Filing a STEM Extension OPT Application via Mail/Courier

Complete List of Application Materials

- Completed Form I-765 (instructions)
    - Click here for guidance for completing PDF form I-765.
- Copy of most recent I-20 (pages 1 and 2)
- Copy of all previous I-20s (pages 1 and 2)
- Copy of I-94
- Color copy of passport photo page
- Two (2) full-face, passport-style photos
    - The photos must be identical and in color with a plain background.
    - They should be no more than 30 days old when your application is filed to USCIS.
    - Photos can be obtained at Walgreens, Walmart, or a local photography shop.
    - Include your photography receipt with the photos to prove they are recent.
    - Write your name and I-94 number in pencil on the back of the photos.
- $410 application fee in the form of a money order payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"
- All past Employment Authorization Document (EAD) cards (if applicable)
- Official transcript showing your degree conferral
- Letter from your employer

** You do not need to submit your Form I-983 to USCIS. The Center for International Studies keeps it on file for you. **

Mailing to USCIS

Make sure you **mail your application packet within 60 days** from the date the CIS advisor recommends your off-campus work authorization in SEVIS (this date is shown on the signature line on your I-20). Also make sure your application arrives at the USCIS office **no later than your OPT end date** (to be safe, we recommend you do not wait until the last minute).

You can mail the packet via the U.S. Postal Service or courier service (FedEx, UPS, DHL, etc.) to one of the corresponding addresses:

- U.S. Postal Service
  USCIS
  PO Box 805373
  Chicago, IL 60680

- Express mail and courier services:
  USCIS
  Attn: I-765 C03

131 South Dearborn – 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Students are responsible for mailing their own applications to USCIS.

We encourage using a tracked mailing system (e.g. USPS certified mail, FedEx, UPS) to ensure safe delivery.

Approval

- USCIS usually takes **2-3 months to process** OPT Applications.
- Within 2 weeks of receiving your application, USCIS will mail you a **Form I-797 Receipt Notice** to the mailing address you provide on your Form I-765.
    - Once you receive your I-797 Receipt Notice, you will be able to **track your case status**.
- If your application is **returned** with a Request for Further Evidence (RFE), you should contact a DSO for assistance. We will likely need to create a new I-20 for you.
- When your application is **approved**, USCIS will mail you the following separately:
    - Form **I-797 Approval Notice**
    - **EAD card**
- You should submit a copy of your EAD to your employer.
- If your application is **denied**, USCIS will mail you a notification.

Reporting Your OPT Employment

You are required to report your Optional Practical Training employment every 6 months during your STEM extension. Please visit the link for reporting requirements.