STEM OPT extension

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

309 Wes Watkins Center / 405-744-5459

CAUTION

Do NOT file I-765 application without STEM OPT recommended I-20 from ISS office

I-765 application will be denied or rejected
by USCIS
if you file without OPT recommended I-20

STEM OPT

- OPT STEM Extension

  ➤ After 12-month post-completion OPT

  ➤ Allows for up to 24 additional months for STEM fields

  ➤ USCIS Webpage for STEM OPT

STEM OPT
Eligibility

- Must be engaging in unexpired post-completion OPT that was granted BS, MS, or PhD degree listed on DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List

- Must have **current** or **previous** degree in eligible STEM major from U.S. SEVP certified institution of higher education

- Each degree has assigned **CIP code**
  ➡ check to see if your degree is eligible for <u>STEM degree</u>

- Must have **full-time** job offer for <u>paid employment</u> from <u>E-Verified</u> employer who is willing & able to meet STEM OPT reporting requirements

- STEM OPT is available for **2 times** in lifetime

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STEM OPT
Process

1. Must read below on ISS Website

   STEM OPT Extension Information PDF

   STEM OPT Reporting Requirements

2. Student submits **STEM OPT Extension Request form** with completed I-983

3. ISS reviews the request and email student for further clarification if needed

4. ISS issues STEM OPT recommended I-20 if everything looks good

5. Student reviews & signs on I-20

6. Student submits application* to USCIS

Do **NOT** file I-765 application
without OPT recommended I-20 from ISS office

* ISS office reviews STEM OPT request form only to issue OPT I-20
ISS does NOT send application to USCIS for students

Previously Obtained STEM Degrees

- F1 student participating in 12 month OPT based on non-STEM degree can use prior STEM-OPT qualified degree for STEM-OPT application

- If you have STEM-OPT eligible prior degree,
  on I-983, page 1, question "Based on prior degree?"
  check "yes" - if application is based on prior degree

- Employment must be related to previous STEM degree

- Degree must be received within 10 years

- Student must send **official transcript of prior degree** to ISS to verify

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STEM OPT

Filing Parameters

- Must file STEM OPT within 90 days of current OPT expiration date
  but may **NOT** apply after current OPT expiration date

- Student and employer must complete and sign **Form I-983** (Training Plan for STEM OPT Students) and <u>submit to ISS</u>. The job offer must be full-time and paying job.

- Check <u>official I-983 guidelines</u> on how to complete Form I-983
- Check <u>I-983 Form overview</u> on Study in the States website

- USCIS must receive application <u>within **60 days**</u> of STEM OPT I-20 issuance

- A student who files application timely may continue employment while extension application is pending, until final decision is made, or for 180 days. Contact USCIS if processing time is over 180 days.

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STEM OPT
Employer-Employee Relationship

- Must have bona-fide employer-employee experience

- No volunteer positions

- Start up businesses & self-employment do not qualify for STEM-OPT extension option

After Receiving
OPT I-20 from ISS

Two options

1. **File I-765 application with USCIS online** / Fee $470
   - You can get an immediate application receipt notice
   - Application fee can be paid by credit/debit card
   - No delays by mailing issues
   - ISS recommend online application

OR

2. **File I-765 application with USCIS by mail** / Fee $520
   - Traditional method with hard copy documentation
   - In case the internet fails!
   - Payment by check, money order, cashier's check, but <u>no cash</u>

Do **NOT** file I-765 application
without OPT recommended I-20 from ISS office

Filing OPT Online

- **Who Can Submit
  Form I-765 Online?**

Initial release of online I-765 is limited to students in these categories:

- (C)(3)(A) Pre-Completion OPT
- (C)(3)(B) Post-Completion OPT
- **(C)(3)(C) STEM Extension**

      All other categories
     must submit paper form I-765

The benefits
of filing online

The Benefits of Filing Online

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Filing OPT Online

- To file Form I-765 online, eligible F-1 students must first visit my.uscis.gov to create USCIS online account

Quick Tips

- Online form is same as paper version
- USCIS automatically save your answers so you can work at your own pace
- Draft forms are saved for 30 days from last time you worked on your form
- Applicants must be in U.S. to apply online

How to Create USCIS Online Account

Filing OPT Online

Filling out the Form-Formats

- Photos : JPG, JPEG, or PNG

- Documents : JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF or TIFF

- Foreign language documents must have English translation

- Maximum size : 6 MB per file

- Only characters allowed in document file name are : English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, parentheses

- Do NOT use special characters

Filing OPT Online

**Filling out Form I-765
Applicant's Declaration / Certification
& Paying application fee**

- Sign digitally

- Review entire entries before pay

- After agree to applicant statement, you will be directed to pay.gov

- When hit 'Continue' to pay the fee, form will be submitted

- Once submit payment, you **CANNOT** make corrections

- Click on 'Go to my cases' to see your case and receipt notice

Filing STEM OPT By Mail

List to apply for I-765, Application for EAD

- Application fee $520 - Check or Money order
  * Check on USCIS official website for latest <u>filing fee</u>
- 2 passport style photos
- **Completed I-765 – <mark>category (C) (3) (C)</mark>**
- Form G1145 - Electronic notification (Mail filers only)
- I-20 copy with STEM OPT Notation
  * OPT application must be filed within **60 days** of date DSO enters recommendation for STEM OPT in SEVIS
- Copies of all previous I-20s for OPT & CPT
- Copy of EADs
- Copy of I-94
- Colored copy of Valid page
- **Copy of official transcript or diploma** - showing completion of degree

Filing location: mail filers submit applications to USCIS Chicago Lockbox, at:

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

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Filing OPT By Mail

Mark 'N/A' on text fields that don't apply

According to I-765 form, Application for Employment Authorization

If a question does not apply to you (for example, if you have never been married and the question asks, "Provide the name of your current spouse"), type or print "**N/A**" unless otherwise directed.

If your answer to a question which required a numeric response is zero or none (for example, "How many children do you have" or "How many times have you departed the United States"), type or print "**None**" unless otherwise directed.

▶ **START HERE - Type or print in black ink.** Answer all questions fully and accurately. If a question does not apply to you (for example, if you have never been married and the question asks, "Provide the name of your current spouse"), type or print "N/A" unless otherwise directed. If your answer to a question which requires a numeric response is zero or none (for example, "How many children do you have" or "How many times have you departed the United States"), type or print "None" unless otherwise directed.

Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select **only one** box):

1.a. ☒ Initial permission to accept employment.

1.b. ☐ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document, or correction of my employment authorization document **NOT DUE** to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.

NOTE: Replacement (correction) of an employment authorization document due to USCIS error does not require a new Form I-765 and filing fee. Refer to **Replacement for Card Error** in the **What is the Filing Fee** section of the Form I-765 Instructions for further details.

1.c. ☐ Renewal of my permission to accept employment. (Attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document.)

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name (Last Name) | Pete
1.b. Given Name (First Name) | Pistol
1.c. Middle Name |

Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in **Part 6. Additional Information.**

2.a. Family Name (Last Name) | N/A
2.b. Given Name (First Name) | N/A
2.c. Middle Name | N/A

3.a. Family Name (Last Name) | N/A
3.b. Given Name (First Name) | N/A
3.c. Middle Name | N/A

4.a. Family Name (Last Name) | N/A
4.b. Given Name (First Name) | N/A
4.c. Middle Name | N/A

ISS **do NOT recommend** to enter 'N/A' under Middle Name.
USCIS might mistakenly use NA as your middle name on your EAD.
If you do not have a middle name, leave it blank.

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Filing OPT By Mail

How to Track OPT application

Online tracking after obtaining OPT receipt number

- **USCIS.gov**
- USCIS Case Status Service Online
- Check processing time – 90 days +
- National Customer Service Center 1-800-375-5283

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Previous OPT, CPT & SEVIS ID#

I-765 Form - Page 7, Part 6

Part 6. Additional Information

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the **Page Number**, **Part Number**, and **Item Number** to which your answer refers; sign and date each sheet.

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)   Pete
1.b. Given Name (First Name)   Pistol
1.c. Middle Name

2.   A-Number (if any) ► A-

3.a. Page Number   3
3.b. Part Number   2
3.c. Item Number   26

3.d. Current SEVIS ID# N00012345678.

Master's degree;

Previous CPT:

Full-time 05/20/2017 - 08/15/2017

SAMPLE

4.a. Page Number   3
4.b. Part Number   2
4.c. Item Number   26

Previous SEVIS ID# N00222333555.

Bachelor of Science

Previous CPT:

Full-time: 05/14/2015-08/15/2015

Previous OPT:

Post-Completion: 05/21/2016-08/20/2017

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STEM OPT
EAD Delivery Procedure

- Use **your own physical address** as mailing address on I-765 form

- Do **NOT** move after filing I-765 application for STEM extension
  If you must move, <u>use ISS address as mailing address</u> on I-765 to avoid mailing complications and inform ISS

- USCIS mailing is not forwarded to another address
  If EAD is not delivered successfully, it will be returned to USCIS

- If you must change your address after filing,
  contact USCIS National Customer Service number : **(800) 375-5283**

  There is risk in changing your address after filed I-765 application

EAD

(Employment Authorization Document)

- USCIS authorizes employment with approval of EAD
(normal processing time is 90-120 day)

- I-765 receipt does **NOT** authorize employment

- Only EAD card authorizes employment

EAD

(Employment Authorization Document)

IS THIS YOUR PHOTO?

You can find A-Number under USCIS#

Documents needed for international travel during OPT

- Passport with at least 6 months validity
- Valid F1 visa
- Recently endorsed I-20 with Travel Signature
- Valid EAD card
- Job offer letter
- Pay stub(s)

Limit your time out of the U.S.

If you work at OSU while on OPT,
you need to obtain professional staff work permit from **Human Resources**
Contact elizabeth.scott@okstate.edu

STEM OPT
Unemployment Period

- Unemployment days – additional 60 cumulative days
  (including weekends & holidays)

- Total unemployment days accrues for
  post-completion OPT (90) + STEM OPT extension (60) = **150 days**

- Must **report** termination of employment within 10 days of event

STEM OPT
Reporting - Employment

- In SEVP portal, STEM OPT students are unable to add new employer or change start date of new employer due to Form I-983 (Training plan) requirement

- For **new employment**
⇒ submit new I-983 to ISS (DSO) **within 10 days** of new employment start date

- For **employment end date changes**
  ⇒ **student and employer** need to complete & sign on
     Final Evaluation on Student Progress (page 5 of I-983)
  ⇒ submit to ISS (DSO) **within 10 days** of job end date

- Form I-983 will be uploaded in SEVIS by ISS

STEM OPT
Reporting – Material Changes

- Changes in employment status
  Termination / Resignation / Departure

- For **Material changes** on Form I-983

⇒ Submit updated I-983 to ISS (DSO) **within 10 days** of any material changes :
  - ➢ Change in employer's EIN
  - ➢ Compensation and reduction of work hours
  - ➢ Significant decrease in hours per week
  - ➢ Changes in learning objectives or employer's commitment

STEM OPT
Reporting - SEVP portal

- You **must** go through ISS (DSO) to report **new employment** with **completed & signed Form I-983**

    ISS form : STEM OPT Employment Update Request

    Form I-983 : https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983.pdf

- You **cannot** edit employer information to work for another employer

- You will **not** be able to change read-only portions

- SEVIS will push updates into SEVP portal (within a few days)

STEM OPT

Reporting - Regular Participation
Every 6 month (6 / 12 / 18 / 24)

OPT STEM REPORTING REMINDER FROM SEVP PORTAL

SEVP Portal will provide you with reminders of when you are expected to report.

example of reminder email

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 I-983). These are due:
   a. 12 months after your STEM OPT starts and
   b. 24 months after your STEM OPT starts.
3. Evaluation of Student Progress (page 5 of the Form I-983) when you stop working for a STEM employer before your STEM OPT authorization ends. These are due within 10 days after you stop working for the employer.
Your reporting deadlines:

Date	What is Due?
Feb 9 2019	Validation report for address and employer information
Aug 9 2019	Validation report for address and employer information Evaluation of Student Progress (page 5 of Form I-983)
Feb 9 2020	Validation report for address and employer information
Aug 9 2020	Validation report for address and employer information Evaluation of Student Progress (page 5 of Form I-983)

Missing these deadlines may affect the state of your SEVIS record.
For more information, go to the STEM OPT Hub (https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub) pages on the Study in the States website.

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STEM OPT
Reporting - Regular Participation
Every 6 month (6 / 12 / 18 / 24)

- 6 & 18 month Participation Report

  Student is responsible for **reporting** following information **to ISS**
  - Legal name
  - Current address
  - Name and address of current employer
  - Job title
  - Supervisor information
  - End date of employment

    - Submit **6 month participation report** to ISS through here
    - Submit **18 month participation report** to ISS through here

STEM OPT
Reporting - Regular Participation
Every 6 month (6 / 12 / 18 / 24)

I-983 Form, Page 5

EVALUATION ON STUDENT PROGRESS

Provide a self-evaluation of your performance, using the measures previously identified, in applying and acquiring new knowledge, skills, and competencies identified in the Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. Discuss accomplishments, successful projects, overall contributions, etc., during this review period. Address whether there are any modifications to the objectives and goals for projects, or new areas for skill and competency development.

Range of Evaluation Dates: From (mm-dd-yyyy): _____   To (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

Signature of Student (Sign in ink): _____
Printed Name of Student: _____   Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____
Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority (Sign in ink): _____
Printed Name of Employer Official with Signatory Authority: _____   Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

FINAL EVALUATION ON STUDENT PROGRESS

Provide a self-evaluation of your performance, using the measures previously identified, in applying and acquiring new knowledge, skills, and competencies identified in the Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. Discuss accomplishments, successful projects, overall contributions, etc., during this review period. Address whether there are any modifications to the objectives and goals for projects, or new areas for skill and competency development.

Range of Evaluation Dates: From (mm-dd-yyyy): _____   To (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

If you leave company, you **must** fill out this section

Signature of Student (Sign in ink): _____
Printed Name of Student: _____   Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____
Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority (Sign in ink): _____
Printed Name of Employer Official with Signatory Authority: _____   Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

- **12 month STEM OPT report**

  From STEM OPT start date, student must complete Evaluation on Student Progress on page 5 of I-983

- **Final or 24 month STEM OPT report**

  From STEM OPT start date, student must complete Final Evaluation on Student Progress on page 5 of the I-983

- Collect required **signature** from employer and upload I-983 to

  Link for STEM OPT 12 month report
  Link for STEM OPT Final or 24 month report

- ISS will **upload** I-983 in SEVIS
- We suggest you keep copy for your records

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After Completion of STEM OPT

You have **60 day grace period** following STEM OPT end date

STEM OPT
End Date

60 Day Grace Period
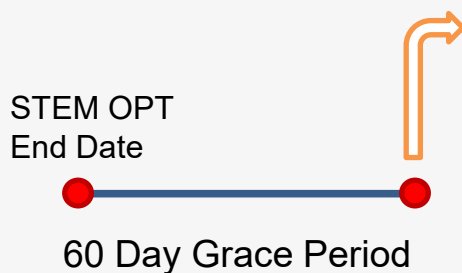
You must choose one of the following:

- Depart the U.S. by end of 60 days
- Change of educational level at OSU
  for different degree
- Transfer out to another university and start your
  new program (no later than 5 months from date
  STEM OPT expires)
- Complete change of status

Questions?

iss@okstate.edu