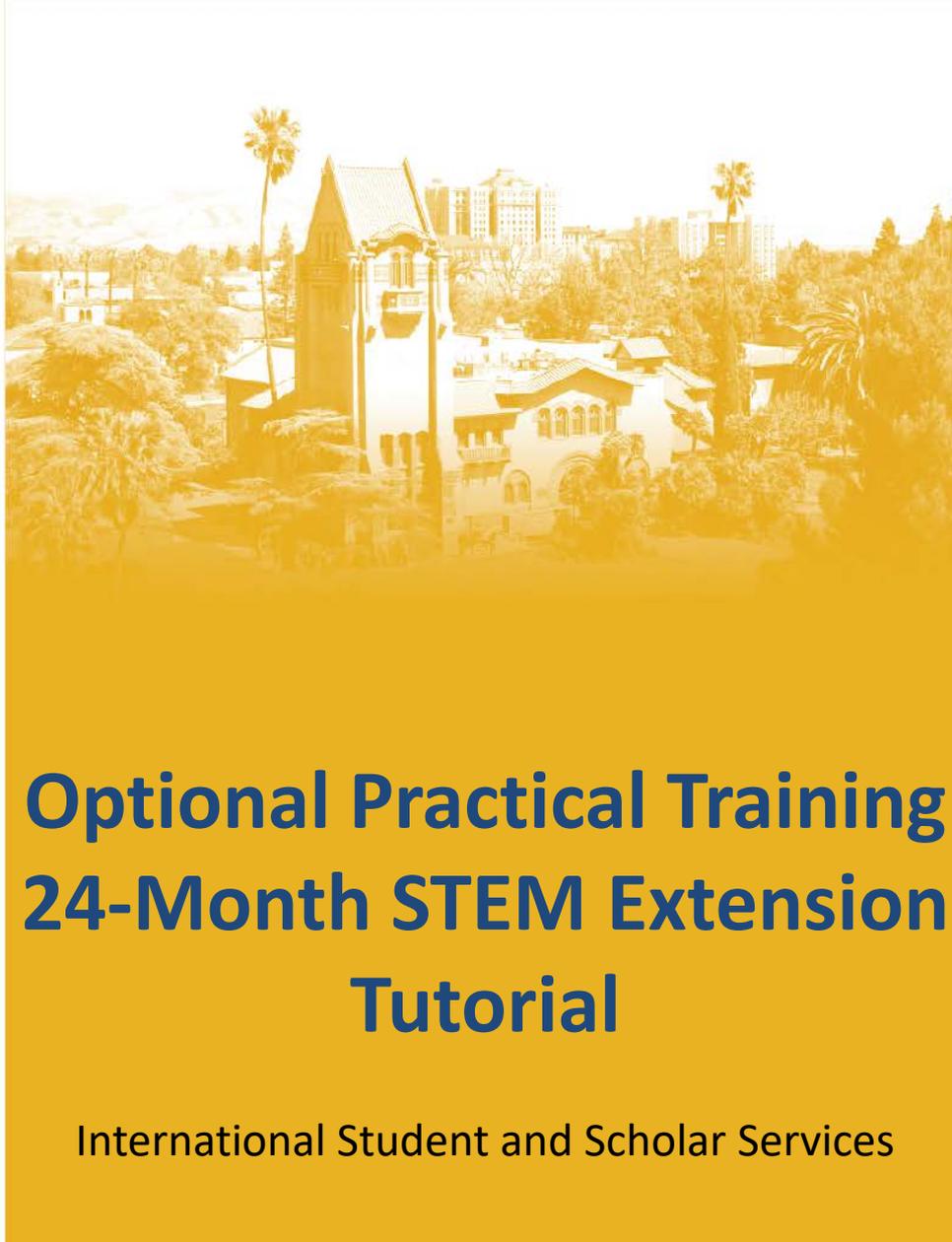




Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The background of the right side of the slide is a photograph of the SJSU campus, featuring a prominent building with a tall tower and palm trees. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent yellow filter.

Optional Practical Training 24-Month STEM Extension Tutorial

International Student and Scholar Services

FAQ Topics:

- Employment Rules
- Unemployment Rules
- Changing Employers
- Travel

Check out the last slide for links to Helpful Resources!

EMPLOYMENT RULES

Can I continue to work while my 24-month STEM OPT extension application is pending?

Yes, if you timely filed your extension application with USCIS you are permitted to continue to work 180 days past your current OPT expiration date.

What documents do I present to the employer to verify that I am able to continue to work while my STEM OPT application is pending?

Provide a copy of expired EAD card, new Form I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation listed on page 2, and Form I-797C Notice of Action or filing receipt received for Form I-765 for STEM OPT extension.

What is considered full-time employment?

You must work at least 20 hours per week for an E-Verify employer in a position that is directly related to the STEM degree, following the goals and objectives state in the I-983 training plan. The employer information must be reported to SEVIS.

Can I have two part-time jobs while engaged in STEM OPT?

No, only full-time employment is allowed with an eligible E-Verify-registered employer.

UNEMPLOYMENT RULES

How many days of unemployment am I allowed while on STEM OPT extension?

Students who receive a 24-month STEM OPT extension are given additional 60 days of unemployment for a total of 150 days throughout the entire post-completion OPT period (includes any days accrued while on post-completion OPT).

What counts as unemployment?

Each day during the authorized STEM OPT period in which there is no reported work or employment info is counted towards unemployment. Be aware that SEVIS may start counting days of unemployment without employer information.

CHANGING EMPLOYERS

Can I change employers while my STEM OPT application is pending?

We do not recommend that you change employers until after STEM OPT is approved. Contact ISSS for more information.

Can I change employers after my STEM OPT has been approved?

Yes. Visit [Study in the States STEM OPT Hub](#) for more information. The new employer must be enrolled in Everify before you begin to work for pay. You will need to submit a new Form I-983 training plan to ISSS within 10 day of starting the new job.

TRAVEL RELATED

Can I travel outside the U.S. during approved STEM OPT period?

Yes. Please refer to the ISSS website for the required documents, including a valid travel signature on the I-20, you will need to present to CBP at a U.S. port-of-entry.

Can I travel outside the U.S. while my 24-month STEM OPT application is pending?

Travel while the STEM OPT application is pending is not recommended; assume possible risks of not being allowing to re-enter U.S. unless you have valid F-1 visa, valid travel signature on the I-20, and current OPT EAD has not yet expired. ISSS cannot guarantee that CBP will allow you entry based on STEM OPT filing receipt and proof of employment.

Helpful Links

Government

- [Study in the States STEM OPT Hub](#)
- [USCIS OPT for STEM Students](#)
- [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#)
- [Form I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT students](#)
- [Form I-983 instructions](#)
- [Employers and Form I-983](#)
- [Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization](#)
- [Instructions for Form I-765](#)
- [Direct Filing Addresses for Form I-765](#)

SJSU ISSS

- [ISSS Sample I-983](#)
- [ISSS Sample I-765 Completion Guide](#)
- [ISSS 24-month STEM OPT Request Form](#)

Contact Information

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY *powering* SILICON VALLEY

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