Applying for 24 Month STEM OPT Extension Using the Online USCIS Portal

International Student and Scholar Services

Updated: 05/20/2022

Disclaimer:

Please note that this tutorial provides guided recommendations. All images used are samples. Information contained within should not be considered legal advice. Please remember that it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure the application materials you submit to USCIS are completed correctly.

This tutorial may change over time; please do not download this document, and instead access it newly each time at the Sac State ISSS website

STEM OPT Application Process Overview

1. **Read the 24 Month STEM OPT Extension Application Document**
2. **Online applicants only:** _Start_ **the online process but DO NOT submit.**
3. **Send application documents (PDF format) to your ISSS Advisor**
4. **Your ISSS advisor will schedule an appointment with you to review then send you a STEM OPT I-20 via email**
5. **Submit supporting documents and STEM OPT I-20 to USCIS either online or via mail**
6. **Wait for USCIS to adjudicate**
7. **Continue reporting OPT and STEM OPT updates according to the Responsibilities and Reporting Requirements Forms**

This tutorial describes Step 2 - 5 ONLY

A Note on Preparers

Some employers or their law firms will prepare and submit the STEM OPT application for you. Be sure to discuss with your employer regarding what type of assistance they will provide in the process and share this information with your ISSS advisor.

Depending on their level of assistance, your application process may vary from what is described in this tutorial.

Prepare Your Documents

1. Ensure you have items B - F as described on the 24 Month STEM OPT Extension Application Instructions document

2. Prepare items D – E for upload. The Responsibilities and Reporting Requirements form and I-983 will not be uploaded.

File Formats
Photos: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
Documents: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
Maximum size per file: 6MB

You can upload 5 documents at once, and there is no limit to the number of files you can upload in total

Foreign language documents must have official English Translation

Allowable Characters in file names
English letters
Numbers
Spaces
Periods .
Hyphens -
Underscores _
Parentheses ( )
******Do not use special characters**

NOT ALLOWED
foreign characters
.doc or .bmp files
special characters
NOT ALLOWED

ق Æ $
Ñ & 国
.bmp .doc
@
.xlsx

Create or Login to your USCIS Online Account

3. Create or Login to your **USCIS Online Account** following the instructions on their website. If you applied for OPT online in the past, you may already have an account

   2 step authentication is used, and you will choose which way you prefer this to be verified (text vs email)

   Each account is unique to 1 person - you cannot have 2 people using 1 account
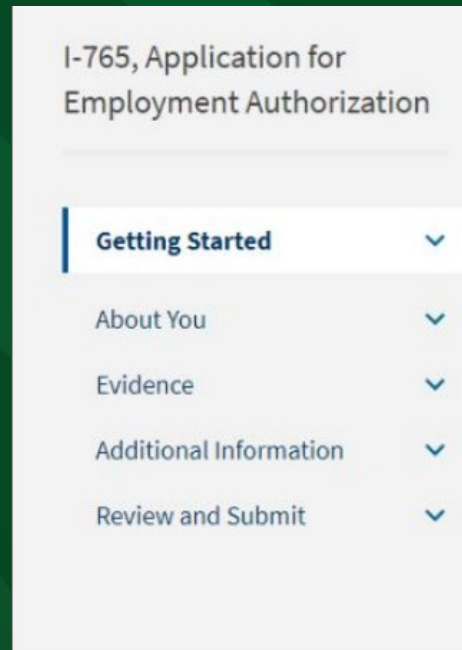
   Resources:
   https://www.uscis.gov/file-online/how-to-create-a-uscis-online-account
   www.uscis.gov/file-online

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The Online Application

4. Read official instructions for completing Form I-765: https://www.uscis.gov/i-765

5. Once Logged in to your USCIS account, click "File a form online"

6. The online application has multiple sections to complete.

The $410 application fee will be paid in the "Review and Submit" section

I-765, Application for
Employment Authorization

Getting Started ⌄

About You ⌄

Evidence ⌄

Additional Information ⌄

Review and Submit ⌄

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7. Select "Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)

8. Under "What is your eligibility category" select c(3)(C) STEM Extension

9. Type of degree type and name, shortening if it does not all fit (e.g. "MS Computer Science")

   Type in the name of your employer's company name <u>exactly</u> as it is shown in E-Verify.

   Type the company's E-Verify number. Note the E-Verify number and EIN are NOT THE SAME number. E-Verify numbers are generally four to seven digits long. Be sure to check with your employer for their E-Verify number.

9. Under "What is your reason for applying" select "Renewal of permission to accept employment"

   "Replacement" is only if your EAD was lost or stolen. Please contact your ISSS advisor before selecting this option.

The Online Application

10. Under "have you previously filed Form I-765" select "yes."

11. Under "Is someone assisting you with completing this application" select "no", unless an attorney, preparer, or interpreter is helping you file. Sac State ISSS advisors are not attorneys, preparers, or interpreters.

12. Enter your name as shown on your passport. If you have used other names, either formally or informally, indicate "yes" and enter them on the application.

13. Write a U.S. mailing address where you will be able to receive documents for the next 1 to 4 months. Do not use the IPGE address or other Sac State office address.

    The address can be someone else's (e.g. friend or family). In this case, write the full name of the person whose address you are using in "In care of name" box.

    If your mailing address and physical address are different, answer "no" to the next question and enter your physical address.

14. Fill out your biographical information throughout the next section of the application

The Online Application

15. Continue to fill out your immigration information using your I-94 and passport

    To download your I-94 go to: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/

    If you entered the U.S. on another status other than F-1 and completed a change of status with USCIS, write the status you last entered under "status at last arrival"

    F-1 students do not have a travel document, so this field may be left blank.

    Your current immigration status should be "F-1 Student"

    Enter your current SEVIS ID (begins with N). You may find this at the top of your I-20. Use the "Additional Information" section to provide any previously used SEVIS ID numbers, if applicable.

16. Under "What is your A-Number?" enter the USCIS # from your Post Completion OPT EAD.

    You will only have a USCIS Online Account Number if you previously filed an online application with USCIS. Check "I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number" if you never filed online before.

17. Select "yes" and enter your Social Security Number.

18. Under "2 x 2 Photo of You", upload your photo using the file requirements. See item D on the 12 Month OPT Application and Instructions document for details.

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19.   Obtain your I-94 and upload. Your I-94 can be found at **https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/**. If you changed your status to F-1 while inside the United States (using Form I-539), your I-94 will be located on the bottom of your I-797 Approval Notice.

20.   Under "Employment Authorization Document or Government ID" Upload the following:

- Image of biographical page of your current passport. The bottom numbers (Machine Readable Zone) must be visible

- Image of your F-1 visa. If you do not have an F-1 visa, upload your I-797 Approval Notice. Canadian citizens do not have F-1 visas.

-Image of previously issued EAD cards, front and back

STOP HERE. Send items B – F to your ISSS Advisor. Your advisor will schedule an appointment with you to review, then issue a STEM OPT request I-20.

Once you have your STEM OPT request I-20, proceed to the next slide.

If you proceed without your STEM OPT request I-20 your STEM OPT will be denied by USCIS.

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Once you have your STEM OPT request I-20, double check that you are within your application window. Your application must be received by USCIS:
 - No earlier than 90 days before your Post Completion OPT expires
 -Within 60 days of your STEM OPT I-20 being issued by ISSS, or before the end of your Post Completion OPT, _**whichever is sooner**_.

If your application is received by USCIS outside this timeframe, your STEM OPT will be denied.

Also ensure you are only filing with just one method (online OR mail). Do not file using both methods!

Finishing the Application

21. Print, sign, and upload your STEM OPT request I-20 under "I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status." Your I-20 must be signed and dated by you in ink.

   If you do not have an I-20 with an STEM OPT recommendation **STOP HERE** and go back two slides.

22. Under "College Degree" upload the images of your diploma and transcripts showing your degree has been awarded. If your STEM degree has not yet been awarded, contact your ISSS advisor.

23. The "Institution Accreditation" is only for students who are applying based off a *prior* degree. This means a degree that is *different* from the one you used to apply for your most recent Post Completion OPT. This is rare. If you believe this applies to you, contact your ISSS advisor.

   If you are applying based off your most recent degree, you may skip this.

24. The "Additional Information" section may be used for a variety of reasons. The most common is if you have been authorized for CPT or OPT at any degree level. List out the information separately for each individual authorization period using the example information below. Please note there is not a place to upload your previous CPT/OPT I-20s in this application.

In the "Additional Information" box, type your specific information for each OPT or CPT authorization:
- Employer's name (CPT only)
- Start and end date of authorization
- Part-time or full-time (CPT only)
- Degree Level (Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD)

If any of these less common situations apply, discuss with your ISSS Advisor. If none apply, click Next.

- You Filed Form I-765 previously but it was withdrawn or denied
- You have ever been in status with a different SEVIS ID
- You entered the U.S. overland and your I-94 does not reflect entry
- You hold dual citizenship
- You entered the U.S. in a different status (not F-1) and changed to F-1 from within the United States

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25.	Check your application and fix all alerts and warnings. Ensure that the application is showing the correct filing fee of $410. You may pay by ACH withdrawal from your savings/checking account or by credit/debit card.

26.	Under "Your application summary" section, save a copy of your application by clicking "view draft snapshot." This is a good time to double check all of the information in your application and save a copy for your own records.

27.	Under "your statement" section, read and confirm the statement. Type your full legal name under "applicant's signature" and click "next"

28.	Once you have confirmed you are within your application window, make payment and submit your application. **Once you pay, you cannot go back and edit your application, so you must ensure everything is complete prior to paying. This includes uploading your STEM OPT I-20. If you submit without uploading a STEM OPT I-20, your application will be denied.**

	After you complete payment at pay.gov you should see a screen which confirms "you successfully submitted your I-765" and receive an email from pay.gov with your payment confirmation. Make sure you save these for your records.

Congratulations!

You have submitted your STEM OPT application! You may follow the progress of your application by viewing "Your Cases" in your *myUSCIS* account and clicking on Case Status, Case History, or Documents for application history/receipt.

If you receive an RFE or denial for any reason, please contact your ISSS advisor immediately prior to responding.

Follow the procedures as outlined in the OPT and 24 Month STEM OPT Responsibilities and Reporting Requirements Forms and contact ISSS with any inquiries at intlprg@csus.edu or (916) 278-6686.