
Applying for STEM Optional Practical Training (OPT)
Read USCIS Instructions

- This is a general guide to help you complete Form I-765. It is your responsibility to ensure that your I-765 is completed correctly, fully (with sufficient supporting documents and required evidence) and is filed in a timely manner.

- Please read the Instructions for the Form I-765 at https://www.uscis.gov/I-765

- Following this guide does not guarantee approval of your OPT by USCIS and should not be construed as legal advice.
Create an Account

- Visit [https://myaccount.uscis.gov/](https://myaccount.uscis.gov/)
- Create an account
- A USCIS Account confirmation email will be sent to you. Follow the instructions in the email to confirm your account. It is important that you timely check your Inbox and/or other folders for the email with instructions on confirming your account.
Carefully read the terms of use and click “I Agree” to the acknowledgement.
Follow the prompts to create a password and verification method. Please keep your login credentials confidential. Then provide answers to five security questions.
Click on My USCIS to begin your application.

Welcome to your USCIS Account

Select what you want to do

Edit My Profile
Editing your profile includes email, password, phone number, security questions, two-step verification and backup code.

Login to a USCIS Service

Account Type

Select an account type:

- I am an applicant, petitioner, or requestor.
  - USCIS only offers certain benefit types for online filing. Please refer to uscis.gov for further guidance.
  - You cannot file an H-1B Registration with this account type.

- I am a Legal Representative.
  - I am an attorney eligible to practice law in the United States.
  - I am an accredited representative of a qualified organization that is recognized by the Department of Justice in accordance with 8 CFR part 1292.

Submit
Click on “File a form online.”
Then select “Application for Employment Authorization (I-765).” Then, click “Start Form.”
Things to Keep in Mind

Security Reminder

If you do not work on your form for more than 30 days, we will delete your data in order to prevent storing personal information indefinitely.

Biometric services appointment

USCIS may require that you appear for an interview or provide biometrics (fingerprints, photograph, and/or signature) at any time to verify your identity, obtain additional information, and conduct background and security checks, including a check of criminal history records maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), before making a decision on your application or petition. After USCIS receives your application and ensures it is complete, we will inform you in writing if you need to attend a biometric services appointment.

By filing online, you may be requested to appear in-person for an interview or provide your fingerprints, photo, and/or signature. OPT applications do not generally require biometrics.

If you receive a notice from USCIS to appear for an interview or biometric services appointment, please contact your OISS advisor.
Getting Started: Basis of Eligibility

For STEM OPT Extension, select (c) (3) (C) STEM Extension, from the dropdown menu.
Degree and Employment

Enter your degree level and major. Ex: M.S. Industrial Engineering

Check with your supervisor or HR staff member to retrieve your employer’s E-Verify information, specifically your employer’s name as listed in E-Verify and your employer’s E-Verify company identification number. An E-Verify number is 4 – 7 digits and is NOT the employer’s EIN.
College Degree

Upload evidence that your degree meets the STEM requirements:

- Official transcript from the [Lehigh University Registrar's Office](#) - OR -
- Copy of your diploma that shows your degree level and program of study

* You do not need to upload both, but the evidence that you upload should include the name of the major and the degree earned.
Institution Accreditation

This is only required if you are applying for STEM OPT based on a previously earned degree. If the STEM OPT extension is based on the same degree as your current post-completion OPT, you would not need to include this information.

If this applies to you, please contact your OISS Advisor for more information about how to fulfill this requirement.
Getting Started: Reason for Applying

Select **Initial** since STEM OPT is a different employment category than your post-completion OPT.

Select **Replacement** if your OPT was authorized, but your EAD card was lost, stolen, damaged, or needs to be corrected and the correction is NOT due to USCIS error.

Since you have previously applied for post-completion OPT in the past, answer **Yes**.

What is your reason for applying?

- Initial permission to accept employment
- Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to US Citizenship and Immigration Services error
- Renewal of permission to accept employment

Have you previously filed Form I-765?

- Yes
- No
Getting Started: Preparer & Interpreter Information

Is someone assisting you with completing this application?

- Yes
- No

Answer: No.
About You: Your Name

Type your name exactly as it appears on your passport. (Note: USCIS has character limits that may impact longer names on the EAD.)

What is your current legal name?

Your current legal name is the name on your birth certificate, unless it changed after birth by a legal action such as marriage or court order. Do not provide any nicknames here.

- Given name (first name)
- Middle name
- Family name (last name)

Have you used any other names since birth?
Other names used may include nicknames, aliases and maiden names.
- Yes
- No

Provide the other names you have used.

- Given name (first name)
- Middle name
- Family name (last name)

If you do not have additional names that have been used on official documents, click No.
Enter your contact information.

This address is where your I-797 receipt notice, approval notice, and EAD card will be sent. Typically we recommend that you put OISS’s address: In care of: OISS – Lehigh Univ 32 Sayre Dr Bethlehem, PA 18015

If you don’t use OISS’s address, please use a secure address that is valid for several months to avoid documents being sent to incorrect or old addresses. You must be listed as physically residing there with USPS or have indicated the person living at the residence in the “In care of name” section.

What is your current U.S. mailing address?
We will use your current mailing address to contact you throughout the application process. We may not be able to contact you if you do not provide a complete and valid address. Please provide a U.S. address only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In care of name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address line 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street number and name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address line 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment, suite, unit, or floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City or town</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you use OISS’s address as your mailing address, you must enter your physical/residential address here even if you plan to move soon.

If your mailing address and physical address are different, provide your current physical address.
About You: Describe Yourself

Select your Gender and Marital Status.

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
About You: When & Where Were You Born

Your city, town, or village, as well as state or province of birth should be typed as indicated on your birth certificate.

When completing this section, use the dropdown menu to select your country of birth. If the country’s name has changed or no longer exists, select the name of the country as it was named when you were born. If that name is not listed, select the name of the country as it is named today if the name has changed.

Remember to use U.S. date formatting: month/day/year.
About You: Your Immigration Information

List ALL of the countries that you are a citizen or national.

List the entire I-94 Number found on your I-94 (from most recent entry into the United States). You can access your current I-94 at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94

Save your I-94 as a PDF. You will need to upload it later in the application.

Fill in the blanks with the information directly from your passport.

Use the dropdown menu and select F-1 Student here. *If you are not currently an F-1 Student, please see an OISS advisor.

Type your current SEVIS ID number, which can be found on the top left corner of your I-20 (it starts with an N)
About You: Other Information

Please enter the USCIS number from your post-completion OPT EAD card.

If you do not have a USCIS Online Account Number (most F-1 students do not), click "I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number."

If you do not have a Social Security Card/Number, click Yes and enter the number. Click No, if you do not.

If you do not have a Social Security Card or if you have an SSN but need a replacement card, click Yes.
About You: Other Information

If you do not have a Social Security Card and clicked “Yes” for a new Social Security Card, complete this Section by:

• Checking “Yes” to the “Consent for Disclosure.”
• Type your father’s first and last names.
• Type your mother’s first and last names.
Evidence: Passport Photo

Follow the prompts and upload a recent passport photo.

It must be taken within 30 days of your application.

It must meet U.S. standards (2 inches x 2 inches)

*Failure to submit a correct photo will trigger a biometrics appointment.
Evidence: Form I-94

You can access your current I-94 at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94

Upload the PDF of your most recent I-94 here, and keep the PDF for your records.
Evidence: EAD or Government ID

This section is for evidence for your government-issued photo ID.

Since you have an unexpired EAD card, upload a copy of the front AND back of the EAD card.

Additionally, you can, but are not required to, upload a copy of a government issued identification that shows your picture, name, and date of birth, such as the biographic page of your foreign passport.

Employment Authorization Document Or Government ID

Upload a copy of your last Employment Authorization document (EAD) (front and back). If you were not previously issued an EAD, you must upload a copy of a government-issued identity document (such as a passport) showing your picture, name, and date of birth; a birth certificate with photo ID; a visa issued by a foreign consulate; or a national ID document with photo and/or fingerprint. The identity document photocopy must clearly show your facial features and contain your biographical information.

File requirements
- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator’s certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload
Your I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation will be issued to you after you have submitted your OPT Extension request in iHome.

You must print, sign, and date the I-20 and then upload it to the online application.

For STEM OPT, you must submit your online application with 60 days of an OISS advisor issuing your I-20.
Additional Information

This section can be used to clarify anything in your application that may be confusing, such as:

- Previous OPT or CPT at a different academic level
- A different SEVIS I-20 number that you used in the past, include:
  - Previous SEVIS ID
  - School name
  - Program start/end dates on I-20
  - Program level
- Previous immigration status that was used to meet the full-year academic requirement (ex: H-4 changed to F-1)

If you need to provide any additional information for any of your answers to the questions in this form, enter it into the space below. You should include the questions that you are referencing.

If you do not need to provide any additional information, you may leave this section blank.
Review Your Application

Check your application before you submit

We will review your application to check for accuracy and completeness before you submit it.

We encourage you to provide as many responses as you can throughout the application, to the best of your knowledge. Missing information can slow down the review process after you submit your application.

You can return to this page to review your application as many times as you want before you submit it.

Be sure to review your application line-by-line.

If you see any alerts or warnings, address them, you must address them.

If there are no errors, you will see the green check mark to indicate your application is complete.

Alerts and warnings

- There are errors in Getting Started: Reason for applying
  - Edit my responses
- There are errors in About You: Your name
  - Edit my responses

You have one or more alerts and warnings based on the information you provided in your application.

A red alert means you have incomplete responses or inconsistent data. You cannot submit your application with any alerts.

We found no alerts or warnings in your application
Here is a summary of all the information you provided in your application.

Make sure you have provided responses for everything that applies to you before you submit your application. You can edit your responses by going to each application section using the site navigation.

We also prepared a draft case snapshot with your responses, which you can download below.

Click on “View draft snapshot” to download a copy of your I-765.

You must save the PDF for your records. You must also upload a copy to the OPT Extension request in iHome.
Check the statement attesting that you can understanding English, and that you have read and understand every question and instructions on the application, as well as the answers to every question.

Check the statement attesting that you have read and agree to the applicant’s statement.

Type your full name.

Then, prepare your payment.
STOP – Read these directions!!

STOP:
- Do NOT add your signature
- Do NOT make a payment
- Do NOT submit your application

Please go to iHome to complete the OPT Extension Request e-form. Then wait until your international advisor tells you what to do next.
Communicate with OISS Part 1

Submit a STEM OPT Extension Request in iHome and upload the following documents:

- Your completed, unsigned Form I-765
- Both sides of EAD card
- I-983 training plan: Instructions on how to fill out I-983 can be found [here](#).
- Optional: Job offer letter from a registered [E-Verify](#) company printed on official letterhead.
Communicate with OISS Part 2

1. Now you must submit your STEM Extension Request in iHome and upload the following documents:
   - Your completed, unsigned Form I-765
   - Your 2 x 2 passport photo
   - I-94 record
   - Copy of post-completion OPT EAD
   - Official transcript from the Lehigh University Registrar's Office -or- copy of your diploma that shows your degree level and program of study
   - Completed, signed Form I-983 (include link to I-983 page on Study in the States)
   - If STEM OPT extension is based on a previously earned STEM degree, provide school's accreditation by the U.S. Department of Education and SEVP certification

2. After you have submitted your STEM OPT Extension request in iHome, your new I-20 will be issued. You will need to print, sign and then upload the new STEM OPT I-20 to your online I-765. Then you can continue to payment.

***DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION WITHOUT AN I-20 FROM OISS***
Now that you have your I-20 with OPT recommendation, you are ready to submit your OPT application!

- Log back in to your USCIS online account and go to the Review and Submit section.

- Remember, you must submit your OPT application within **60 days** of receiving your new I-20 with OPT recommendation.
Check the statement attesting that you can understand English, and that you have read and understand every question and instructions on the application, as well as the answers to every question.

Type your full name.

Check the statement attesting that you have read and agree to the applicant’s statement.

Then, prepare your payment.
Payment & Submission

We will send you to Pay.gov — our safe and secure payment website — to pay your fees and submit your form online.

Here are the steps in the payment and submission process:
1. Provide your billing information on Pay.gov
2. Provide your credit card of U.S. bank account information
3. Submit your payment

When you have paid your fee, your form will be submitted.

Pay.gov will redirect you to auscis.gov confirmation screen, which will include your receipt number. Please keep a copy of your receipt number for your records. You can track the status of your application through your USCIS online account.

Choose your method of payment. You can pay by electronic check, debit, or certain credit cards.

Click on the blue "Pay and submit" button.
Finalize Payment

If you are using your checking or savings account, enter your banking information (routing and account, which are at the bottom of your check).

If you are using your credit or debit card, enter your personal and account information.
After Submission

- You will get a receipt number in your USCIS account right away. You can check occasionally to see other status updates.
- Your approval notice and EAD card from USCIS will come to the mailing address listed in your application. If your mailing address changes while the process is pending, submit a Change of Address with USCIS online or by calling 800-375-5283.
  - If you used OISS’s address as your mailing address, please note there may be a delay as mail may take an extra few days to come to our office from the mail room. We will notify you by e-mail as soon as mail arrives for you.
- Notify an OISS advisor immediately if you receive a Request for Evidence (RFE) or Request for Information (RFI). Email a copy of the RFE to your OISS advisor for assistance. Failure to respond to a RFE or RFI will lead to a denial of your OPT request.
- Check your EAD for accuracy (name misspelled, wrong dates, etc). If there are errors, email a scanned copy of the card with a description of the error to OISS.
- If you want to withdraw your OPT application after submission to USCIS and before it has been approved, contact OISS.