

How to File the Online I-765 for 24-Month STEM OPT Extension

Please review each item carefully to ensure your I-765 is filled out correctly. [Detailed instructions for completing the I-765](#) are also available through the USCIS website.

The information contained on this page is for general information purposes only. Due to frequent government updates, University of Utah ISSS may make additions, deletions, or modifications to the contents on this page at any time without prior notice.

Please note, these directions are meant to help you in completing your application but should not be considered legal advice. US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) ultimately provides the decision on your STEM OPT application. It is your responsibility, as the STEM OPT applicant, to ensure that your STEM OPT application is accurate and complete before you submit it to the US government. Incomplete applications could result in a delay in processing time or denial. University of Utah in no event shall be held liable for any delay, denial, or mistake on your STEM OPT application.

Important Reminders

- Do **not** file the Form I-765 online until you have received your updated Form I-20 recommending STEM OPT. The STEM OPT recommendation will be printed on page 2 of the new I-20. **USCIS denies applications submitted without the I-20 containing the STEM OPT recommendation.**
- Do **not** submit an online application if you have already filed by mail. Duplicate applications may be denied by USCIS.
- You may only file Form I-765 online from within the U.S. You are **not** eligible to apply for STEM OPT from outside the country.
- You can still choose to file your I-765 using the paper process. However, please do not file using both methods. If you wish to apply for OPT using the paper process, please see our STEM OPT Policy Guide.
- ISSS cannot contact USCIS on your behalf to request expedited processing; STEM OPT applications are between you, the applicant, and USCIS.
- File on time! STEM OPT applications may be submitted 90 days before the end date of your current Post OPT period but must be received by USCIS no later than your current OPT end date.
- File in 60 days! USCIS denies applications submitted after 60 days of the date STEM OPT was recommended in your SEVIS record. Submit your I-765 within 60 days of receiving your new STEM OPT I-20 from ISSS.

Step 1: Gather and Scan Your Supporting Documents

It is best to have digital versions of all required documents ready in a folder to drag and drop into the USCIS system. All document copies can be in black and white **OR** in color, as long as they are clear and readable. Document should not be encrypted or password-protected. Documents should be in English, and in one of the following accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF. Please refer to the USCIS website for specifics on file size.

Application Documents to Prepare:

- Scan of STEM OPT I-20 from ISSS. Please be sure to print, sign and date (MM/DD/YYYY) the bottom of page 1 of your I-20s in the 'Student attestation' section in wet ink. Student's typed or electronic signatures on the I-20s are not allowed.
- Please note:** If you have not submitted your STEM OPT application and your I-20 is older than 60 days, or you are worried your application will not arrive at USCIS in a timely manner, please log into UAtlas and submit an "STEM OPT I-20 Request" e-form again. Please use the Additional Comments box on the e-form to confirm that you have **not** submitted your STEM OPT application to the USCIS.
- Digital color U.S. style passport photo** of yourself taken within the last 6 months. Do not re-use passport photos you have or will be using for another application. These photos should be specific to this application.
- Most recent Form I-94
- Scan of passport identification page (plus extension page, if applicable)
- Scan of any previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) cards (front and back), if applicable.
- Scan of diploma and/or official transcript for STEM degree
- Institution Accreditation for previously earned STEM degree, if applicable (see 'Evidence' section for details)
- Student must confirm the CIP code under Program of Study on Page 1 of the STEM OPT Extension I-20 matches a code on the [DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List](#). Students who do not have a I-20 with a STEM-eligible CIP code must not proceed with application and need to contact ISSS office.
- Before applying for a STEM OPT I-20, ensure you've reported all your Post OPT employment.

Step 2: If you have not already done so, you will need to create an online account at

<https://myaccount.uscis.gov>.

- You will be required to provide a valid email address or mobile phone where you can receive a verification code for two-factor authentication, which will be required every time you log in. Go to “File a Form” to get started and select I-765.
- Read through the information carefully.
- **Please note:** Your responses on the online I-765 will be automatically saved. If you log out, you may log back in and resume where you left off last time. Your form will stay in draft status for 30 days but will then auto-delete if you have not submitted it yet. If you have technical difficulties, please contact USCIS directly.

STEP 3: Follow the instructions and complete each step in the order they are presented to you.

Form I-765 Question or Entry Field	Response
Section 1- Getting Started	
What is your eligibility category?	Choose “(c)(3)(C) Stem Extension.
What is your degree?	Enter degree/major name as it appears on your I-20.
What is your employer's name as listed in E-Verify?	Enter the employer's name as it is listed with E-Verify.
What is your employer's E-Verify company identification number or a valid E-Verify client company identification number?	Enter your employer's E-Verify Number (not EIN). This should be a number between 4-7 digits long.
What is your reason for applying?	Select “Initial permission to accept employment”.
Have you previously filed Form I-765?	Select “Yes”
Is someone assisting you with completing this application?	Select “No” unless you have an immigration attorney or employer representative or interpreter helping you prepare the application. Most students handle the OPT application filing on their own.
Section 2- About You	
What is your current legal name?	Enter your full name exactly as it appears in your passport
Have you used any other names since birth?	Select “Yes” or “No.” If “Yes,” you must enter other names.

	Most students will select “No.”
How may we contact you?	Enter preferred phone number(s).
Email address	Enter preferred University of Utah or non-University of Utah email address.
What is your current U.S. mailing address?	<p>You are recommended to use an address you will reliably have access to up to six months after graduating from the University of Utah. Changing addresses during a pending OPT application may lead to mail delivery issues. You may use a trusted friend’s or colleague’s address if you will be moving. You may not use the ISSS address.</p> <p>In care of name (if any) - If you are using someone else’s address, such as a friend or family member’s to receive your mail, enter their name here. Otherwise, leave blank.</p>
Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?	Select “Yes” or “No.” If “No,” you must enter your current physical address (i.e., where you currently live).
What is your gender?	Select one of the options.
What is your marital status?	Select one of the options.
What is your city, town, or village of birth?	Enter your city, town, or village of birth.
What is your state or province of birth?	Enter your state or province of birth. If none, leave blank.
What is your country of birth?	Enter the country where you were born.
What is your date of birth?	Enter your date of birth formatted as MONTH/DAY/YEAR.
What is your country of citizenship or nationality?	List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national.
What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)?	Enter the number from your most recent electronic Form I-94 Record .
When did you last arrive in the United States?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the arrival date, place of arrival, and status at arrival, as it appears on your most recent I-94 record. • Date of arrival – Enter the date of arrival as MONTH/DAY/YEAR. • Place of arrival – Select your port of entry of arrival from the drop-down menu. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) preclearance is available in some foreign airports which is why your port of entry may also be a location outside of the U.S.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status at last arrival – Most students will select “F1 – STUDENT, ACADEMIC, OR LANGUAGE PROGRAM.” unless you obtained an in-country change of status through USCIS after your most recent date of entry to the U.S.
What is the passport number of your most recently issued passport?	Enter your passport number.
What is your travel document number (if any)?	Most students should leave this question blank. If you do not have a valid passport, but your country has issued a valid travel document instead, please enter the travel document number here. <u>If you have a valid passport, be sure to list the passport number in the previous question.</u>
What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?	Be sure to list the expiration date of your most recently issued passport, even if your F-1 visa is in a prior passport.
What country issued your passport or travel document?	List the information from your most recently issued passport, even if your F-1 visa is in a prior passport.
What is your current immigration status or category?	Select “F1 – STUDENT, ACADEMIC, OR LANGUAGE PROGRAM.”
What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)?	Enter the SEVIS number from top left corner of the <u>OPT I-20</u> starts with “N00...”.
What is your A-Number?	Most students may select ‘I do not have or know my A-number.’ However, if you have been issued an A-number from a previous EAD such as OPT or as part of the green card process, please list your A-number. The A-number is the USCIS # listed on your previous OPT EAD card.
What is your USCIS Online Account Number?	Most students may select ‘I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number.’ You may already have a USCIS Online Account Number if you previously filed certain paper forms and received an Account Access Notice in the mail. You can find the OAN at the top of the notice; it is NOT the same as an A-Number.
Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?	If you have a Social Security Number (SSN), select “Yes” and enter the SSN. Students that have never applied for an SSN must select “No.”
Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?	If you need an SSN, select “Yes.” Selecting “Yes” requires the applicant to agree to the Consent for Disclosure and enter their father’s and mother’s birth names. If you have received a SSN in the past, do NOT select “Yes.” If

you need a replacement Social Security Card, please contact the local Social Security Office."

Section 3- Evidence Carefully scan and upload copies of all the required documents and photos in this section.

2 x 2 Photo of You

You will need to upload a recently taken (within the last 6 months) U.S. style passport photograph of yourself. Please refer to the Department of State's website and [Photo Sample](#) as well as the instructions on the online I-765 application for additional information on the photo requirements.

As a best practice, do not re-use photos that you have previously used on your passport or visa, as this may lead to issues with your application.

You may wish to use the Department of State's Photo Tool to upload your photo and crop to the correct size.

Form I-94

Copy of [most recent electronic Form I-94 Record](#). travel history is not required.

Please note that if you changed to F-1 status within the US via a successful in-country change of nonimmigrant status (Form I-539) application with USCIS and have not since traveled outside the US, the I-94 is located on your change of status approval notice document (I-797).

Employment Authorization Document or Government ID

Although other documents are listed as optional if you were issued an EAD, we strongly recommend that you also upload your most recently issued valid passport identification page showing picture, name, date of birth, and passport expiration date and a copy of your F-1 Visa, regardless of whether you have been issued an EAD previously.

Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status (your OPT I-20)

- **Double check your Program of Study information on page 1 of the I-20 and the STEM OPT recommendation dates on page 2 of the I-20 to ensure they are correct.**

- Please be sure to print, sign and date (MM/DD/YYYY) the bottom of page 1 of your I-20 in the 'Student attestation' section in ink. Student's typed or electronic signatures on the STEM OPT Extension I-20 are not allowed.

- Your STEM OPT Extension application must be filed with USCIS within 60 days of the OPT I-20 issuance date. You can confirm the date your STEM OPT Extension I-20 was issued by viewing the "DATE ISSUED" section on page 1 in the "School Attestation" box.

- **If your application is submitted to USCIS more than 60 days after the Date Issued and/or you do not file your I-765 with USCIS at least 90 days prior to your program end date, your OPT application will be denied.**

- If you have not submitted your OPT application and your

	STEM OPT I-20 is older than 60 days, or you are worried your application will not arrive at USCIS in a timely manner, please log into UAtlas and submit an "STEM OPT I-20 Request" e-form again.
College Degree	<p>A copy of official or unofficial U of U transcript OR a copy of U of U diploma showing degree earned and program of study. ISSS recommends including both a copy of your diploma (required) and transcript (optional). T</p> <p><i>Most students apply for STEM OPT Extension based on their most recently obtained degree from U of U. Students applying for STEM OPT Extension based on a prior STEM degree must upload a copy of the transcript or diploma for the previously earned STEM eligible degree.</i></p>
Institution Accreditation	<p>If you are applying for STEM OPT based on your most recent degree earned from U of U, leave this section blank.</p> <p>If you are applying for STEM OPT with a previously earned STEM degree, you must upload an accreditation letter from the school where you earned that degree.</p>
Section 4- Additional Information Use this section to provide any additional information that you could not fit into the previous sections.	
Example #1: Had a different SEVIS number(s) than your current one	<p>Section: Select "About You"</p> <p>Page: Select "Your immigration information"</p> <p>Question: Select "What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information (SEVIS) Number (if any)?"</p> <p>Additional information: Enter your previous SEVIS ID number, the name of the institution, degree level, and program start date. For example: SEVIS #: N00000000000 University of Utah Bachelor's 8/15/2015 - 12/20/2018</p>
Example #2: Your full name could not fit in the About You section	Example: Complete legal name: Last name: _____, First name: _____, Middle Name: _____
Section 5- Review and Submit	
Review your application	<p>Review any system alerts or warnings and make any needed corrections.</p> <p>The online system will allow you to submit the application without completing some of the required fields for the application.</p>

	<p>Changes cannot be made after form is submitted including requested start date.</p>
Your application summary	<p>Be sure to carefully review your application before filing online to ensure that all applicable questions were answered.</p> <p>A form summary can be printed.</p> <p>A PDF of I-765 form completed with your responses and a summary of uploaded evidence can be generated by clicking View draft snapshot.</p> <p>Saving a copy of your completed form is strongly recommended.</p>
Your statement	<p>Under ‘Applicant’s statement,’ you must check ‘I can read and understand English, and have read and understand every question and instruction on this application, as well as my answer to every question.’</p>
Your signature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You must check ‘I have read and agree to the applicant’s statement.’ Be sure to read the statement listed above this attestation. - Provide your digital signature in the box by typing your full legal name as it appears on your current passport.
Pay and submit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pay the application fee indicated on the USCIS website. The application fee can be paid via bank account (ACH), debit, or credit card. - USCIS systems operate on Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) and application deadlines are based on UTC standards. Please do not wait until the last minute to submit your application! Do NOT pay and submit I-765 without new OPT I-20 from ISSS or any other required evidence or information. Do NOT pay and submit I-765 more than 30 days after ISSS recommended OPT in your SEVIS record. IMPORTANT: Once you submit your payment information and the payment is successfully received, USCIS considers your application OFFICIALLY SUBMITTED. You cannot change or edit your I-765 application responses after payment has been submitted. ISSS office cannot change or update your OPT I-20 information.

After Submission

- Form submission is confirmed immediately upon payment of fee.
- Your receipt number is immediately generated in your myUSCIS account.
- Click *Go to my cases* to see case information including status, history, and documents.
- USCIS processing times vary. From our experience it usually averages between 2 and 3 months with the online application. However, these are estimates and it may take longer based on your specific application and USCIS processing times. As more students use the online system, it may increase the processing time.
- You are allowed to continue working for 180 days after your Post OPT EAD expires as long as your STEM OPT I-765 is pending. Please review this [HERE](#) under Applying for a STEM OPT Extension.
- Please check the information on your EAD card for accuracy (e.g. full name, start and end dates)
- Your receipt notice is available to print. A hardcopy will be mailed to the mailing address entered on the I-765.
- Additional notices available through account:
 - Biometrics notice if applicable
 - Request for Evidence (RFE)
 - PDF of submitted I-765 form
 - Decision notice
 - Track the status and history of your application.
 - Upload additional evidence not requested by USCIS such as copies of all previously issued I-20s.
 - Sign up through account profile to receive case updates via email or text.
- Please review the 24 Month STEM OPT Reporting requirement.

After Approval

- Please review the [24 Month STEM OPT Reporting Requirement](#) on ISSS website.

REMINDER:

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they prepare and submit all the correct documents to USCIS for their STEM OPT application. ISSS is in no way liable for any guidance provided in this guide.

Disclaimer: International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) provides support and information related to U.S. immigration laws and regulations related to F and J status at the University of Utah. ISSS staff are not attorneys and any information provided by ISSS should not be construed as legal advice. Individuals are welcome to consult a qualified immigration attorney for specific legal advice, particularly in complicated cases. For a list of local Utah attorneys please visit our website [here](#).

Employment: ISSS reviews work related requests based upon the information provided to us by the student. If USCIS later determines that the student misused the work authorization or otherwise did not follow the required rules and regulations, additional immigration benefits could be denied by USCIS.