

24 Month STEM Extension I-765 Application Instructions

Once International Services has received your request for a STEM OPT extension, processed the request and issued an updated I-20 for this purpose, you should prepare your application with the required fee and documentation as follows:

- Form I-765 and form instructions can be downloaded at www.uscis.gov under forms.
- The application fee is \$410. Check <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> to be sure it hasn't changed. Check/money order should be made payable to US Department of Homeland Security. It's also possible to pay using the G-1450.
- I-765 must be filed with the USCIS Chicago Lockbox Facility and received **BEFORE** your current OPT employment authorization expires and **no later than 60 days** after the DSO's signature on your new I-20.
- If form I-765 is properly and timely filed, the student's employment authorization is considered automatically extended for up to 180 days while the EAD application is pending. ***To be considered timely filed, the I-765 petition must have been received by USCIS, not just a SEVIS request made and I-20 issued.***
- The I-765 should include the eligibility code of (c)(3)(C) in question #27.
- The I-765 should contain your degree and the employer's E-Verify Company or Client Identification Number at item 28. When asked to list the degree in item 28.a., enter exactly as shown on your I-20 with the CIP Code listed on page 1 of the I-20, under the heading "Major 1".

In addition to the application fee, the following documents should be submitted with the I-765:

- A copy of a diploma or transcript which lists the degree **and** your major field of study. Unofficial transcripts or copies of diplomas will be acceptable.
- A copy of an I-20 with STEM recommendation issued and signed by the DSO within 60 days of your filing the I-765. This form must also be signed by the student.
- Copies of all I-20s issued to you by all schools you have attended (not just LSUHSC)
- A copy of an offer letter from your employer
- A copy of your current, unexpired passport
- A copy of your most recent I-94
- A copy of your current EAD for post-completion OPT, and any other EADS that have been issued to you in the past
- Two photos taken within the past 30 days (write Name, DOB and SSN on the back)
- Copies of all pay stubs or W2 forms from OPT employment to confirm compliance with no more than 90 days of unemployment during initial OPT authorization
- G-1145 Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance (**This form is optional**).
<https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>

NOTE: you must submit a completed and signed Form I-983 to International Services as part of the application process, but this form is **not** included when you submit the I-765 to USCIS. The original will be kept at International Services, and you should keep a copy.

Sending in your application

Once you have completed your I-765, you will need to mail it along with the supporting documents to USCIS, either by U.S. Postal Service or another delivery service such as FedEx or UPS. Make sure that you pay for a service that includes tracking and/or confirmation of delivery.

If you send it by USPS, send it to

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03
P.O. Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680-5374

If you send it by FedEx, UPS or DHL, send it to

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03 (Box 805373)
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

After submitting your application

A receipt notice will be sent to the email address you list on the G-1145 (if you used this form). This will have information on how you can check the progress of your STEM OPT application online. You will also be sent a paper receipt to the mailing address you list on the I-765 form.

Approval

Once your application has been approved, you will be sent an Approval Notice and an EAD, or Employment Authorization Document to the address on your I-765. Check that carefully for any errors. If you find any, contact International Services ***before*** you contact USCIS.

Once you receive the new EAD, please provide a copy to International Services

Remember to submit your “Student Validation Reports” to ISO every six months and the Evaluation of Student Progress (Form I-983, Pgs 6-7) annually, according to previous instructions.

Travel while your STEM OPT application is pending

We recommend that you do not leave the U.S. until you have received your new EAD. If you do travel, try to return before the end of your initial EAD. Be sure to carry your most recent I-20 with a travel signature, and evidence of the job you will be returning to.

Reporting Requirements during the STEM OPT extension

During STEM OPT, you are required to maintain updated information with International Services. You are required to report/provide:

- The required 6 month validation report, within 10 days of the due date
- Any changes to your legal name, mailing and physical address

- When you stop working for an employer
- When you start working for a new qualifying employer
- Required self-evaluations
- A modified I-983 if there has been a material change to the training plan that was originally filed with the International Services office

Unemployment limits

While on STEM OPT, you are allowed to be unemployed for a total of 150 days. This includes the 90 days (and an additional 60) from your initial period of OPT – the clock does not reset with the STEM OPT extension.

For more information on STEM OPT extension, please refer to Study in the States at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub/student-records/fm-student-employment/f-1-stem-optional-practical-training-opt>

Practical training may not begin until the Employment Authorization Document has been received or before the start date noted on the EAD.

Appropriate Employment on Post Completion STEM OPT

Work done for STEM OPT must be "directly related to the student's major area of study." Employment based on a STEM OPT EAD that is not directly related to the major area of study would be considered a status violation. The employment must also be commensurate with your educational level. While on STEM OPT, employment **must be paid.**

Documenting that your STEM OPT employment is appropriate is **your** responsibility, not that of International Services. We recommend that you maintain evidence for each job documenting the position held, proof of the duration of that position, the job title, contact information for your supervisor or manager, and a description of the work. If it is not clear from the job title that the work is related to your degree, we recommend that you get a signed letter from your hiring official, supervisor, or manager explaining how your degree is related to the work performed.

According to SEVP policy guidance, “a student must work at least 20 hours per week in a qualifying position to be considered employed. If a student has a variable schedule, within a month, it should average out to at least 20 hours per week”.

If you cannot show that your employment was appropriate for Post Completion STEM OPT, as applied for, you may be considered to have violated your status, which may require that you leave the United States and/or make you ineligible for future immigration benefits.

Cap Gap Extensions

(**not** applicable to LSUHSC-New Orleans employees)

If your STEM OPT period ends before October 1, and your employer is considered to be subject to the H1B cap, and that employer has filed a petition to change your status to H1B in a timely manner, your work authorization and your F-1 status will be automatically extended until a decision is made on your H1B petition. If it is approved, your authorization will continue until September 30. If the H1B petition is

denied, revoked or withdrawn during the cap gap period, your STEM OPT will end on the day the petition was denied, revoked or withdrawn. At that point you will still have a 60 day grace period to leave the country, change status or begin a new academic program