

24-Month STEM OPT Extension– Application & Reporting Process

Students must contact ISSS to request an appointment to apply for the 24-month STEM Extension OPT up to 90 days prior to the expiration of the first 12 months of “regular” OPT. The application must be received by USCIS prior to the expiration date of your OPT period in order to be timely filed. USCIS will not accept I-765 applications for STEM extensions any earlier than 90 days before the current (OPT) EAD expiration date.

STEP 1: PREPARE YOUR DOCUMENTS

Completed Immigration Form I-765

Download the form directly from the USCIS website at <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> Click on "Immigration Forms" and find Form I-765 by scrolling down the page. You must use the correct version of your I-765 in the drop down menu:

- You should **TYPE** all information into the form I-765 and then print it out to sign. Whenever you are unsure of an item/answer, please leave it blank. **Please use Black Ink to sign your application.** Specify the appropriate code for **Item #27**:
 - **Item #27**: Specify the appropriate code for **OPT STEM Extension –(C)(3)(C)**
 - **Item #28**: Specify your Company’s E-Verify Number. Your current STEM OPT employer **MUST** be enrolled in E-verify in order to qualify as your STEM employer.

Completed Immigration Form I-983: Download the form by visiting the USCIS website at <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/i983.pdf>. Complete with your employer (Pg. 1-4)

Completed Immigration Form G-1145

If you complete this form and include it with the application, you will receive updates directly from USCIS regarding the status of your application. Download the form at <http://www.uscis.gov>.

Two immigration photos taken within 30 days of application

Photos should be 2” x 2” (standard passport photos) and you should write your name and USCIS# or I-94# on the back of each photo using pencil or felt pen.

One set of photocopies of the following immigration documents:

1. Passport identification page. Passport page showing expiration date (if not included on identification page)
2. F-1 visa stamp OR Approval Notice of Change of Status to F-1
3. Form I-94: original I-94 card if you still have one OR a printout of your I-94 record at www.cbp.gov/i94 (NOTE: If you still have a paper Form I-94, you must copy both the front and back sides of the card.)
4. OPT EAD card (Front & Back)
5. Official Transcripts or Diploma

Money order or personal check payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”. Refer to I-765 instructions for current OPT application fee. Students must read all the I-765 instructions and confirm the current fee and version of the I-765 to submit. Begin by visiting the USCIS website at: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms>. You may submit a search for the form I-765 or use: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> . Scroll to the “Form Details” to confirm “edition,” “where to file,” and “filing fee.” Please note: OPT category C-3-B does not require submitting additional biometric fees.

STEM OPT Maintenance Fee in the amount of \$250.00

One-time non-refundable compulsory maintenance fee required to process your STEM Extension OPT Application and maintain your F1 student record at FIU while you are in STEM OPT. Maintenance Fee can be paid online by visiting this

[STEM OPT MAINTENANCE FEE PORTAL](#). You must submit your confirmation email in order to process your STEM OPT application.

STEP 2: SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST

- Upload all the documents on the checklist to the [FIU ISSS PORTAL](#) (Under F-1 Practical Training Applications/STEM-Completion OPT) **Please note that incomplete requests cannot be processed and will delay your application**
- Once you upload all your documents, the ISSS Portal will allow you to schedule an appointment with an advisor to review your application.
- You will receive an invite with the advisor assigned to your case and her/his contact information. **(Please allow 24-48 hours for a response)**
- Meet with ISSS advisor to prepare STEM OPT submission **(Advisor will not meet with you if submission is incomplete)**
- After being recommended by ISSS Advisor for Post OPT, you will Mail application to USCIS (Your STEM OPT status in SEVIS will show as “pending”). For Waiting period- visit <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/> Select I-765 and processing center
- When you get the Notice of Receipt (I-797 Form) please notify ISSS by emailing a copy offrom I-797.

STEP 3: RECEIVE YOUR NEW I-20

An ISSS Advisor will prepare a new I-20 for you the date of your scheduled appointment and it will be sent via email. You may request Eship Global to receive your original I-20. In order to receive your new I-20 via courier, please visit <https://study.eshipglobal.com> to arrange shipping. You may need to create an account, pay shipping fees, and then our ISSS office will be notified to ship the requested document.

STEP 4: MAIL YOUR APPLICATION TO USCIS

Before sending your STEM Extension OPT application to USCIS, please follow the below instructions:

1. Arrange the following documents in this order (from top to bottom)
 - a. Form G-1145 (it is important that this form be on the top)
 - b. Form I-765 with money order/check and two photos stapled to it (*Make sure I-765, I-20 and Check are signed*)
 - c. Copy of new I-20 (*Sign and Date your new I-20*) and make a copy. Include a copy of the signed I-20 with your application. DO NOT send USCIS the original I-20.
 - d. Copy of passport (identification page AND expiration page if two separate pages)
 - e. Copy of F-1 visa
 - f. Copy of I-94 Arrival/Departure Record
NOTE: If you still have an I-94 card, include copies of both the front and back of the card; if you do not have a card because you have traveled since April 2013, go to www.cbp.gov/i94 to print your I-94 record – it must be included in the application.
 - g. Copy of current EAD (OPT card) and any previous EAD’s, if applicable
 - h. Copy of diploma or transcript for most recent degree completed**NOTE: Please note that you do not need to send a copy of your I-983 form. It will stay in your file at the office of International Student and Scholar Services at FIU.**
2. Place all documents in the above order into an appropriate envelope and seal the envelope.
3. We recommend mailing your application via US Postal Service (USPS) and using Certified Mail. Please see the below USCIS chart for addresses. **Your application must arrive at USCIS within 30 days from when your DSO signed the STEM Recommendation I-20.**

U.S. Postal Service (USPS):	FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:
USCIS PO Box 805373 Chicago, IL 60680	USCIS Attn: I-765 C03 131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor Chicago, IL 60603-5517

STEP 5: APPROVED STEM OPT APPLICATIONS

- **EAD CARD:** Per U.S. regulations 8 CFR 214.2(f)(11)(i)(C), “a student who has timely filed an application for a 24-month STEM OPT extension with USCIS may work for the STEM OPT employer while the STEM extension application is pending, for up to 180 days beyond the expiration of his or her prior post-completion OPT EAD”. If an application for a 24-month extension is **Approved**, USCIS will issue an EAD with a validity period that starts on the day after the expiration date stated on the 12-month OPT EAD. **You must provide ISSS with a copy of your STEM EAD Card to update your record by visiting the [FIU ISSS Panther Portal](#).**
- **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** All reporting requirements must be done using the [FIU ISSS Panther Portal](#). You are required to make a validation report to ISSS every six months starting from the date your 24-month OPT starts. The report is due within 10 days of the required reporting date. Visit the [FIU ISSS Panther Portal](#) in order to submit your STEM OPT reporting
 - **6 Month Reporting:** Use the eform to submit your validation report. The validation report must contain the following information: Legal Name, Residential/ mailing address, Employer name, Employer address
 - **12 Month Reporting:** Submit eform along with form I-983 (Pg.5) Evaluation of student progress
 - **18 Month Reporting:** Use the eform to submit your validation report. The validation report must contain the following information: Legal Name, Residential/ mailing address, Employer name, Employer address
 - **24 Month Reporting:** Submit form I-983 (Pg.5) Final evaluation on student progress
- **CHANGING EMPLOYERS:** When changing employers while in STEM OPT, students must update ISSS by using the [FIU ISSS Panther Portal](#) and submit Form I-983 (Pg.1-4) from new employer and Form I-983 (Pg.5) from former employer.
- **INTERRUPTION OF EMPLOYMENT:** If you experience an interruption in employment, you must report it to ISSS by using the the [FIU ISSS Panther Portal](#)