Procedures for Filing your STEM OPT EXTENSION Application

Date: ___________________  To: ________________________________

Thank you for requesting your STEM OPT extension recommendation from ISSS! Here are important steps and information to complete your application with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Important information about your application:

- **Your current post-completion OPT end date is:** ________________

- The earliest USCIS can receive your application is **90 days before** the current OPT end date, and the latest your application can be received is your current post-completion OPT end date.

- **Your OPT recommendation was requested by ISSS on:** ________________

- **Your application must be received by USCIS within 60 days after your OPT recommendation was requested** (but also no later than your current post-completion end date, as noted above).

- ALL employment conducted while on the OPT STEM extension must be with an E-Verify employer and directly related to your field of study.

- You must submit a new I-983 to ISSS via the OPT Information Form any time there is a substantial change to your employment situation.

- If your current EAD expires while awaiting approval of your STEM OPT extension, and you properly filed your application by your OPT end date, you may continue to work for up to 180 days after the EAD expires while awaiting an outcome of your application.

- While on the OPT STEM Extension, you may accrue an additional 60 days of unemployment plus any unused unemployment from the 90 days of unemployment permitted during the 12-month post-completion OPT (150 cumulative unemployment days). **Accrual of more than 150 days of unemployment will lead to termination of your SEVIS record.**

The STEM OPT application can be filed online, or paper-based. Instructions are included below for each method.

**Online Filing Instructions:**

1. Visit [www.uscis.gov/i-765](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765) and select the button to “File Online”.
2. Create a USCIS login account, or login using your existing login credentials, if you already have an account.
3. Select MyUSCIS after logging in.
4. Select I am an applicant, petitioner, or requestor.
5. Select File a form online, and then select Application for Employment Authorization (I-765). Hit Start Form.

6. Review the form instructions thoroughly. You can follow the guidelines to complete the online form on our website: https://isss.uconn.edu/tips-to-complete-the-i-765/

7. Upload required documentation when prompted for the following evidence categories:

- **2x2 Photo of you:** Upload a passport photo meeting listed format requirements. You should try to select a passport photo location that also provides digital photo copies, and pay extra for this service). If you will take your own photo, or make a digital copy of your printed passport photos, you must be sure to meet the stated photo requirements. Ensure there are no shadows or glare on the photos you submit.

- **Form I-94:** A copy of your I-94. This will be either: 1) Print out of online admission record (https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov), 2) white card stapled to passport 3) If you obtained F-1 status through a Change of Status application in the U.S., the I-94 is attached to I-797 approval notice.


- **Form I-20:** A signed copy of your Form I-20 recently issued by ISSS recommending OPT. **PLEASE sign the bottom of the Form I-20 in the signature section before you photocopy it. This is extremely important!**

- **College Degree:** Upload a copy of your diploma or transcript for your earned STEM degree. ISSS also provides some students a letter issued by ISSS to demonstrate that your degree program is a qualifying STEM Designated Degree program. If you were provided a letter from ISSS with your STEM OPT I-20, upload it here with your STEM degree diploma or transcript.

- **Institution Accreditation:** This evidence is only required when your STEM OPT extension is not based on the same degree as your post-completion OPT (based on a prior degree). We suggest you visit the website for your school’s accrediting agency to print documentation of your school’s accreditation.

- **Additional Information:** Upload a list of all employers and dates of employment during your 12-month standard OPT period (optional).

8. Upon completion of the online questionnaire, you will be notified of the filing fee (but not required to pay yet) and advised to fix any form errors. Make sure to re-read all completed questions carefully, because the form does not catch all errors. The online form highlights text fields that need revising in red.

9. After all question form fields are complete, you can print a pdf of a draft I-765 form for your records (do not send this or submit to USCIS). The link to this form is called, “View Draft Snapshot”.

10. Follow the prompts to continue to the fee payment section, where you will pay the filing fee through pay.gov. You will have the option to pay by debit/credit card or through direct withdrawal from your bank account.

**Paper Filing Instructions:**
Send the following materials to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox (see backside for address), assembled in the following order (first to last):

1. **$410.00** in the form of a credit card, personal check, bank check or money order made out to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**. While credit card payment is also available, we strongly recommend that students use personal check as their payment method.

2. Two recent passport-style photos per instructions on form I-765; please print your name and SEVIS number in pencil or felt pen on the back of each photo.

3. Original form I-765 ([www.uscis.gov > FORMS > I-765](https://www.uscis.gov())). Type form, print and sign, or complete form in black ink. Signature must be hand-signed, and keep your signature within the lines of the text box.

4. Copy of current I-94: Print out of online admission record ([https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov)) OR white card stapled to passport OR I-94 attached to I-797 approval notice (if you changed to F-1 from another visa category within the U.S.)

5. Copies of any previous Employment Authorization Documents (EAD cards) issued to you, including for your current OPT.

6. Copy of your unexpired passport ID page, showing your picture, name, and date of birth.

7. Copy of Form I-20 with STEM OPT Extension recommendation on page 2 (you keep the original). **PLEASE sign the bottom of the Form I-20 in the signature section before you photocopy it. This is extremely important!**

8. Copies of I-20 forms listing any previous periods of OPT or CPT, including OPT/CPT used at other schools or for prior degree levels.

9. Copy of your degree certificate, diploma, or academic transcript for your earned STEM degree. ISSS also provides some students a letter issued by ISSS to demonstrate that your degree program is a qualifying STEM Designated Degree program. If ISSS provided this letter with your STEM OPT I-20, include it with your diploma or transcript.

10. List of all employers and dates of employment during your 12-month standard OPT period (optional).

11. **OPTIONAL:** To receive e-notifications by text message or email from USCIS when your I-765 is received please fill out form G-1145 and clip it to the front of your package. ([www.uscis.gov > FORMS > G-1145](https://www.uscis.gov/))
12. Send all materials by USPS certified mail (delivery confirmation) or express mail to the applicable USCIS Lockbox:

**USCIS Chicago Lockbox**

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<th>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries:</th>
<th>For Express Mail and Courier Service Deliveries (UPS, FedEx, DHL):</th>
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<td>USCIS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 805373</td>
<td>Attn: I-765 C03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL 60680</td>
<td>131 South Dearborn – 3rd Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago, IL 60603-5517</td>
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**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS WHILE ON STEM OPT EXTENSION**

1. When received, you must upload a copy of your STEM OPT EAD on the ISSS Website. Go to isss.uconn.edu > Quick Links > Immigration Document Update.

2. You are required by U.S. immigration regulations to report to ISSS within 10 days:
   a. Any change in your name or residential/mailing address
   b. The name and address of your employer
   c. A statement on how the employment is related to your STEM course of study
   d. Any change to the name and address of the employer
   e. Any interruption of such employment

   To report changes in employment, submit the OPT Employment Update. Visit www.isss.uconn.edu > Start OPT Employment Update.

3. Additionally, you are required to submit a STEM Validation Report via the ISSS website every 6 months, starting 6 months after your STEM OPT start date, and ending on the extended OPT expiration date. This is to validate that your name and address, employer name and address, and/or loss of employment is current and accurate. Your OPT Information Form reporting timelines are:

   6 months: _______ 12 months: _______ 18 months: _______ 24 months: _______

4. Finally, submit I-983 Self-Evaluation Reports to ISSS. Along with your 12-month and 24-month OPT STEM Validation Reports, you must upload your I-983 Self-Evaluation Reports to ISSS (p 5 of the I-983). Upload this form with your STEM Validation Report Record for the same reporting deadline.

   12 months: _______ 24 months: _______

5. If you change jobs while on STEM OPT, you must also submit the “Final Evaluation” on page 5 of the Form I-983 to show final evaluation with your old employer, even if outside of a normal 12/24 month reporting deadline. Upload this final evaluation with the OPT Employment Update record.

6. You must also notify ISSS of any changes to your physical address in the U.S. (where you reside) or your home country address. Visit t isss.uconn.edu > Quick Links > Update your Local Address.

**These are MANDATORY reporting requirements for students on extended OPT. Failure to report may result in the termination of your F-1 SEVIS record. We recommend that you note these dates on your calendar. ISSS WILL NOT PROVIDE ANY FURTHER REMINDER TO YOU ABOUT THESE REQUIREMENTS.**