



Applying for STEM OPT Online

Steps for Applying

After CIS has processed your STEM Extension request and returned your packet of materials, you can apply for STEM OPT online through the USCIS website. Here are the instructions:

1. **Gather digital copies of the following documents:**
 - a. Digital Passport-style Photo of You (2x2 photo)
 - Must be recent (within the last 30 days), in color, and meet [US passport photo standards](#).
 - Photos can be obtained at Walgreens, Walmart, or a local photography shop. You may also take your own, but the photo file must meet USCIS's photo requirements.
 - b. Valid passport identification page
 - c. [I-94](#) record
 - d. Previous EAD card(s) (front & back)
 - e. Most recent I-20 with requested STEM OPT extension.
 - The I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765. After that time, your application may be denied.
 - You must print the I-20, sign & date on page 1, and scan the signed copy to upload.
 - f. Official Transcripts
 - Official transcripts must be requested via [Records and Registration](#). Transcripts must show degree conferral date.

Acceptable File Formats

Photos: JPG, JPEG, PNG

Documents: JPG JPEG, PDF, TIF, TIFF (.doc or .bmp files are not allowed)

Maximum size: 6MB per file

2. **Create a USCIS online account.**
 - a. Go to <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/> and click "Create an account."
 - b. Complete registration process, including setting up two-step verification. You will be required to use the two-step verification process each time you log in.
3. **Start your application.**

Log into your USCIS account and click the "myUSCIS" button. The first time you log in, you will be prompted to choose an account type; select "I am an applicant, petitioner, or requester."

Welcome to your USCIS Account

Select what you want to do

Edit My Profile Editing your profile includes email, password, phone number, security questions, two-step verification and backup code.

Login to a USCIS Service

USCIS Apply for immigration benefits, find tools and resources to assist in preparation for naturalization, and search for doctors in your local community.

FIRST Submit, manage and receive Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

myE-Verify Confirm your records for employment eligibility, track E-Verify or Self-Check case status, and protect your identity by locking your Social Security Number (SSN).

Not sure what service you need? Start at [USCIS.gov](https://uscis.gov)

Account Type

Select an account type:

- I am an applicant, petitioner, or requestor.
 - USCIS only offers certain benefit types for online filing. Please refer to uscis.gov for further guidance.
 - You cannot file an H-1B Registration with this account type.
- I am a Legal Representative.
 - I am an attorney eligible to practice law in the United States.
 - I am an accredited representative of a qualified organization that is recognized by the Department of Justice in accordance with 8 CFR part 1292.

Submit

Next, select “File a Form Online” under “Select What You Want to Do.”

Welcome To Your USCIS Account

Select What You Want To Do

- Add a paper-filed case**
View your case status and case history by adding your case to your account
- File a form online**
Start a new form, upload evidence, and pay and submit online
- Enter a representative passcode**
Review and sign forms prepared for you by your attorney or representative
- Verify your identity**
Answer questions about your immigration history to verify your personal identity

Then, under “File a form online,” select “Application for Employment Authorization (I-765).”

- Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)**
Only certain F-1 students seeking optional practical training (OPT) may file Form I-765 online. This includes:
 - Pre-completion OPT - (c)(3)(A) eligibility category;
 - Post-completion OPT - (c)(3)(B) eligibility category; or
 - a 24-month extension for STEM students (students holding a degree in science technology, engineering, or mathematics) - (c)(3)(C) eligibility category.
 For all other eligibility categories, you must submit a paper [Form I-765](#).
- Petition for Alien Relative (I-130)
- Application To Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (I-539)

Start form

Cancel

You will be brought to a page with an overview of the online filing process, including eligibility requirements, required documents, payment details, and action items you may need to take after submitting Form I-765. **Please read this page carefully** and contact the Center for International Studies if you have any questions.

Review the "Completing Your Form Online" section carefully. Note that your responses will be automatically saved. If you log out, you may log back in and continue where you stopped last time.

4. Complete the form

a. Section 1 – Getting Started

Provide all the required information in this section. Here are some tips:

- **Basis of eligibility**
 - Select “c(3)(C)” for the STEM Extension
- **Reason for applying**
 - Select “Renewal of permission to accept employment” for the STEM Extension
- **Have you previously filed Form I-765?**
 - Select "Yes" if you have previously filed an I-765 (you will be required to upload a copy of your last Employment Authorization Document [EAD] in the "Evidence" section).
- **Preparer and interpreter information**
 - Select “no” unless someone (e.g. an interpreter) is helping you with the application

b. Section 2 – About You

Carefully provide all the required information in this section. Here are some tips:

- Your immigration information
 - You can retrieve your Form I-94 on the CBP website here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>.
 - Be sure to select the correct immigration status, as the list of available statuses is quite long (**F1 - Student, Academic, or Language Program**).
 - Your SEVIS number can be found on the top left corner of your I-20.
- Other information
 - You have a previous EAD, and your A-Number will be listed under USCIS# on your card.

- If you have been issued a Social Security Number, please provide it.
- c. Section 3 – Evidence

Carefully scan and upload copies of all the required documents and photos in this section.

- **2 x 2 photo**

- Be sure to review the guidelines for taking and uploading a photo. Selfies are not acceptable, and the picture must be taken on a plain white or off-white background. You can upload your photo to the Photo Tool on the Department of State's [Passport Photos](#) page to create an acceptable passport-style photo. Your application will not be approved without a photo.

- **Form I-94**

In this section, you will be required to upload a copy of one of the following documents:

- I-94 (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>)
- Passport photo page (if you have more than one passport number, upload copies of both your old and new passport)

- **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)**

- **Most Recent I-20**

- Upload a copy of your new I-20 with the OPT request on page 2.
- Don't forget to sign the I-20 on page 1.

- **College degree**

- Upload your official transcripts for the degree that is the basis for the STEM OPT extension. The list of accepted STEM degrees is listed here: [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#). Your transcripts must show that the degree has been officially conferred.

- **Institution accreditation**

- You are only required to provide evidence of institution accreditation if you are applying for your STEM OPT extension based on a previously earned degree, and not your most recent one.
- If you are applying for STEM OPT based on a prior degree, you may find proof of accreditation here: [SCSU Accreditation – Higher Learning Commission](#).

- d. Section 4 – Additional Information

Use this section to provide any additional information that you could not fit into the previous sections.

- **Example #1** – If you have a previous SEVIS number:
 - **Section:** Select “About You”
 - **Page:** Select “Your immigration information”
 - **Question:** Select “What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)?”
 - **Additional information:** Enter your previous SEVIS ID number, the name of the institution, degree level, and program start date. For instance:
 - N00123456789
New York University
Bachelor’s
1/13/2015 – 12/11/2019

Additional Information

If you need to provide any additional information for any of your answers to the questions in this form, enter it into the space below. You should include the questions that you are referencing.

If you do not need to provide any additional information, you may leave this section blank.

Section
Evidence

Page
Post-Completion CPT or OPT

Question
Post-Completion CPT or OPT

Additional information
CPT, Amazon, Part-time
5/31/2018 - 9/1/2018
Master's
N00123456789

66/500

- **Example #2** – If you have previous CPT or OPT authorization:
 - **Section:** Select "Evidence";
 - **Page:** "Post-Completion CPT or OPT";
 - **Question:** "Post-Completion CPT or OPT";
 - **Additional Information:** Enter the type of authorization, employer, full- or part-time status, dates, degree level, and SEVIS ID. For example:
 - CPT, Amazon, Part-time
5/31/2018 - 9/1/2018
Master's
N00123456789

Figure 1: Example #2 - Previous CPT or OPT

- **Example #3** – If you have received Severe Economic Hardship work authorization:
 - **Section:** Select "Evidence"
 - **Page:** “Employment Authorization Document”
 - **Additional Information:** Enter the type of authorization and name of your employers, etc. For example
 - Severe Economic Hardship

5. Review, digitally sign, and submit your application.

The system will alert you of any errors or incomplete fields and will give you the opportunity to make corrections. However, please also manually review each section of the form to ensure that you are submitting accurate information under "Your application summary." You will also have the opportunity to download a .pdf copy of your responses, which you can save for your records by clicking "View draft snapshot."

After you review your application, you must indicate that you can read and understand English. You will then be required to provide a digital signature by typing your full legal name to confirm that all information you submitted is accurate as of the time of filing.

6. Pay the filing fee.

After you sign your application in the previous step, you will pay your \$410 [filing fee](#). Filing online allows you to pay using a credit card, debit card, or withdrawal from a checking or savings account. After you click "Pay and submit," you will be taken to [pay.gov](#) to complete your payment.

Please note that the USCIS filing fee is not refundable. Avoid clicking the back or refresh button on your browser. If you are not ready to complete the payment, click Cancel to be taken back to the USCIS online portal.

7. After you pay, you will be redirected to a screen confirming that your form was submitted. Click "Go to my cases" to view your case card and receipt notice. Please save a copy of your receipt number for your records.

Once your application and payment are submitted, you can use your online account for the following:

- Access your receipt notice
- Access biometrics notices (if applicable)
- Review Requests for Evidence (RFEs), if applicable
- View your case status (via the Case Status tab)
- See a PDF of the completed Form I-765
- Access your Decision Letter

All notices will also be mailed to the mailing address you provided on your I-765.