Submit your complete STEM application to USCIS

There are two ways to file your request for the STEM OPT extension through USCIS: by paper (mail) or online. Regardless of how you file, USCIS must receive your request within 60 days of the date the I-20 requesting STEM OPT is issued by ISSS and/or before your post-completion EAD end date (whichever date comes first). USCIS processing takes approximately 90 days and may take longer.

Filing by Mail

Please take copies of everything you will mail to USCIS before mailing. If filing by mail please select a mailing option which allows you to confirm delivery (as evidence that your case was received within 60 days of when the I-20 recommending STEM OPT was issued and/or before your post-completion EAD card expires, whichever date comes first.)

You will need to mail the following documents:

1. Original Form I-765 with your signature in ink
2. Form G-1145
3. Photocopy of the new Form I-20 issued for OPT (do not send the original) — Remember to sign your I-20!
4. Photocopies of any previous I-20s authorizing CPT or OPT (including CPT/OPT authorizations for prior institutions, degree levels, or SEVIS IDs).
5. A photocopy of your most recent I-94 (cardstock version in passport if most recent, or electronic version)
6. A photocopy of the photo page (identification page) of your passport. Also include any extra pages that record extensions of the validity of your passport
7. A photocopy of the F1 visa page of your passport (even if the visa has expired)
8. A photocopy of all previous EAD cards front and back, including the current post-completion EAD
9. Transcripts and/or Diploma: You must include a copy of your transcript or diploma proving that you earned a STEM degree and the date conferred. UAlbany diplomas typically only state the degree level and not the specific degree field, so you should send the UAlbany transcript instead. If you are applying for the STEM OPT based on a prior
degree you must also include the transcript or diploma for your most recent degree for which you are currently on OPT. You can order a UAlbany transcript online here: https://www.albany.edu/registrar/ordering-transcripts.php

10. Two passport style photographs. For complete photo requirements, please review this website: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply/photos.html#phot We recommend writing your name and I-94 number on the back of the photos in pencil.

11. A money order, certified check or personal check made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The filing fee is $410.

12. Optional but Recommended: Official job offer letter on company letterhead with an employer’s signature.

Note: Take a copy of the entire application before mailing it for your records. We recommend sending documents by certified mail with a return receipt OR express mail (so that you have a tracking number) to the U.S. Service Center with jurisdiction over your current residence. You do not need to send the form I-983, though USCIS can request the information on the form I-983 at a later date if needed.

Students should use the filing address currently listed for the foreign student category on the USCIS website here: https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses. There is usually a different address listed depending on if you send the address via USPS (United States Postal Service) or private service (UPS, FedEx, DHL, etc...). Sometimes, there are different addresses listed depending on which state you live in.
As of an update on January 8, 2021, USCIS has listed the Chicago Lockbox as the filing location for F-1 student I-765 applications:

**USCIS Chicago Lockbox**

**U.S. Postal Service (USPS):**

USCIS  
PO Box 805373  
Chicago, IL 60680

**FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:**

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

**Filing Online**

To file the I-765 online you must first create an account on [https://www.uscis.gov/](https://www.uscis.gov/). You must electronically submit your I-765 within 60 days of when the I-20 recommending STEM OPT was issued and/or before your OPT EAD card expires, whichever date comes first.

In addition to completing the form fields on the electronic I-765 you will need to upload the following documents. Please be sure to follow the file requirements and be sure that your uploads are clear and easily readable:

1. Passport photograph meeting all [USCIS specifications](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply/photos.html#phot)
2. Copy of your current I-94 (either the screengrab of the electronic form or a photocopy of both sides of the paper I-94).
3. A photocopy of all previous EAD cards, including current EAD, front and back
4. Photocopy of identity pages in passport, including expiration date (optional if uploaded EAD, but highly recommended)
5. Photocopy of F-1 visa stamp (optional if upload passport and/or EAD card)
6. Photocopy of the new Form I-20 issued for STEM OPT—Remember to sign your I-20!
7. Photocopies of any previous I-20s authorizing CPT or OPT (including CPT/OPT authorizations for prior institutions, degree levels, or SEVIS IDs).
8. Transcripts and/or Diploma: You must include a copy of your transcript or diploma proving that you earned a STEM degree and the date conferred. UAlbany diplomas typically only state the degree level, not the specific degree field, so you should send the UAlbany transcript instead. If you are applying for the STEM OPT based on a prior degree, you must also include the transcript or diploma for your most recent degree for which you are currently on OPT. You can order a UAlbany transcript online here: https://www.albany.edu/registrar/ordering-transcripts.php

When submitting the EForm online you will be directed to pay.gov to pay the $410 filing fee by credit card, debit card, or through a bank account withdrawal.

After Filing the I-765:
- You will receive a receipt notice (Form I-797) from USCIS. Keep this for your records. You should receive this receipt notice within 2-3 weeks of when your package arrives to USCIS. If you do not receive a receipt notice, contact USCIS Customer Service at 1-800-375-5283.
- Track the status of your application and current processing times through USCIS using the case number on your receipt notice: https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp
- Authorization is granted by the EAD card (Employment Authorization Document):
  - The EAD will be mailed only to the address listed on Form I-765. Government mail cannot be forwarded, so you must notify USCIS immediately if your residential address changes.
  - You may continue working up to 180 days after your post-completion EAD expires while the STEM Extension is pending as long as you are in compliance with all STEM OPT regulations during what would be the STEM OPT period of authorization.
Unemployment Periods While on STEM OPT
Students authorized for a STEM OPT extension are allotted an additional 60 days of cumulative unemployment, including weekends. This means that students on STEM OPT are allowed a total of 150 cumulative unemployment days between the STEM OPT and post-completion OPT periods. If you end employment you must complete the final evaluation section on the I-983 form (section 6) and report the loss of employment to ISSS within 5 business days. SEVIS has the capacity to track unemployment.

Changing Employers on STEM OPT
Students are allowed to change employers while on STEM OPT as long as the new employer meets all eligibility requirements, including that they are an e-Verified employer. The new employer must work with the student to complete, submit and maintain the form I-983 (this must be submitted to the ISSS office). Additionally, the student must ensure that he/she completes the form I-983 final evaluation with the prior employer.

Reporting Requirements While on STEM OPT
- Keep the “Help USCIS Serve You Better” EAD card cover sheet. (If you ever need to request another card, you should submit this sheet). **Keep any EAD cards and I-797 receipt notices permanently for your personal records.**
- Keep the following information up to date in your MyUAlbany (update within 10 days of any changes): Legal name; residential address (SEVIS USA address); preferred email address; phone number
- You must report any changes in employment, including if your employment ends or if you change employers, within 10 days, as well as changes in status (such as change to H1b).
- **You must report material changes to the I-983 Training Plan within 10 days.** These changes include, but are not limited to: changes in employer’s EIN, reduction in student compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked, any significant; decrease in hours per week student engages in training opportunity, changes to the employer’s commitments or student’s learning objectives as documented on form I-983. **Student is required, with their employer’s cooperation, to submit an amended I-983 reflecting these changes to the ISSS Office. The student, employer, and DSO at ISSS must all keep the most recent, updated I-983 on record. Updates cannot be made only in the SEVP Portal while on STEM OPT because ISSS needs a copy of your I-983; updates should be made to ISSS using the STEM OPT Employment Reporting EForm:** https://www.albany.edu/isss/89450.php
- **Complete your 6 month reports and submit the evaluations on the Form-I-983 training plan (Section 6) using the STEM OPT Reporting EForm:** https://www.albany.edu/isss/89450.php **See table next page.**
Your STEM OPT Reporting Deadlines

While on STEM OPT, you must give your designated school official (DSO):

1.) Validation reports to confirm that your address and employer information in SEVIS is correct. These are due every six months.
2.) Two Evaluations of Student Progress (page 5 of the Form I983). These are due:
   a. 12 months after your STEM OPT starts and
   b. 24 months after your STEM OPT starts.

Summary of these reporting deadlines, from your STEM OPT Start date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>What is Due?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Validation report for address and employer information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>Validation report for address and employer information and 1 Year evaluation of Student Progress (please submit all pages of your I-983 to ISSS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>Validation report for address and employer information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>Validation report for address and employer information and Final evaluation of Student Progress (please submit all pages of your I-983 to ISSS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.) When you stop working for a STEM employer before your STEM OPT authorization ends a final Evaluation of Student Progress (page 5 of the Form I983) must be reported. This reporting is due within 10 days after you stop working for the employer.
4.) When you change address, phone number or e-mail, reporting of these changes are due within 10 days of the change.

Missing these deadlines may affect the state of your SEVIS record.