USCIS Online Account and Form Filing Instructions for STEM OPT

Explore the USCIS resources and self-service tools available at Tools and Resources
Learn about USCIS online accounts at Benefits of a USCIS Online Account
Sign up for a USCIS online account at How to Create a USCIS Online Account
Take action in your USCIS Online Account at USCIS Account Onboarding
Watch a YouTube video on the Benefits of Applying Online
Review step-by-step instructions, and other guidance for filing a form online at USCIS Tips for Filing Forms Online

When you are ready to file for STEM OPT (c-3-C), please select **File a Form Online** from the options available through your USCIS Online Account. The form that you will need to file is the **Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)**. After clicking on the **start form** box, you will be redirected to the I-765, Application for Employment Authorization page.

The process of completing and submitting Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization is divided into five sections and instructions will be provided as you navigate through each section. You may save your draft application for up to 30 days if you are unable to complete it all in a single session. The online Form I-765 will list questions in a different order than the paper Form I-765, but both require the same responses. The same support documents will also be needed to submit your Form I-765 online as would be necessary if filing the paper Form I-765.

The sections and subsections of the application are as follows:

➢ Getting Started
- Basis of eligibility
  - STEM OPT is category c(3)(C)
  - What is your degree?
    → List your academic level and CIP code or academic level and major
  - What is your employer's name as listed in E-Verify?
    → Confirm this answer with your employer
  - What is your employer's E-Verify company identification number?
    → Confirm this answer with your employer. The E-Verify number is not the same as the Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- Reason for applying
  - Renewal of permission to accept employment
- Have you previously filed Form I-765?
  - YES- If you have previously filed a Form I-765
    → Note- If you select YES you will be required to upload a copy of your previous EAD in the "Evidence" section of the online I-765
- Preparer and interpreter
  - NO- Unless someone is assisting you with the application (e.g., an interpreter or legal professional)

➢ About You
- Your name
- Your contact information
- Describe yourself
- When and where you were born
- Your immigration information
- Other information
  - What is your A-Number?
    → This number is listed as the USCIS number on your Post-Completion OPT EAD card. It is not the same as your receipt/case number.
  - What is your USCIS Online Account Number?
    → This number is assigned by the USCIS after a form, such as an I-765, has been filed online. If you have been assigned a USCIS Online Account Number, it should automatically populate into the space provided. If you have not been assigned a USCIS online account number, please leave this section blank and select the box indicating that you do not have a number or do not know your number.

Evidence
- 2x2 photo of you
  - Information on photo requirements and how to create a photo is available on the U.S. Department of State website at [Photo Requirements and Tools](#)

- Form I-94
  - Upload your Form I-94
    - The digital form can be downloaded or printed at [Customs and Border Protection I-94 Website](#)
    - If you most recently arrived in the United States before April 30, 2013, you may have been issued an I-94 record stub by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and may not have access to a digital Form I-94. If applicable, please copy and include both sides of your I-94 record stub.
  - Upload your valid passport and any expired passports
    - Photo and biographical page (may be on the same page or multiple pages)
      - → Note- Include expired passport only if the document was used to enter the United States and is listed in your most recent Form I-94

- Employment Authorization Document
  - Upload your Post-Completion OPT EAD card and any previously issued EAD cards
  - Upload Form I-797, Notice of Action (approval notice) for Post-Completion OPT
  - Upload your F-1 visa and any other U.S.-issued visas
    - Biographical page and page with most recent entry stamp
    - Visa may be expired
      - → Note- Include other U.S. issued visas only if you most recently entered the United States using a visa other than a category F-1 and were subsequently approved for an adjustment of status to F-1 by the USCIS
      - → Note- If you were approved for an adjustment of status to F-1 by the USCIS, please confirm with your International Advisor if any additional steps are required before filing your Form I-765 application with the USCIS

- Form I-20
  - Upload the STEM OPT recommendation Form I-20 issued to you for the purpose of applying for STEM OPT. Please verify that a recommendation for STEM OPT is listed on page 2. The I-20 must be hand-signed by your International Advisor and yourself.

    - → **Warning- The Form I-20 that you upload must include a recommendation for STEM OPT listed on page 2. If your Form I-20 does not include a recommendation for STEM OPT, the USCIS will likely deny your Form I-765 application for STEM OPT.**

    - → **Warning- You must file your Form I-765 application for STEM OPT with the USCIS within 60 days of when your International Advisor processed your recommendation in SEVIS. This date may be different from the date your I-20 was created.**

- College Degree
  - Upload a copy of your final **official** transcript or diploma

- Institutional Accreditation
  - Only required if this STEM OPT extension is based on a previously earned STEM degree. This is very uncommon.

- Additional Information
  - The additional information section is the online equivalent to page 7 of the paper Form I-765. Please use this section to provide any additional information for any of your answers. (e.g., previously filed Form I-765, change of status to F-1, updated name, etc.)

- ➢ Review and Submit
  - • Review your application
    - o A list of alerts and warnings will appear based on the information you provided in your application. Review the alerts and make any necessary corrections.
  - • Your application summary
    - o Review each section of your Form I-765 and uploaded evidence to ensure the accuracy of your application. We also recommend downloading your Form I-765 responses for your reference.
  - • Your statement
    - o Indicate that you can read and understand English
    - o Indicate that you have read and agree to the applicant's statement
    - o Provide a digital signature by typing your full legal name as listed on your Form I-20
  - • Pay the Form I-765 Filing Fee
    - o You may pay using a credit card, debit card, or withdrawal from a checking or savings account
    - o You will be redirected to pay.gov to make your payment
    - o The Form I-765 filing fee payment is not refundable
    - o The payment will not post to your USCIS Online Account on the same day the transaction is made. The USCIS recommends allowing at least 1-2 business days for the payment to reach your online account.

      - → **Warning- If you file your Form I-765 application for STEM OPT and make the necessary payment on the last day of your eligibility period, the USCIS will likely deny your application for STEM OPT. Please consider the payment processing time when completing your application.**

      - → **Warning- You may not make any edits or updates to your Form I-765 after paying your form filing fee. Please review your form responses, uploaded evidence, and any alerts or warnings BEFORE making your payment.**

Once your application is submitted and payment received, you will use your online account to:
- ❖ View your receipt notice (Form I-797c)
- ❖ View your case status
- ❖ View a PDF of the completed Form I-765
- ❖ View your decision notice (Form I-797)
- ❖ Review Requests for Evidence (RFE) if applicable
- ❖ Send the USCIS secure messages regarding your case and receive answers in response

The USCIS will mail the following items to you via United States Postal Service (USPS):
- ❖ Form I-797c, Notice of Action (receipt notice)
- ❖ Form I-797, Notice of Action (decision notice)
- ❖ EAD Card
- ❖ Request for Evidence (RFE) if applicable