

## **STEM OPT EXTENSION APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

If submitting your STEM OPT Extension application online, once you have received your STEM OPT Extension I-20 from the Dashew Center, print, sign, and date the bottom of page 1 (the Student Attestation section) before uploading pages 1 and 2 of your STEM OPT Extension I-20 along with other application materials to USCIS.

If submitting your application by mail, sign and date the bottom of page 1 (the Student Attestation section), make copies of pages 1 and 2 of the signed STEM OPT Extension I-20 to include with your STEM OPT Extension application materials to USCIS. Please keep your new STEM OPT Extension I-20 in your records. The STEM OPT Extension I-20 is your new I-20 and replaces your previous I-20. Please retain all of your previous I-20s in your records as you will need them in case you apply for future U.S. visa benefits (you do not need to submit previous I-20 copies to the Dashew Center).

### **Submitting your STEM OPT Extension Application to USCIS**

USCIS accepts STEM OPT Extension applications online or by mail.

You can request for premium processing for either online or mailed STEM OPT Extension applications. If you would like information about USCIS' Premium Processing of OPT applications, please visit USCIS website [here](#).

### **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- **USCIS must receive your completed STEM OPT Extension application materials with 60 days of the issuance date listed on page 1 of your STEM OPT Extension I-20. Applications received by USCIS later than 60 days from the issuance date on page 1 of the STEM OPT Extension I-20 will be denied.**
- **USCIS must receive your completed STEM OPT Extension application materials before your initial 12-month OPT end date as listed on the EAD card and page 2 of the 12-month OPT I-20. Applications received by USCIS after the initial 12-month OPT end date will be denied.**

### **To File Online:**

USCIS has made online filing of the I-765 Form available to F-1 students applying for the STEM OPT Extension. Please note that the Dashew Center does not have step-by-step instructions for filing STEM OPT Extension applications online, so please follow the instructions provided by USCIS if you choose to submit your application online.

To file your application online, please visit <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> and click on the blue 'File Online' button. Then, look for the online "I-765 I Application for Employment Authorization" and choose the category (c)(3)(c) – F-1 student, 24-month extension for STEM students (students holding a degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics). The link will redirect you to a new page with instructions on how to create a USCIS account or login information.

Once you have created a USCIS account, please select that you would like to file the I-765 Form to apply for the STEM OPT Extension – this will redirect you to the online I-765 Form. The questions on the online I-765 form will match the questions on the [PDF I-765 Form](#), but will appear in a different order. It is recommended that you review Slides 22-41 of the [STEM OPT Extension Workshop](#) to prepare your I-765 Form, even if you will be submitting your application online.

You will see that you must upload supporting documents to complete your online application. Please wait until you receive your STEM OPT Extension I-20 from the Dashew Center before submitting your STEM OPT Extension application online, since the STEM OPT Extension I-20 is a required supporting document. Incomplete applications will be denied by USCIS.

Please upload a copy of your STEM OPT Extension I-20 for the ‘institution accreditation’ requirement, even if you are uploading your STEM OPT Extension I-20 for another requirement.

Once you submit your completed STEM OPT Extension application online, you will be issued an application receipt number and will be able to access your application receipt notice through your USCIS account. Your EAD card will be mailed to the U.S. mailing address provided on your I-765 Form.

### **To File by Mail:**

Please prepare your STEM OPT Extension application for submission to USCIS in the following order:

- [I-765 Form](#)**
  - USCIS requires that you submit the most recent edition of the form with your STEM OPT Extension application. Do not save the form locally to complete or submit at a later time. If you submit an older version of the form, your application will be denied. Make sure you have checked ‘Renewal of my permission to accept employment.’ in Part 1 (on page 1) of the [I-765 Form](#).
  - Make sure you have provided your Alien Registration Number (‘A-number’ or ‘USCIS number’) on page 2 (Part 2, #8) and page 7 (Part 6, #2) of the [I-765 Form](#).
  
- 2 U.S. style passport photos. Please see [U.S. Style Passport Photo Guidelines](#)**
  - Write your name and SEVIS ID number on the back of each photo (do not use ink pens as they can smear)
  
- \$410 check or money order made payable to ‘U.S. Department of Homeland Security’**
  - Write your date of birth and SEVIS ID number on the *front* of the check in the memo section
    - Do not sign or write anything on the back of the check. USCIS will not be able to cash the check if there is any writing on the back of the check.
  - Ensure that your check will be valid and you have sufficient funding in the account at the time USCIS receives your application
    - Personal checks expire in 90 days; money orders do not expire
  
- 1 copy of your current I-94 Admission Record**
  - **Electronic I-94:** Access and print record here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>
  - **QR Paper I-94:** Please copy front and back sides
  
- 1 copy of your I-94 Travel History or most recent U.S. entry stamp in passport**

- I-94 Travel History: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/history-search>
- 1 copy of your passport biographical page**
  - Passports must be valid at least 6 months into the future from the date that USCIS will receive your STEM OPT Extension application.
  - If you have more one country of citizenship, please include a copy of any/all other passport biographical page(s). This must also be noted on page 2 (Part 2, #18.b) of the [I-765 Form](#).
- 1 copy of EAD (front and back sides)**
- 1 copy of your STEM degree diploma or official transcript**
- Employment Verification Letter**
- 1 copy of your STEM OPT Extension I-20 (pages 1 and 2) with signatures from DSO and student**
  - USCIS must **receive** your completed STEM OPT Extension application materials with 60 days of the issuance date listed on page 1 of your STEM OPT Extension I-20. Applications received by USCIS later than 60 days from the issuance date on page 1 of the STEM OPT Extension I-20 will be denied.
  - USCIS must **receive** your completed STEM OPT Extension application materials before your initial 12-month OPT end date as listed on the EAD card and page 2 of the 12-month OPT I-20. Applications received by USCIS after the initial 12-month OPT end date will be denied.
- 1 copy of your most recent initial OPT I-20 (pages 1 and 2)**
- 1 copy of any previous EAD cards**
  - Previous employment authorization periods must be noted on page 7 of the [I-765 Form](#)

## USCIS Mailing Instructions

Please mail the STEM OPT Extension application materials to USCIS in the order listed above to the appropriate address listed under “Foreign Students” on this page: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses>

Please ship your application to USCIS using a courier service with mail tracking (USPS, FedEx, UPS, DHL). If you need USCIS’ phone number to process your STEM OPT Extension application shipment, please use: 800-375-5283.

## What Are the Next Steps?

Receive your Notice of Action Receipt Notice:

- For applications submitted by mail: you will receive a *Notice of Action* receipt in the mail (to the ‘Mailing Address’ you provided on your I-765 Form) from USCIS approximately 3-4 weeks from the date your STEM OPT Extension application was received and has begun processing by USCIS. This receipt notice will include your application receipt number.
- For applications submitted online: you will be issued an application receipt number immediately after submitting your application online and will be able to access your application receipt notice through your USCIS account.

You can check the status of your OPT application with your application receipt number on the [USCIS Case Status](#) page.

Receive your EAD card:

- You will receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card in the mail to the mailing address provided on your I-765 Form approximately 3-4 weeks from the date your STEM OPT Extension application was approved by USCIS.
- Email copies of the front and back of your STEM OPT Extension EAD card to [OPT@saonet.ucla.edu](mailto:OPT@saonet.ucla.edu) to fulfill your reporting requirements.