
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/
- 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.
VII. Acknowledgment

By clicking “I agree”, I acknowledge that I have read the Terms and understand and will comply with them. I agree to abide by the Terms and understand that if I do not accept the Terms, I am not eligible to access or use USCIS online electronic immigration system. I understand that any violations of these Terms and any criminal activity will result in immediate suspension and/or termination of my access to and use of USCIS online electronic immigration system and that I may be subject to administrative or civil action as allowed by law, or criminal prosecution.

I Agree
Password Creation

Create a Password

Your password must be between 8 and 64 characters, and can contain letters, numbers, special characters and emojis.

Password

Password strength:

Password confirmation

Submit

Two-Step Verification Method

Every time you log in, you will be given a verification code. What is your preferred method to receive your verification code?

- Use an Authentication App
  - Retrieve codes from an authentication app (such as Authy or Google Authenticator) on your mobile device.

- SMS Text Message
  - Receive a text message to your mobile device when signing in.

- Email
  - Receive an Email when signing in.

Secure verification code

Submit

Follow the prompts to create a password and verification method. Please keep your login credentials confidential. Then provide answers to five security questions.
USCIS Account

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

Apply for immigration benefits, find tools and resources to assist in preparation for naturalization, and search for doctors in your local community.

Select “I am an applicant, petitioner, or requestor.”

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.
Begin your Application

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.

If you are inactive for 30 days, you will lose the work that you have done on your application.

By filing online, you may be requested to appear in-person for an interview or provide your fingerprints, photo, and/or signature.

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.
Enter your major and CIP code. Ex: Industrial Engineering, 14.3501

Your CIP code can be found on your I-20, under “Major 1.”

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.

What is your employer’s name as listed in E-Verify?

What is your employer’s E-Verify company identification number or a valid E-Verify client company identification number?
College Degree

Upload Evidence that your degree meets the STEM requirements:

- Official transcript from the Lehigh University Registrar’s Office
- Copy of your diploma that shows your degree level and program of study
First, if your STEM OPT extension is based on an already earned STEM degree, you must upload evidence that Lehigh University is an institution accredited by the U.S. Department of Education. Evidence of Lehigh University’s Middle States accreditation is available on the Provost’s Publications and Reports page of their website. Please upload the PDF of the accreditation.

Second, you MUST upload evidence that Lehigh University is certified by the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP). You can find this on the Study in the States website by entering Lehigh University’s name and zip code, 18015. Please print that page as a PDF and upload the PDF of the page as shown in the top right hand corner.

If the STEM OPT extension is based on the same degree as the post-completion OPT, you would not need to include an accreditation letter.
Getting Started: Reason for Applying

Select **Renewal** if you have applied before for 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.

If this is your first time applying for OPT, answer **No**. If you have applied for OPT or EAD card 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
Answer: No.
About You: Your Name

Type your name exactly as it appears on your passport.

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)  

+ Add another name

Type any other names that have been used on any official records or documents (maiden names, nicknames, etc.).

If you do not have additional names that have been used on official documents, click No.
**About You: Your Contact Information**

Enter your contact information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How may we contact you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daytime telephone number</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] This is the same as my daytime telephone number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobile telephone number (if any)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email address</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. However, since all staff are working remotely due to COVID-19 and mail is checked sporadically, **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>In care of name (if any)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address line 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address line 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Street number and name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apartment, suite, unit, or floor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City or town</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?

- Yes
- No

If your mailing address and physical address are different, provide your current physical address.

Where in the United States do you live?

Address line 1

Street number and name

Address line 2

Apartment, suite, unit, or floor

City or town | State | ZIP code
About You: Describe Yourself

Select your Gender and Marital Status.

What is your gender?
- Male
- Female

What is your marital status?
- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widow/Widower
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.

What is your country of citizenship or nationality?
List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national.

What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)?

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

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

What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?

What country issued your passport or travel document?

What is your current immigration status or category?

Type your current SEVIS ID number, which can be found on the top left corner of your I-20.

What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)? Use the "Additional Information" section to include all previously used SEVIS numbers.
You will only have an A-Number if you were previously in immigration status such as H1B, H4, etc., or if you’ve had OPT authorized in the past. If you have a prior EAD card, please enter the USCIS number on the EAD card. If you do not have an A-Number, leave this blank.

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

If you do not have a Social Security Card and would like to request one, click Yes.
About You: Other Information

Consent for Disclosure: I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.

- Yes
- No

What is your father’s birth name?

Given name (first name)  Family name (last name)

What is your mother’s birth name?

Given name (first name)  Family name (last name)

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.*

2 X 2 Photo Of You

Upload a recent color photograph of yourself that measures 2 inches by 2 inches, with your face measuring 1 inch to 1 3/8 inch from your chin to the top of your head. Your eyes should be between 1 1/8 inch and 1 3/8 inch from the bottom of the photo.

Make sure your whole face is visible, you are facing the camera directly, and the background is white or off-white. Your head must be bare, unless contrary to your religious beliefs.

If you need help understanding the photo requirements or want to resize, rotate, or crop your photo, you can use the Department of State’s photo composition tools. Please note that we cannot approve your application without your photos.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- 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
Evidence: Form I-94

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

I-94, Arrival And Departure Record

Upload a copy of one of the following:
- Your Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record (front and back);
- A printout of your electronic Form I-94;
- or Your passport or other travel document.

If you were admitted to the United States by CBP at an airport or seaport after April 30, 2013, CBP may have issued you an electronic Form I-94 instead of a paper Form I-94. You may visit the CBP website to obtain a paper version of an electronic Form I-94. CBP does not charge a fee for this service. Some travelers admitted to the United States at a land border, airport, or seaport, after April 30, 2013, with a passport or travel document, who were issued a paper Form I-94 by CBP, may also be able to obtain a replacement Form I-94 from the CBP website without charge.

If your Form I-94 cannot be obtained from the CBP website, it may be obtained by filing Form I-102, Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Record, with USCIS. USCIS does charge a fee for this service.

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: 5MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload
Evidence: EAD or Government ID

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

If you do not have an unexpired EAD card, then 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.
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.
If you would like to submit a copy of your job offer letter from a registered E-Verify company, you can upload it here. Be sure it is printed on official letterhead.

If you have an I-20 with a different SEVIS number, click “Add a response” and add the following information from your previous I-20:

- Previous SEVIS ID
- Name of School
- Program Start and End Dates
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

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.

1. There are errors in Getting Started: Reason for applying
   - Edit my responses

1. There are errors in About You: Your name
   - Edit my responses
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.

**View draft snapshot**

**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.

Refund Policy: USCIS does not refund fees, regardless of any action we take on your application, petition or request, or how long USCIS takes to reach a decision. By continuing this transaction, you acknowledge that you must submit fees in the exact amount and that you are paying the fees for a government service.
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

Prepare the rest of your documents:

- Your 2 x 2 passport photo
- I-94 record
- Official transcript from the Lehigh University Registrar’s Office
- Copy of your diploma that shows your degree level and program of study
- If you have an I-20 with a different SEVIS number, your previous I-20
- If STEM OPT extension is based on a previously earned STEM degree, provide Lehigh’s accreditation by the U.S. Department of Education and SEVP certification

After you have submitted your STEM OPT Extension request in iHome, your new I-20 will be issued. Then you can continue to payment.

***DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION WITHOUT AN I-20 FROM OISS***
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 a uscis.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

- Check your USCIS online account often to see if you receive a receipt number and any updates.
- Be on the lookout for an approval notice and EAD card from USCIS. It will be mailed to the mailing address listed on your Form I-765. If your mailing address changes while the process is pending, submit a Change of Address with USCIS online or by calling 800-375-5283.
- Notify an OISS advisor immediately if you receive a Request for Evidence (RFE) or Request for Information (RFI). Email a copy of the documents requested. Failure to respond to a RFE or RFI will lead to a denial of your OPT request.
- If there is any problem with your EAD (name misspelled, wrong dates, etc). Email a scanned copy of the card with a description to OISS.
- If you want to withdraw your OPT application after submission to USCIS and before it has been approved, contact OISS.