

The STEM extension application can be filed online or through U.S. mail. Instructions are included below for each method. Both online and paper forms collect the same information, so choose the method that works best for you.

## **Online Filing Instructions:**

1. Visit [www.uscis.gov/i-765](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765) and select the button to “File Online”.
2. Create a USCIS login account, or login using your existing login credentials, if you already have an account.
3. Select MyUSCIS after logging in.
4. Select I am an applicant, petitioner, or requestor.
5. Select File a form online, then select Application for Employment Authorization (I-765). Hit Start Form.
6. Review the form instructions thoroughly and carefully answer all questions.
7. Upload required documentation when prompted in the corresponding evidence fields:
  - **2x2 Photo of you:** Upload a passport photo meeting listed format requirements. You should try to select a passport photo location that also provides digital photo copies, and pay extra for this service. If you will take your own photo, or make a digital copy of your printed passport photos, be sure to meet the stated photo requirements and that there are no shadows or glares.
    - If you take your own photo, use the [photo-tool](#) to crop it to the appropriate size.
  - **Form I-94** This will be either: 1) Print out of online admission record (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>), 2) White card stapled to passport 3) If you obtained F-1 status through a Change of Status application in the U.S., the I-94 is attached to I-797 approval notice.
  - **Employment Authorization Document or Government ID:** A copy of your prior Employment Authorization Document issued by USCIS (if you have one). If you do not have one, upload a copy of your unexpired passport.
  - **Evidence of STEM degree:** Evidence of degree that is basis for STEM OPT and is listed on STEM Designated Degree Program List.  
If you seek STEM OPT extension based on previously earned STEM degree, provide evidence that your school is currently accredited by U.S. Department of Education and certified by SEVP.
  - **Form I-20:** A signed copy of your Form I-20 recently issued by International Student Services recommending the requested OPT. **PLEASE sign the bottom of the Form I-20 in the signature section before you photocopy it. The I-20 must be submitted to USCIS within 60 days of issuance date.**

Documents must be:

- submitted in JPEG, PNG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF formats only
- may not exceed 6 MB per file
- in English

Please also review the I-765 Evidence Checklist for the most up-to-date information. [Checklist of Required Initial Evidence for Form I-765 \(for informational purposes only\) | USCIS](#)

8. Upon completion of the online questionnaire, you will be notified of the filing fee (but not required to pay yet) and advised to fix any form errors. Make sure to re-read all completed questions carefully, because the form does not catch all errors. The online form highlights text fields that need revising in red.

9. After all question form fields are complete, print a pdf of a draft I-765 form for your records (do not send this or submit to USCIS). The link to this form is called, "View Draft Snapshot".

10. Follow the prompts to continue to the fee payment section, where you will pay the filing fee through pay.gov. You will have the option to pay by debit/credit card or through direct withdrawal from your bank account.

**Once you pay the fee your application will be considered submitted.**

You will be immediately issued a case number, and you can track your case through MyUSCIS. All documents issued by USCIS will also be available on MyUSCIS.

## **Paper Filing Instructions:**

Send the following materials to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox, assembled in the following order (first to last):

1. \$410.00 in the form of a credit card, personal check, bank check or money order made out to U.S. Department of Homeland Security. While credit card payment is also available, we strongly recommend that students use personal check as their payment method.
2. Two recent passport-style photos per instructions on form I-765; please print your name and SEVIS number in pencil or felt pen on the back of each photo.
3. Original Form I-765 (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>). Type form, print and sign, or complete form in black ink. Signature must be hand-signed, and keep your signature within the lines of the text box.
  - Mark item 27 for STEM OPT as (c)(3)(C)
4. Copy of current I-94. This will be either: 1) Print out of online admission record (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>), 2) White card stapled to passport 3) If you obtained F-1 status through a Change of Status application in the U.S., the I-94 is attached to I-797 approval notice.
5. Copy of your unexpired passport ID page, showing your picture, name, and date of birth.
6. Evidence of degree that is basis for STEM OPT and is listed on STEM Designated Degree Program List.
7. Copies of any previous Employment Authorization Documents (EAD cards) issued to you.

# STEM Extension Filing Instructions

8. Copy of Form I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation (you keep the original). **PLEASE sign the bottom of the Form I-20 in the signature section before you photocopy it. The I-20 must be submitted to USCIS within 30 days of issuance date.**
9. Copies of I-20 forms listing any previous periods of OPT or CPT, including OPT/CPT used at other schools or for prior degree levels.
10. OPTIONAL: To receive e-notifications by text message or email from USCIS when your I-765 is received please fill out form G-1145 and clip it to the front of your package. (<https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>)
11. Send all materials by USPS certified mail (delivery confirmation) or express mail to the applicable USCIS Lockbox:

### USCIS Chicago Lockbox

**All student I-765 Applications for OPT and STEM OPT Extension will file at the Chicago Lockbox**

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries: USCIS PO Box 805373 Chicago, IL 60680	For Express Mail and Courier Service Deliveries (UPS, FedEx, DHL): USCIS Attn: I-765 C03 131 South Dearborn – 3rd Floor Chicago, IL 60603-5517
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## NEXT STEPS AFTER SUBMITTING YOUR I-765 APPLICATION TO USCIS:

**NOTE: If you have filed online, you will receive both paper and digital copies of the below notices. If you have filed by U.S. mail, you will only receive paper notices by mail.**

1. **Receive I-797 (Receipt Notice):** After receiving your application, USCIS will send you a Receipt Notice (I-797). This will list the Service Center where your application is being processed, the date your application was officially received, and a case number in reference to your application. Carefully review the notice to make sure your application was received within the timelines outlined above, and that your name is spelled correctly on the I-797. If your name is not spelled correctly, contact the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) number listed on your receipt notice.
2. **Receive I-797 (Approval Notice):** After processing your OPT application, USCIS will send you an approval notice (I-797). This is a notification on your application status, NOT your work authorization/permission. USCIS processing time for OPT is up to 90 days, but can exceed this length in some cases.
3. **Receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD):** You will receive an EAD in the mail from USCIS, separate from the approval notice. This is your proof of employment authorization. You may not start working until you receive your EAD and the start date becomes effective. EADs cannot be forwarded by the post office, so if you move or change your mailing address you MUST notify USCIS with the updated address for EAD mailing.

## STEM Extension Filing Instructions

**4. STEM OPT Employment Information and Address Changes:** You must report your employer information, and any changes to that employer information within 10 days. You must also report any changes to your U.S. residential and home country addresses.

You should update any changes through your USCIS Portal, but you can also email International Student Services with this information.

Maintain the I-983 Training Plan throughout your employment. If there are significant changes to the terms on the form, complete an updated I-983 with your current employer. If you receive a new employer, submit a new I-983 for each new employer.

Submit a STEM OPT Validation Report every 6 months while on OPT.

Self-Evaluation: Every 12 months, submit to International Student Services a self-evaluation (p. 5 of the I-983), approved by your employer. The Evaluation on Student Progress (top of p. 5) is submitted with the 12-month STEM OPT Validation Report, and the Final Evaluation on Student Progress (bottom of p. 5) is submitted with the 24-month STEM OPT Validation Report. The Final Evaluation on Student Progress is also submitted if you depart from your position before reaching the 24-month STEM OPT Validation Report.

### **Rejection Notice/Request for Evidence**

If something is missing from your application, your application may be rejected, or, USCIS could accept your application and send you a letter requesting further information to process your application. If your application is rejected, you will receive instructions on how to resubmit your application with the missing materials. If you are sent a request for evidence, you will receive a letter from USCIS that outlines the information needed to process your application. If you receive either a rejection notice OR a request for evidence, you should contact International Student Services and submit a copy of your rejection notice or request for evidence so we can advise you further on next steps.

### **Traveling on STEM OPT**

If you will travel while on STEM OPT you must carry your EAD, I-20 with travel signature, proof of employment, and valid passport and visa to return. Please note that your travel signature is only valid for six months while on STEM OPT, and your passport must be valid at least six months into the future

### **International Student Services Contact Information**

Lacey Wismer (PDSO & RO)

Assistant Director of International Admissions & Services, Boxwood House 201

484-646-4256 [wismer@kutztown.edu](mailto:wismer@kutztown.edu) [international@kutztown.edu](mailto:international@kutztown.edu)

Kerri Gardi (DSO – OPT, STEM OPT & CPT)

Director of Career Development Center, Stratton Administration Center 113D

610-683-4067 [gardi@kutztown.edu](mailto:gardi@kutztown.edu)

*International Student Services cannot contact USCIS about your case. If you have questions or concerns about your case please call 1-800-375-5283 and have your case number available. USCIS is available between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm, but please be prepared for long hold times.*