

STEM OPT EXTENSION APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Once you have received your STEM OPT Extension I-20 from the Dashew Center, please sign the bottom of page 1 and make copies of pages 1 and 2 to include with your STEM OPT Extension application (if submitting your application by mail), or save your I-20 PDF document with an electronically reproduced original signature (if submitting your application online).

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 is now accepting OPT applications by mail and online.

To File Online:

As of 4/12/2021, 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. The link will redirect you to a new page with instructions on how to create a USCIS account.

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.
 - On 9/29/2020, a U.S. District Court issued a preliminary injunction on USCIS' Fee Schedule and Changes to Certain Other Immigration Benefit Request Requirements rule. USCIS will continue to accept the 8/25/20 edition of the I-765 Form and \$410 filing fee for applications postmarked on or after 10/2/2020 until further notice.
 - 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](#).
 - Ensure that your signature on page 4 of the form is hand-signed in black ink. USCIS has [announced](#) that they will temporarily accept electronically reproduced original signatures (not digital signatures) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 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>
 - **OR Paper I-94:** Please copy front and back sides
- 1 copy of your most recent U.S. entry stamp in passport**
- If you did not receive an F-1/DS entry stamp for your most recent entry, print your [Travel History page](#)
- 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 your signature**
- USCIS must receive your OPT application within 60 days of your STEM OPT Extension I-20 issue date. Applications received by USCIS more than 60 days after your OPT I-20 issue date will be denied.
- 1 copy of your most recent 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 your STEM OPT Extension application materials in the order listed to the USCIS Chicago Lockbox:

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS
PO Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680

For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Please ship your application to USCIS using a courier service with mail tracking. 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 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 months from the date your STEM OPT Extension application was received by USCIS.
- Email copies of the front and back of your STEM OPT Extension EAD card to OPT@saonet.ucla.edu to fulfill your reporting requirements.