Tips for Online I-765 Application
For STEM Extension OPT

Important Reminders

⚠️ This document is for guidance ONLY. It is not legal advice. The information in this document are suggested tips you might need in completing the online Form I-765 for Employment Authorization.

⚠️ USCIS must receive your STEM OPT application within **60 days** of the date your STEM OPT Recommendation I-20 was created or before your Post-Completion OPT ends, whichever is earlier.

⚠️ Once you start your application, the USCIS portal will save it for 30 days, therefore you must submit the online form within 30 days of starting the application. After that, it will delete your data and progress to protect your personal information.

Prepare to file online I-765 Application

There are two ways to file for STEM OPT. In the recent years, students have found filing online I-765 has been more beneficial at a lower cost.

Documents to prepare before filing:

- STEM Extension Recommendation I-20 issued by OIP
- Passport Biographical Page (unexpired)
- Most Recent I-94 Record.
- Passport style photo.
- Previously issued Employment Authorized Document (EAD card)
- Previously issued CPT I-20 (if applicable)
- Previously issued OPT I-20

Online Filing Benefits

- Case status alerts and secure messages
- See all case correspondence
- Check your case status and update personal information
- Upload evidence

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Log into your USCIS Online Account

Log into your USCIS Online Account through the Sign-in Page.

If you forgot your password, please click on the hyperlinked "Forgot Password?" Under the Password box for instructions on how to reset your password.
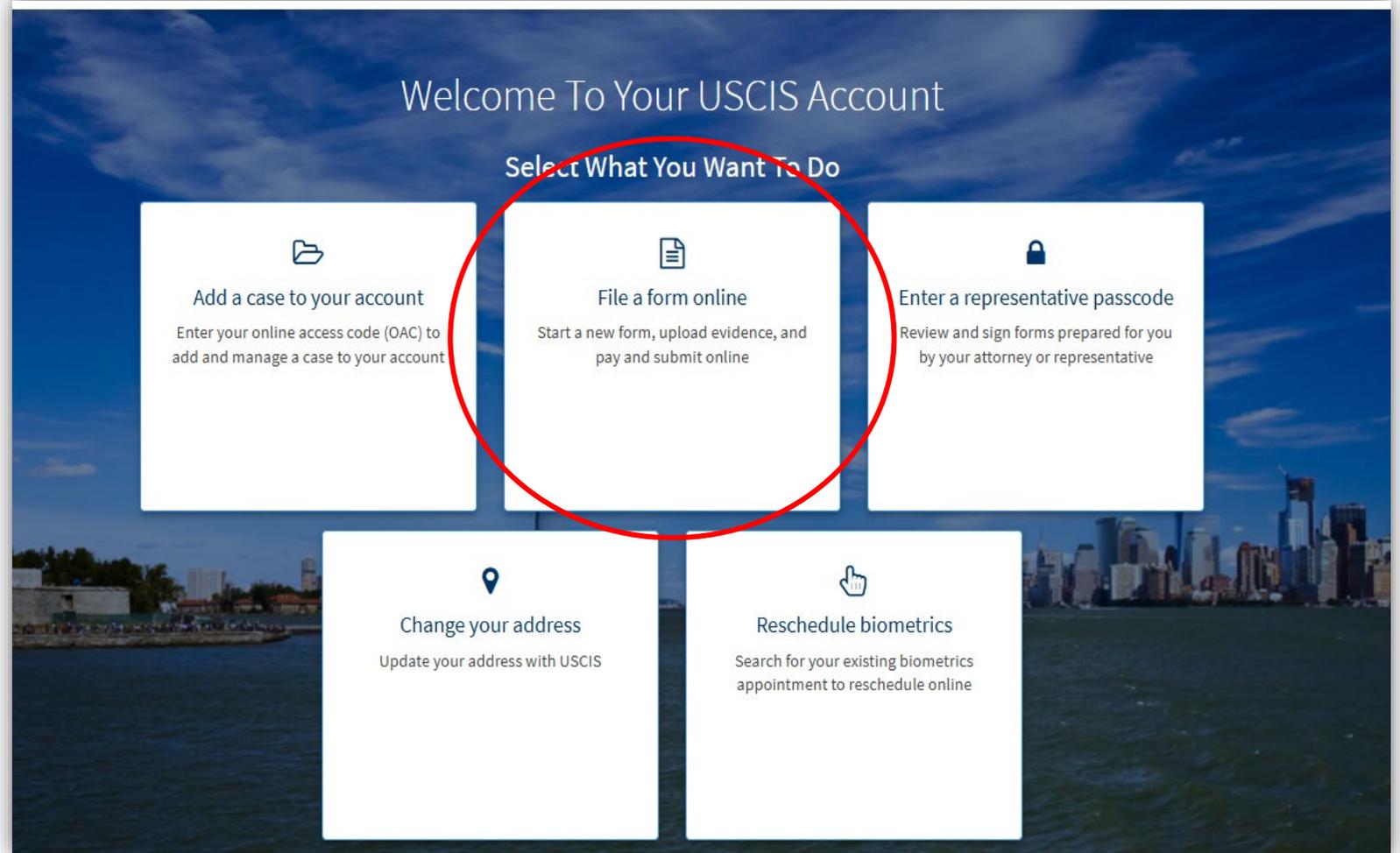

Sign In

Email Address *

Password *

Forgot Password?   ☐ Show Password

Sign In

Don't have a USCIS online account?

Create an account

Didn't receive confirmation instructions?

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After you create your USCIS account, click on "File a form online."

Getting Started: Select Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization from the list.

Getting Started: Enter eligibility category (c)(3)(C) for a STEM OPT extension.

File a Form

Select the form you want to file online. For some forms you will have the option to either fill out your form online or upload a completed form. Once you start, we will automatically save your information for 30 days, or from the last time you worked on the form.

Fee waiver: Fee waivers can be requested online only when submitting certain benefit requests using the PDF filing option. If your desired benefit request is not eligible for PDF filing, you must file a paper version of both the Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver and the form for the specific benefit you are requesting. You can review the fee waiver guidance at www.uscis.gov/feewaiver.

Select the form you want to file online.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization ▼

What is your eligibility category?

If your eligibility category is not listed in the drop down menu, you can submit a paper form by mail.

(c)(3)(C) STEM Extension ▼

Use this form to request employment authorization and an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) if your immigration status allows you to work in the United States.

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Getting Started- Basis of Eligibility:
You will be asked again to select the eligibility category which is (c)(3)(C) for a STEM OPT extension.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ∧

Basis of eligibility

Reason for applying

Preparer and interpreter information

About You ∨

Evidence ∨

Additional Information ∨

You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form.

What is your eligibility category? *

⚠ **You can file your request online only for certain eligibility categories**
If your eligibility category does not appear on the drop-down list, you must file a paper Form I-765. If you submit online and are not eligible for one of the listed categories, your application may be denied.

(c)(3)(C) STEM Extension ▾

Getting Started-

- Write your *degree level* (e.g., Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate)
- Write the 6-digit STEM qualified CIP Code can be found on your I-20
- Follow with the *exact STEM major title* that appears on your official **Form I-20** next to the STEM Major code (not necessarily word-for-word from your diploma).

Use your employer's exact name as it appears in the E-Verify system. Ask your HR or payroll department if you are unsure. Do not use nicknames, abbreviations, or trade names unless that is exactly how it's listed in E-Verify. This should also match what is on your Form I-983 and I-20.

Enter the exact E-Verify Company ID given by your employer's HR; This number is not an EIN Number. It is typically 4-7 digits.

What is your degree?

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?

Provide a 4 to 7-digit employer identification number.

Getting Started- Reasons for Applying:

Select "Initial permission to accept employment ". The STEM OPT Extension is a separate category code.

Select "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

About You - contact information – Enter a U.S. Mailing Address. This address **must** be valid for at least 5 months from date you submit your application.

Important Reminders:

- When filling out your OPT application, it's important to carefully choose your **U.S. mailing address** — this is where USCIS will send your **receipt notice, approval notice, and your OPT EAD card**. Since the EAD is a secure government document, **USPS will not forward it** if you move.

- **Do not list a campus or university address**, as these often become inactive after graduation and can result in lost mail.

- Changing your address after submitting your application can cause delays and may result in your EAD card being lost or returned to USCIS.

- If you prefer, you can use a **P.O. Box**, as long as it's a secure and reliable option for receiving your mail.

- Before entering your mailing address, make sure it's valid and properly formatted by checking it through the USPS website: USPS Address Lookup Tool

- Your **U.S. physical address** should be the address where you are actually living at the time you submit your application.

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.

In care of name (if any)

[   ]

Address line 1 *

[   ]

Street number and name

Address line 2

[   ]

Apartment, suite, unit, or floor

City or town *   **State ***   **ZIP code ***

[   ]   [▼]   [   ]

Provide a 5 or 9-digit ZIP code.

Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?

○ Yes
○ No

About You- Other Information: Generally, students do not have an A or alien number. However, since you have worked on Post-Completion OPT, your A number is listed on your Post-Completion OPT EAD card.

About You- Other Information: Often USCIS number is not listed on your USCIS Portal. If you cannot locate your USCIS number, just check off "I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number".

What is your A-Number?

☐ I do not have or know my A-Number.

A-

Provide a 7, 8, or 9-digit number. If the A-Number is fewer than 9 digits, the system will automatically add zero(s) after the "A" and before the first digit so there is a total of 9 digits, for example: A-001234567.

What is your USCIS Online Account Number?

Providing your unique USCIS Online Account Number (OAN) helps us manage your account. You may already have an OAN if you previously filed certain paper forms and received an Account Access Notice in the mail. You can find the OAN at the top of the notice; it is not the same as an A-Number.

☐ I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number.

Provide a 12-digit Online Account Number.

Evidence- 2" X 2" Photo of You- Uploading a photo to the I-765 application is still required.

[Recent change in USCIS application adjudication processing indicates](#) that after USCIS receives your application, you might receive notification to go to a nearby Application Support Center(ASC) to take photo or biometrics.

Please reach out to OIP if you receive such notice. We may be reached at oip@shu.edu.

Evidence- Form I-94 or passport: Upload a clear copy of your most recent **Form I-94** (Arrival/Departure Record). You can obtain this from the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection website](#).

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form.

Getting Started ⌄

About You ⌄

Evidence ⌃

2" x 2" photo of you

Form I-94 or passport

Employment Authorization Document

Form I-20

College degree

Institution accreditation

Additional Information ⌄

Review and Submit ⌄

Form I-94, Arrival And Departure Record Or Passport

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. For specific information about fees applicable to this form, see Form G-1055.

Evidence- Employment Authorization Document (EAD Card): Upload a clear copy of your current Post OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card, showing both front and back. It is also recommended to upload a clear picture of your biographical page of your current passport.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ⌄

About You ⌄

Evidence ⌃

2" x 2" photo of you

Form I-94 or passport

Employment Authorization Document

Form I-20

College degree

Institution accreditation

You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form.

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

⚠️ Do not file the I-765 without the STEM OPT I-20 issued to you from OIP. **Please ensure the STEM OPT Recommendation is listed on Page 2 of your STEM OPT Recommendation I-20.**

⚠️ You must submit a I-765 STEM OPT application within 60 days from the day OIP issues you the STEM OPT Recommendation I-20 or before the last day of your Post-Completion OPT end date, whichever is earlier. Please reach out to OIP and do not submit an I-765 if your STEM OPT I-20 is outside of the eligibility timeline. You application will be denied if you proceed.

Evidence- Form I-20: In this section, upload your STEM OPT I-20 that OIP issued you. You should print, sign, and upload the signed STEM OPT I-20.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ⌄

About You ⌄

Evidence ⌃

2" x 2" photo of you

Form I-94 or passport

Employment Authorization Document

Form I-20

College degree

Institution accreditation

Additional Information ⌄

You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form.

I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status

⚠️ **Important information regarding your Form I-20**
Do **NOT** submit this form until you receive a Form I-20 recommendation from your DSO. We will deny your application if you do not include your Form I-20 recommendation when you submit Form I-765. If you need to provide Form I-765 to your DSO, print or download this draft before you submit.

Upload a copy of the Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status endorsed by the Designated School Official (DSO). For the (c)(3)(B) eligibility category, your DSO must have entered the recommendation for OPT into your SEVIS record within 30 days of you submitting Form I-765. If you fail to do so, we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765.

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Evidence- College Degree: In this section, upload a clear copy of your official diploma or your final official transcript showing your STEM degree.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started

About You

Evidence

2" x 2" photo of you

Form I-94 or passport

Employment Authorization Document

Form I-20

College degree

Institution accreditation

Additional Information

Review and Submit

You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form.

College Degree

Upload evidence the degree that is the basis for the STEM OPT extension is in one of the degree programs currently listed on the STEM Designated Degree Program List or a copy of your prior STEM degree.

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.
- Upload no more than five documents at a time
- Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 12MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload

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Evidence- Institutional Accreditation: You **only** need to fill this section out if you are applying based on a **prior degree** and not from your current degree from Seton Hall.

If you are applying based on a previous degree, ask for a letter from your previous school confirming your degree along with CIP CODE.

Biometrics Appointment at Application Support Center

- Students might receive notification that a biometric has been scheduled near a USCIS Application Support Center (ASC).

- To retrieve the appointment information and instructions, students should log into their USCIS portal. Go to the documents tab and download the notice.

- If an appointment is necessary, the notice will provide you the location of your local or designated USCIS Application Support Center (ASC) and the date and time of your appointment. **Please be sure to go to the appointment in order for your application to move forward.** You can reschedule the appointment through the appointment system before your appointment date. The information should be provided to you in the appointment notice.

While Waiting for STEM OPT Approval

- Any changes to STEM OPT employment while your STEM OPT application is pending should still be reported to OIP within 10 days of the change. For example, report the following:

  - Phone Number
  - Personal Email Address
  - Name change
  - Visa status
  - Leaving U.S. before the end of STEM OPT

- If your Post Completion OPT ends while your STEM OPT application is still pending with USCIS, students can continue to work up to 180 days. To complete a temporary, I-9 with your STEM employer, <u>you can present your current EAD card with your STEM OPT I-20</u>.

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Reporting Requirements after STEM OPT is Approved

To maintain your F-1 status during the STEM OPT extension, you must regularly check in with our office. This includes verifying that your SEVIS information is accurate and reporting any updates to your training plan. Staying in communication with our office helps ensure your records are up to date and that you remain in compliance with immigration regulations. Please take a look at our <u>STEM OPT Extension webpage</u> for further guidance on reporting requirements.

6 Months Reporting Requirements – You can submit the reports to us in the <u>International Student and Scholar Portal (ISS).</u>
Log in with your username and password. Go to OIP requests and you will find the form: 📅 *STEM OPT Reporting Form*.

- **6 Months Validation Reporting** – 6 months from STEM OPT start date, report physical address, confirm current employment, work address, supervisor information.

- **12 Months Annual Evaluation** – 12 months from STEM OPT start date report physical address, confirm current employment, work address, supervisor information and submit p.5 of I-983 Annual Evaluation (top portion of p.5 <u>I-983 Training Plan</u>)

- **18 Months Validation Reporting-** 18 months from STEM OPT start date, report physical address, confirm current employment, work address, supervisor information.

- **24 Months Annual Evaluation** – 24 months from STEM OPT start date report physical address, confirm current employment, work address, supervisor information and submit p.5 of I-983 Annual Evaluation (bottom portion of p.5 <u>I-983 Training Plan</u>)

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Unemployment and Travel Considerations

- Whether or not you are working, the 2-year STEM OPT work benefit continues.

- According to F1 regulations, you may only be unemployed for more than **150 days** total throughout your 3-year period of OPT and STEM OPT combined. These **150 days** are aggregate, and do not reset if you change jobs or lose employment.

- Please keep in mind that any travel is a risk. If your visa is no longer valid, then you will have to renew your visa before traveling back to the United States. There is a chance you could still be denied this visa, so please keep that in mind when travelling.

- If you decide to travel after applying for OPT and it is after your I-20's program end date, carry the following:
  - EAD Card
  - Post OPT I-20, signed in the "travel authorization" section within 6 months of the date of departure.
  - Valid Passport
  - Valid visa
  - Job offer letter and pay stub

- If you decide to leave the country and end your STEM OPT early, please email oip@shu.edu to inform us.

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