Optional Practical Training (OPT)
24-Month STEM Extension Tutorial

International Students and Scholars (ISS) Office
900 University Ave, Skye Hall 321
Riverside, CA 92521
(951) 827-4113
internationalstudents@ucr.edu

This does not constitute as legal advice.
COVID-19 - USCIS Updates

USCIS Office Changes

USCIS may furlough employees at the end of August may cause EAD delays but,

USCIS I-9 flexibility rule

Mailing OPT

● OPT applications must be physically mailed - no electronic method
● Students still required to apply for OPT while inside the U.S.
● Starting in August 25, 2020, USCIS will only accept 08/25/20 Edition of Form I-765.

OPT Application Fee Increase

● Effective Oct 2, 2020, I-765 applications will be increased to $550

Link: SEVP Frequently Asked Questions - COVID-19
USCIS Updates

OPT Application and Fee Changes

Using the chart below, please make sure that you are using the correct version of Form I-765 (EAD card application form) and the I-765 Fee amount before mailing your OPT documents to USCIS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Postmark Date</th>
<th>Form I-765 Version used</th>
<th>I-765 Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before August 25, 2020</td>
<td>Must use 12/26/19 edition</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On or after August 25, 2020 but before October 2, 2020</td>
<td>Must use 08/25/20 edition</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On or after October 2, 2020</td>
<td>Must use 08/25/20 edition</td>
<td>$550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COVID-19 - STEM OPT Updates

Remote Working

● OPT students may work remotely if your employer can properly assess your performance

● No need to report remote working if it is because of COVID-19

OPT Hours

● USCIS has NOT released exceptions for OPT unemployment time

● STEM OPT Applicants must have (paid) employment at the time of application

Link: SEVP Frequently Asked Questions - COVID-19
Table of Contents

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● STEM OPT Eligibility
● Application Process
● STEM OPT Application Documents
  ○ Form I-983 Training Plan
  ○ Form I-765
● Mailing your STEM OPT application
● While STEM OPT application is pending
● USCIS Final Decision
● STEM OPT Reporting Requirements
● After STEM OPT
● Helpful Resources
Basics of STEM OPT
Basic Information on STEM OPT

What is STEM OPT?

F-1 students who graduated in eligible science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees may apply for a 24-month extension after their standard 12-month Post-Completion OPT.

NOTE: F-1 students may participate in STEM OPT employment up to two times per lifetime.
Basic Information on STEM OPT

When does STEM OPT start?

- STEM OPT begins the day after Post-Completion OPT
- Extension of F-1 I-20 status
Eligibility for STEM OPT
# Eligibility for STEM OPT Extension

## Valid Immigration Status
- Valid F-1 I-20 status
- Currently on Post-Completion OPT
- EAD Card unexpired

## Eligible Degree
- Bachelor’s or higher degree in eligible STEM field
- Major CIP Codes must be on [DHS STEM Designated Degree List](#)
- Within the last 10 years and unused for STEM OPT

## Qualified Employment
- E-Verified Employer
- Paid employment
- At least 20 hours per week
- Must complete I-983 Training Plan with employer
Checking your STEM Degree

- Check if your degree is eligible for STEM OPT by checking the CIP code listed on your I-20.
- Your STEM degree must be listed in the STEM Designated Degree Program List.

STEM Designated Degree Program List
Effective May 10, 2016

The STEM Designated Degree Program list is a complete list of fields of study that DHS considers to be science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) fields of study for purposes of the 24-month STEM optional practical training extension described at 8 CFR 214.2(f). Under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)(C)(2), a STEM field of study is a field of study “included in the Department of Education’s Classification of Instructional Programs taxonomy within the two-digit series containing engineering, biological sciences, mathematics, and physical sciences, or a related field. In general, related fields will include fields involving research, innovation, or development of new technologies using engineering, mathematics, computer science, or natural sciences (including physical, biological, and agricultural sciences).”

Accordingly, this list designates the following four CIP summary groups at the 2-digit CIP code level: Engineering (CIP code 14), Biological and Biomedical Sciences (CIP code 26), Mathematics and Statistics (CIP code 27), and Physical Sciences (CIP code 40). Any new additions to these areas will automatically be included on this STEM Designated Degree Program list. Consistent with the definition of “related field” above, related fields in this list include fields involving research, innovation, or development of new technologies using engineering, mathematics, computer science, or natural sciences. DHS designates these fields at the 6-digit level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIP Code</th>
<th>2010 CIP Code</th>
<th>CIP Code Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.0308</td>
<td>01.0308</td>
<td>Agronomy and Sustainable Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.0901</td>
<td>01.0901</td>
<td>Animal Sciences, General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.0902</td>
<td>01.0902</td>
<td>Agricultural Animal Breeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.0903</td>
<td>01.0903</td>
<td>Animal Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.0904</td>
<td>01.0904</td>
<td>Animal Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.0905</td>
<td>01.0905</td>
<td>Dairy Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.0906</td>
<td>01.0906</td>
<td>Livestock Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.0907</td>
<td>01.0907</td>
<td>Poultry Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.0999</td>
<td>01.0999</td>
<td>Animal Sciences, Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.1001</td>
<td>01.1001</td>
<td>Food Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.1002</td>
<td>01.1002</td>
<td>Food Technology and Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.1009</td>
<td>01.1009</td>
<td>Food Science and Technology, Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.1101</td>
<td>01.1101</td>
<td>Plant Sciences, General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.1102</td>
<td>01.1102</td>
<td>Agronomy and Crop Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment Types on STEM OPT

What is allowable employment during STEM OPT?

● Must be paid employment (at least 20 hrs or more per week)
● No volunteer, unpaid, and self-employment
● Employers must have E-Verify & EIN numbers
● Employer must meet ALL the requirements listed in USCIS Website
  ○ Must establish bona fide relationship between employee and employer
  ○ Strict USCIS guidelines on third party placements/staffing agencies
  ○ F-1 OPT/STEM OPT students are not qualified to train another F-1 student with STEM OPT Extension
  ○ STEM OPT student will not replace a full- or part-time, temporary or permanent U.S. worker.
● Must have STEM OPT employment at the time of application
STEM OPT
Application Process
STEM OPT Application Timeline

90 Days Before EAD Expires
- Start preparing I-983 with employer

Mail STEM OPT Application to USCIS

STEM OPT Extension begins
- USCIS Accepts STEM OPT Extension Application (Processing Time: 3-5 months)
- If timely filed, may continue to work up to 180 days after EAD expires.

EAD Card Expiration Date
- USCIS must receive STEM OPT application before EAD end date

COVID-19 Reminder: Must be employed by a STEM OPT employer at the time of application.
STEM OPT Application Process

Internal Process
(Before mailing to USCIS)

1. Report your current OPT employment through SEVP OPT Portal
2. Complete I-983 with Employer
3. Submit STEM OPT documents to the ISS office
   a. Drop it off or email at internationalstudents@ucr.edu
4. ISS will issue STEM OPT I-20 and make recommendations on documents
   a. Allow 3-5 business days
5. Receive STEM OPT I-20 from ISS office
   a. In person pick up
      i. COVID-19- Campus closed. We will email I-20s at this time
   b. eShipGlobal

External Process
(After mailing to USCIS)

1. Prepare final STEM OPT application and mail materials to USCIS
   a. Include filing fee and passport photos
   b. IMPORTANT: USCIS must receive your documents before EAD expires
2. Continue to maintain STEM OPT Employment during application process
   a. STEM OPT applicant may work up to 180 days after EAD card expires
3. STEM OPT EAD card will arrive
4. Maintain STEM OPT Reporting Responsibilities
UCR STEM OPT Application Checklist

Before you pick up your STEM ICE card, please assemble the application documents in order as listed below. Documents should be paper-sized, not 2½x4½.

- 24-Month STEM OPT Extension Application Checklist

1. Request for STEM OPT-20 from ICE office
2. Fill out I-20 and assemble application
3. Mail application to UCIS

You can submit your STEM OPT documents either in person or by email to internationalstudents@ucr.edu. Please allow 7-10 business days to receive your documents and issue your STEM OPT-20.

STEM OPT Application Documents to review by UCIS
- Designated School Official Contact Information:
  - phone: 909-787-6483
  - email: internationalstudents@ucr.edu
  - phone: (909) 827-4113
- You do not need to complete page 5 Evaluation on Student Progress for your application at this time.

STEM OPT Application Documents to mail to USCIS
- Copy of current I-20 card (front & back)

After you pick up your STEM ICE card, you may continue working in your current STEM position up to 90 days after your EAD expires while the STEM application is pending.

After STEM OPT Approval

STEM OPT Portal
- Only available for Post-Completion OPT and STEM OPT (limited reporting)

The STEM OPT portal is an important and convenient tool to fulfill the legal OPT reporting requirements during your OPT period. This portal is only available for students on Post-Completion OPT and STEM OPT. However, for STEM OPT, it is only available for updating personal information, not employer information. If your portal login is expired, please contact the USC office as the USC office will need to reset your Portal Account.

STEM OPT Reporting Requirements:
- Every 6 months: Must submit a STEM OPT Reporting Form (please contact USC office for form information)
- 24-month Evaluation of Student Progress (will evaluate, sign by you and employer) - final page of page 5 in form I-983
- 24-month Final Evaluation (final self-evaluation, sign by you and employer) - last 2 pages of page 6 in form I-983
- If changes in employment update changes within 10 days of change
- Update of Employer: Must submit I-480 Final Evaluation of Previous Employer and new I-480 of new employer
- Update of Address or Contact Information: Update through USC OPT Portal

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS
P.O. Box 22135
Phoenix, AZ 85036

For FedEx, UPS, and DHL delivery:

USCIS
ATTN: NPO AOS
1425 E. California Blvd. Suite 210
Phoenix, AZ 85004

http://www. iao.ucr.edu

To access the checklist, click here
Required STEM OPT Application Documents
Internal Process: Submitting Docs to ISS

To receive a STEM OPT I-20, please submit the following documents to the ISS office. Once received, the ISS office will review your documents and will issue you a new I-20 recommending you for STEM OPT.

Documents for ISS office

- ✔ Form I-983 Training Plan (ISS office keeps this form)
- ✔ Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization
- ✔ Form G-1145 (for email updates)
- ✔ Copy of current EAD card (front & back)
- ✔ (Recommended) Employee Offer Letter
  - Company Letterhead
  - Job Position
  - Job Responsibilities/Description

Submit your documents at the ISS office or by email: internationalstudents@ucr.edu
Form I-983 Training Plan

**Purpose:** The Form I-983 Training Plan must clearly articulate the STEM OPT student’s learning objectives and affirm the employer’s commitment to helping the student achieve those objectives.

The Form I-983 Training Plan must be completed by student and employer and submitted to the ISS office. For the application process, complete pages 1-4 only. *The ISS office will keep this form and does not go to USCIS. Page 5 will be completed only during the evaluation period.

Download the most updated version through the USCIS website - [Form I-983](https://www.uscis.gov/i-983) (click on link)
Download [I-983 Instructions](https://www.uscis.gov/i-983-instructions) (click on link) & [Form I-983 Overview](https://www.uscis.gov/i-983-overview)
Form I-983 (pg. 1 of 5)

Section 1-2
Completed by Student
*Required for ISS office only
*Not for USCIS

Name of School Recommending STEM OPT
University of California Riverside

Name of School Where STEM Degree was Earned
- If most recent degree is STEM, University of California Riverside
- If STEM degree was earned elsewhere, enter name of U.S. school of STEM degree

DSO Contact Information
- Heidi Nam
  - heidi.nam@ucr.edu
  - (951)827-6148

Email Address
Enter your preferred email. USCIS will use this to send updates

SEVIS School Code
(Can be found on your Form I-20)
LOS214F00177000

STEM OPT Requested Period
Start Date: Day after EAD card expires
End Date: Two years from start date

SEVIS ID No:
Add number that starts with “N00-”
Can be found on pg 1 of the I-20

Qualifying Major CIP Code
Add CIP Code from STEM I-20
Can be found on pg 1 of the I-20

Employment Authorization Number
Enter the EAD card number listed on your current EAD card
Form I-983 (pg. 1 of 5)

Section 2
Completed by Student

SECTION 2: STUDENT CERTIFICATION
I declare and affirm under penalty of perjury that the statements and information made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that the law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willfully falsifying or concealing a material fact, or using any false document in the submission of this form.

I certify that:

1. I have reviewed, understand, and will adhere to this Training Plan for STEM OPT Students ("Plan");

2. I will notify the DSO at the earliest available opportunity if I believe that my employer is not providing me with appropriate training as delineated on this Plan;

3. I understand that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may deny, revoke, or terminate the STEM OPT of students whom DHS determines are not engaging in OPT in compliance with the law, including the STEM OPT of students who are not, or whose employers are not, complying with this Plan;

4. My practical training opportunity is directly related to the STEM degree that qualifies me for the STEM OPT extension; and

5. I will notify the DSO at the earliest available opportunity regarding any material changes to or deviations from this Plan, including but not limited to, any change of Employer Identification Number resulting from a corporate restructuring, any non-trivial reduction in compensation from the amount previously submitted on the Plan that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked, any significant decrease in hours per week that I engage in a STEM training opportunity, and any decrease in hours below the 20-hours-per-week minimum required under this rule.

Signature of Student (Sign in ink): 

Printed Name of Student: ___________________________ Date (mm-dd-yyyy): ___________________________ 

Student Signature (handwritten)

Student Certification

- Signature of student: Should be handwritten in ink

COVID-19 Update: As this document stays with UCR, we can accept digital signatures during COVID-19.
## Section 3
### Completed by Employer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Name/Company Name</th>
<th>Employer or Company Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street Address</td>
<td>Employer or Company’s physical location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer ID Number (EIN):</td>
<td>Unique nine-digit number, also referred to as the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or Federal Tax Identification Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIN Number (9 digits)</td>
<td>North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPT Hours Per Week (must be at least 20 hours/week):</td>
<td>Compensation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hrs/week</td>
<td>A. Salary Amount and Frequency:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date of Employment (mm-dd-yyyy):</td>
<td>B. Other Compensation (Type and Estimated Amount or Value):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM OPT Start Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Employer Information
- **Employer Name:** Employer or Company Name
- **Street Address:** Employer or Company’s physical location
- **Employer ID Number (EIN):** Unique nine-digit number, also referred to as the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or Federal Tax Identification Number
- **Start Date of Employment:** Start date of STEM OPT
Form I-983 (pg. 2 of 5)

Section 4
Completed by Employer

Note: DHS may, at its discretion, conduct a site visit of the employer to ensure that program requirements are being met, including that the employer possesses and maintains the ability and resources to provide structured and guided work-based learning experiences consistent with this Plan.

Signature of Employer Official with Signatory Authority (Sign in ink): ____________________________

Signature of Employer Official (handwritten)

Printed Name and Title of Employer Official with Signatory Authority: ____________________________

Employer Official’s Name and Position Title

Date (mm-dd-yyyy): ____________ Printed Name of Employing Organization: ____________________________

Employer/Company Name

Signature of Employer Official

● Signature must be handwritten
● Should be employee with signatory authority for employer
● Should be familiar with student’s goals and performance
● Must be able to attest to the terms & conditions of STEM practical training

COVID-19 Update: As this document stays with UCR, we can accept digital signatures during COVID-19.
Form I-983 (pg. 3 of 5)

Section 5
Completed by Student and Employer

Training Plan
- Must complete Section 5 with your employer
- Employer’s information should be your direct supervisor or whoever will be providing you with the training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 5: TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS (Completed by Student and Employer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Name (Surname/First Name, Given Name):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYER SITE INFORMATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Name: Site Address (Street, City, State, ZIP):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Official: Official's Title:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official's Email: Official's Phone Number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: For the remaining fields in this section, employers who already have an internal/existing training plan in place may fill in the details based on that plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Site: Describe the student's role with the employer and how that role is directly related to enhancing the student's knowledge obtained through his or her qualifying STEM degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals and Objectives: Describe how the assignment(s) with the employer will help the student achieve his or her specific objectives for work-based training related to his or her STEM degree. The description must both specify the student's goals regarding specific knowledge, skills, or techniques as well as the means by which they will be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Oversight: Explain how the employer provides oversight and supervision of individuals filling positions such as that being filled by the named F-1 student. If the employer has a training program or related policy in place that controls such oversight and supervision, please describe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures and Assessments: Explain how the employer measures and confirms whether individuals filling positions such as that being filled by the named F-1 student are acquiring the knowledge and skills. If the employer has a training program or related policy in place that controls such measures and assessments, please describe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section 5
**Completed by Student and Employer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SECTION 5: TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS</strong> (Completed by Student and Employer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAST NAME, FIRST NAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employer Name:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY NAME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### EMPLOYER SITE INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SITE NAME (If different from Employer Name, enter name of site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site Address (Street, City, State, ZIP):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address where you will be physically working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of Official:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Direct Supervisor (First and Last Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Official’s Title:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Direct Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Official’s Email:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email of Direct Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Official’s Phone Number:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number of Direct Supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: for the remaining fields in this section, employers who already have an internal/pre-existing training plan in place may fill in the details based on that plan.*
Section 5 (Continued)

**Student’s Role**

**Student Role:** Describe the student’s role with the employer and how that role is directly related to enhancing the student’s knowledge obtained through his or her qualifying STEM degree.

Describe what tasks and assignments the student will carry out during the training and how they relate the student's STEM degree at UCR. The plan must cover a specific span of time, detail specific goals, and objectives.

**Tips:**

- Have your offer letter
- Be detailed and descriptive
- Include your position title and your job responsibilities
- Include your STEM Degree name
- Must explain how your job position is going to enhance your knowledge related to your STEM degree
Examples

Explaining how your position is related to your STEM Degree

Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering:

I will be working as an **Electrical Engineer** *(Position title)* at **ABC Corp. (Company Name)**, a government contractor. In my job, I analyze client requirements for electrical systems and provide them with cost estimates of such systems *(Job Duties)*. My work requires understanding of electrical circuit theory, which I studied in-depth in the Electrical Engineering program *(STEM Degree)* at the University of ABC. dissertation *(explaining relation to major of study)*.

PhD in Computer Science:

During my STEM OPT period, I will be working as an **Computer and Information Research Scientist** *(Position Title)* at **ABC Research Institute (Company Name)**. I work as part of a team of scientists and engineers that designs experiments to test the operation of various software systems *(Job Duties)*. My work builds on research in complex algorithms and machine learning, which I studied as part of my dissertation *(Relation to Study)* during the PhD Computer Science program at ABC University *(STEM Degree)*.
Section 5 (Continued)
Goals and Objectives

Describe the specific skills, knowledge, and techniques the student will learn or apply; how the student will achieve the goals set out for his or her training; and the training curriculum including the timeline.

Tips:

● Think of around 3-4 goals and objectives at this position during your STEM period
● Describe how each goal will include learning objectives enhancing your STEM degree
● Each goal should have S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound) elements
Employer Oversight

Explain how the employer provides oversight and supervision of individuals filling positions such as that being filled by the named F-1 student. If the employer has a training program or related policy in place that controls such oversight and supervision, a description of this program or policy may suffice to answer this question.

Tips:
- Describe the methods of how the employer will be providing oversight and supervision
- Be descriptive when explaining each method
Section 5 (Continued)

Measures and Assessments

Tips:
- Describe how your employer will be measuring and assessing your knowledge and skills in your position
- Be as descriptive as you can

Explain how the employer measures and confirms whether individuals filling positions such as that being filled by the named F-1 student are acquiring new knowledge and skills. If the employer has a training program or related policy in place that controls such oversight and supervision, a description of this program or policy may suffice to answer this question.
Section 6
Completed by Employer

Employer Certification
- Must be handwritten
- Employer must sign this section
- Should review above information and affirm by signature
- Does not need to be same official who signed Section 4

Signature of Employer Official
Date of Signature
Name and Position Title of Employer Official
Form I-983 (pg. 5 of 5)

Section 6
Completed by Student & Employer

ATTENTION:
You do not need to submit until evaluations are due.

Evaluation
- Must be completed by student
- Evaluation must be signed off by the student AND the employer
- Mark your calendars for annual evaluation deadlines

Submit your documents in person at the ISS office or by email: internationalstudents@ucr.edu

12-month Self-Evaluation due before this date

24-month Self-Evaluation due before this date
Form I-765 Application

**Purpose:** The Form I-765 is the application form for the EAD card.

The Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization must be submitted to USCIS. Please submit all 7 pages.

**Tips:**
- Typed, not handwritten
- Hand-sign signature (in black ink)
- Always get the most updated version from USCIS website
  - Form I-765

Important Update:

Form I-765 Application

How to check if it's the most updated version:

#1 Edition Date
The bottom left corner of the form will indicate the Edition Date.

#2 Barcode
The bottom of the form should have a barcode.

What to Know About Sending Your Form:

Previous Edition is 12/26/19
If it is postmarked before Aug. 25, 2020, we will continue to accept the 12/26/19 edition.

New Edition is 08/25/20
If it is postmarked on or after Aug. 25, 2020, we will accept the 08/25/20 edition.
Form I-765 Application (Pg. 1 out 7)

Part 1. Reason for Applying

I am applying for (select only one box):

1.a. [X] 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)
1.b. Given Name (First Name)
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)
2.b. Given Name (First Name)
2.c. Middle Name
3.a. Family Name (Last Name)
3.b. Given Name (First Name)
3.c. Middle Name
4.a. Family Name (Last Name)
4.b. Given Name (First Name)
4.c. Middle Name

08/25/20 Edition

Part 1. Items #1a~1c

Select one of the following:
- #1a. If this is your first time applying for STEM OPT
- #1b. If you are replacing your lost, stolen, or damaged EAD card
- #1c. If this is not your first time applying for STEM OPT

Part 2. Items #1a~4c

Enter your full legal name and other names you use
Part 2. U.S. Address

Items #5a–5e: U.S. Mailing Address

- EAD will be sent to this address
- Select an address that will be valid for more than the next 4-5 months
- If friend, relative or employer's address, write FULL name under "In Care of Name (if any)"

If you change your address,

- The U.S. Postal Service will not forward any government mail to new addresses
- Must submit an Official Change of Address (click on link) to USCIS through the USCIS website
Form I-765 Application (Pg. 3 out 7)

Part 2. Eligibility Category

Item #27
Enter STEM code (c)(3)(C)

Item #28
a) Enter Degree level & STEM Major
i.e. "Master’s in Biology"
*If you cannot fit your major name, please complete pg 7, Additional Information, section.

b) Employer’s name as listed in E-Verify
c) Confirm the E-Verify number with employer

Skip rest of page from Item #29.
Part 3. Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature

Applicant’s Statement (Items #1a~2)
Select Item #1a (if you are preparing the STEM OPT application yourself)

Applicant’s Contact Information
Complete Items #3~6
Part 3. Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature (Continued)

COVID-19 REMINDER:
This document goes to USCIS so, signatures must be handwritten.

Applicant’s Signature & Date
IMPORTANT: Remember to sign before mailing STEM OPT packet!
Signature should be handwritten and in black ink.

If you selected Item #1a in Applicant’s Statement, skip Part 4 and jump to page 7.
Part 6. Additional Information

Complete this section if you need to provide additional information. If the following pertain to you, please complete this section:

- Previous OPT Approval
- Explaining STEM Major
- Different SEVIS ID in the past
- Change of Visa Status
- Not enough room for name
Part 6. Additional Information

If you need to explain **OPT approval**, we suggest this format:

- Title: Previous OPT Authorizations
- Enter EAD card Start date –End date
- Enter OPT Degree level: (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate); Post-Completion OPT or STEM OPT
- Enter EAD Card Number
- Enter text “Please see attached for copy of EAD card”
Part 6. Additional Information

If you need to explain STEM Major degree, we suggest this format:

- Title: STEM Degree Major
- Enter STEM major name (as on your I-20)
- Enter School Name
- Enter major CIP code (as on your I-20)
- Enter text “Please see attached for copy of STEM I-20 and STEM diploma or transcript”
Form G-1145

- Optional but, strongly recommended
- Typed, not written
- To receive email notifications on your packet

Download the most updated version through the USCIS website - Form G-1145 (click on link)
Provide a copy of your passport and most recent visa. The photocopies should not be too large or too small.

**Passport**
- Copy should not be enlarged or minimized

**Visa**
- Copy of most recent visa
- Does NOT have to be valid
- Copy should not be enlarged or minimized
USCIS Application Filing Fee

$410 USCIS Application Filing Fee

*Effective Oct 2, 2020, USCIS Application Fee will be $550, not $410.

Payable to:
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Acceptable payment methods:
- Personal Check
- Money Order
- Cashier’s Check
- Credit Card (Form G-1450)

Money Order

Money Orders can be purchased at:
- Banks
- Post-offices
- Local markets (i.e. Albertsons)
- Local pharmacies (i.e. CVS)
Recent Form I-94

Provide a copy of your most recent Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

You can access your Form I-94 through:
  [I-94 Website](#) (click on link)

- I-94 Admission Number will indicate most recent entry
- Class of Admission should say “F1”
- ‘Admit Until Date’ should say Duration of Status (D/S)
U.S. Passport-Style Photos

- Prepare 2 original passport-style photos
- Must meet specifications on U.S. Department of State website
- Must be a recent photo (taken within 30 days)
- Clip the photo and application fee to top of application packet

Correct Passport Size and Position:
- 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm)
- The head centered and sized between 1” and 1.4” (25 and 35 mm)

Background:
- Plain and white or off-white
- No shadows

Shadows and Lighting:
- Clear and in color
- No shadows
- Not digitally altered

Accessories:
- No glasses
- No hats or head coverings (unless for religious or medical purposes)

COVID-19 Update:
- DOS Passport Photos Guideline
- Mypassportphotos.com

Where can you take passport photos?
- Costco (most affordable option)
- U.S. Postal Service
- Local drugstores (i.e. Walgreens, CVS, Rite Aid)

(On the back of photos)
Gently write your name and I-94 number
STEM Diploma or Transcript

Please provide a copy of your STEM Diploma OR Transcript

Your copy should include:
- Your Name
- STEM Major & Degree Level
- Date Degree Received or Completed

The Office of the Registrar will assist in obtaining your diploma or your transcript

- To request a UCR Transcript, click here
- To learn how to receive your UCR Diploma, click here
ISS issues STEM OPT I-20

After review of your STEM OPT documents, the DSO will issue the following documents:

- STEM OPT I-20
- STEM OPT Materials Checklist
- STEM OPT Application Checklist

COVID-19 Reminder: SEVP recently announced that sending digital I-20s to students at this time is acceptable. You will receive a digital copy of I-20 from ISS office.
ISS issues STEM OPT I-20

After reviewing your documents, a DSO will issue you a new I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation. ISS will contact when the I-20 is ready for pick up.

You can choose to:
- Pick up your I-20 from the ISS office
- Ship it to your location (E-Ship Global)

When preparing to send it to USCIS,
- Sign the bottom of page 1 (blue ink)
- Make sure the STEM OPT requested dates are on page 2
- Make sure there is a travel signature on page 2 from DSO
- Make a photocopy of the STEM OPT I-20 (not the original copy)
- Mail your STEM OPT application within 60 days of I-20 issue date

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please review and confirm the accuracy of all information in your documents before mailing your documents. Student is responsible to ensure that all information is correct.
Mailing your STEM OPT Application
Assemble your STEM OPT packet

Once you have picked up your STEM OPT I-20, you will need to assemble your STEM OPT application packet for USCIS. Please gather the following documents in order as listed below.

✅ $410 USCIS Application Filing Fee
*Effective Oct 2, 2020, USCIS Application Fee will be $550, not $410.
✅ 2 recent Passport-Style (2x2 inches) Photos
✅ Form G-1145 (for eNotification updates on application)
✅ Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization
✅ Copy of STEM OPT I-20 (issued by ISS office)
✅ Copy of current EAD card (front & back)
✅ Copy of Transcripts with STEM or STEM Diploma
   - If based on previous STEM diploma, please provide STEM I-20 as well.
✅ Copy of Form I-94
✅ Copy of valid passport
✅ Copy of recent visa
✅ Copy of current Post-Completion OPT I-20

COVID-19 Update:
- USCIS requires OPT application to be mailed from within the U.S.
- Must mail physical copies

Your STEM OPT application must arrive at USCIS within 60 days of the I-20 issue date. Documents should not be stapled together. Remember to hand-sign all of the required documents! All photocopies should be black & white. Make sure to keep a copy of entire packet for your records.
Before Mailing your STEM OPT Documents

Using the chart below, please make sure that you are using the correct version of Form I-765 (EAD card application form) and the I-765 Fee amount before mailing your OPT documents to USCIS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Postmark Date</th>
<th>Form I-765 Version used</th>
<th>I-765 Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before August 25, 2020</td>
<td>Must use 12/26/19 edition</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On or after August 25, 2020 but before October 2, 2020</td>
<td>Must use 08/25/20 edition</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On or after October 2, 2020</td>
<td>Must use 08/25/20 edition</td>
<td>$550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mailing your application to USCIS

We recommend choosing the a mailing courier that offers a tracking number. USCIS must receipt your packet no later than your EAD expiration date.

NOTE: Address may change from time to time. Check USCIS Website (click here) for updated address.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you live in...</th>
<th>Mail your application to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands</td>
<td>USCIS Phoenix Lockbox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USCIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P.O. Box 21281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ 85036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USCIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attn: NFB AOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suite 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ 85034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia</td>
<td>USCIS Dallas Lockbox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USCIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P.O. Box 660867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dallas, TX 75266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USCIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attn: NFB AOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suite 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once USCIS receives your application, your filing fee will be cashed and USCIS will send you a receipt notice with your case number within 1-2 weeks.

COVID-19 Update:
- USCIS requires OPT application to be mailed from within the U.S.
- Must mail physical copies
While STEM OPT Application is pending
Track your Application

I-797C Notice of Action
○ Within 2-4 weeks, USCIS will send you a receipt notice, Form I-797C

Case Inquiries
○ Use the Case Inquiry tool if you don’t receive your receipt notice within 4 weeks
Track your Application

**USCIS Case Status Online**
- Track your application by entering the receipt number
- Link for [USCIS Case Status Online](#)

**USCIS Email Updates**
- USCIS will send you email notifications through the email on [Form G-1145](#)

**USCIS Processing Time**
- Check the latest processing time for your type of application
- If mailing from CA, you will be mailing to the ‘Potomac Service Center.’
- Link for [Case Processing Time](#)
While your application is pending...

- **You have a change of address**
  - You must update your address by filing [Form AR-11](#) (click here) directly with USCIS

- **You can continue Employment After Filing**
  - If USCIS received your STEM OPT application in a timely manner, you may continue working up to 180 days after your EAD card expires

- **You change your employer**
  - Risky but, possible
  - You must report your change of employment as soon as possible
  - You must submit a final evaluation of the Form I-983 for your previous job
  - You must submit a new Form I-983 for your new job

- **You receive a Request For Evidence (RFE)**
  - USCIS will send an RFE if additional information or evidence is required
  - Contact the UCR ISS office to speak with an International Student Advisor
International Travel during STEM OPT

Not recommended while STEM OPT is pending

- Higher risk associated with re-entry while STEM OPT is pending (especially after EAD card expires)
- Strongly recommended to wait until STEM OPT EAD card arrives

Required Travel Documents for Pending STEM OPT

- Valid Passport (within 6 months)
- Valid F-1 Visa stamp
- STEM OPT I-20 w/ travel signature (within 6 months)
- I-797 Receipt Notice

Required Travel Documents for Approved STEM OPT

- Valid Passport (within 6 months)
- Valid F-1 Visa stamp
- STEM OPT I-20 w/ travel signature (within 6 months)
- Valid STEM OPT EAD Card
- Employee offer Letter or letter of employment verification

COVID-19 Update: SEVP has announced that I-20s with digital signatures from universities are acceptable
Requesting for a Travel Signature from ISS

If you are planning on traveling abroad, you can request for an updated travel signature on your STEM OPT I-20. Travel signatures for STEM OPT are only valid for 6 months. Please plan ahead as you may have to consider shipping time if you are living in a different area.

To request for a Travel Signature, please submit:
- **Document Request Form**
  - You can pick up a form at the ISS office or email internationalstudents@ucr.edu
- **STEM OPT I-20 (Original Copy)**
  - If you are unable to send it to us, you can request a new I-20.

**Retrieving your I-20:**
- Allow 3-5 business days for travel signature to be issued
- ISS office will notify you when it is ready for pick up
- Office pick up or eShip Global options are available

**COVID-19 Update:** Since digital I-20s are acceptable during this time, ISS will be emailing you the I-20 with travel signature.
Scams

How to Avoid Scams
● Government entities (USCIS or SEVP) will rarely call you regarding your application
● Most notices are sent via email or paper mail

If someone calls you, here are some warning signs:
● They will know some (but, not all) personal information about you
● Asks you to share personal information (i.e. passport number, SSN, credit card information, etc.)
● Speaks to you in an aggressive manner
● Asks you for money or personal information

USCIS Website- How to Avoid Scams, Report Fraud, Legal Services
● USCIS - Report Scams
● USCIS - How to Avoid Scams
● UCR - Avoid Employment Scams and Fraud
USCIS Final Decision
USCIS STEM OPT Approval

- **New EAD Card**
  - You will receive a new EAD Card with new dates printed on your card
  - If you see any errors on the card, contact the ISS office for assistance
  - Send ISS Office a copy of your new EAD Card
  - Present your new EAD card to your employer

- **Automatic Extension of your F-1 status & employment**

Submit a copy to the ISS office: internationalstudents@ucr.edu
If USCIS needs more information/evidence, they will send a Request for Evidence (RFE).

- This is not a rejection/denial
- Contact ISS office and work with an International Student Advisor
- RFE must be received by deadline date
- Check OPT I-20 recommendation date before mailing RFE
  - If outside 60 day window, request for a new OPT recommendation I-20.

Please contact ISS office to review required RFE documents
USCIS Rejection/Denial

Rejection/Denial
- USCIS will send you a denial notice
- Please contact ISS office for assistance

Common Reasons for Denials:
- USCIS receives OPT application too early or too late (EAD card expired)
- E-Signatures
- Payment problems
- RFE was not received by deadline date
- OPT I-20 was already past 60 days of recommended date

Please contact ISS office immediately to discuss F-1 options
STEM OPT Reporting Requirements
SEVP OPT Portal on STEM OPT

Function of SEVP OPT Portal (click here) during STEM OPT authorization will be LIMITED.

Through the SEVP OPT Portal, you can:

- **Update Personal Information**
  - Name
  - Address
  - Phone Number

- **Review/Verify Employer Information**
  - Cannot be updated through OPT Portal
  - Changes in employer information must be done through ISS office

- Receive alerts of STEM OPT Reports due

- Must update within 10 days of change
STEM Reporting Roadmap

**STEM EAD Start Date**
- 1 Month

**STEM EAD End Date**
- 24 Months

### Validation Report Due
- STEM OPT Reporting Form

### Self-Evaluation Report Due
- STEM OPT Reporting Form
- I-983 Training Plan w/ Self-Evaluation (Pg 1–5)

### Validation Report Due
- STEM OPT Reporting Form

### Final Self-Evaluation Due
- STEM OPT Reporting Form
- I-983 Training Plan w/ Final Self-Evaluation (Pg 1–5)

**NOTE**
- SEVP OPT Portal will remind you with alerts
- Recommended to add schedule alerts on your calendar
- Useful Tool for Due Dates: [https://www.timeanddate.com/date/dateadd.html](https://www.timeanddate.com/date/dateadd.html)
STEM OPT Reporting Requirements

During your 24-months STEM OPT Extension, you are required to report the below information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every 6 months</th>
<th>Validation Report is due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12-Month of STEM OPT</th>
<th>Evaluation on Student Progress is due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit first portion of page 5 of I-983 Training Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Signed by student and employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24-Month of STEM OPT</th>
<th>Final Evaluation on Student Progress is due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit second portion of page 5 of I-983 Training Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Signed by student and employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Personal Information</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Update through SEVP OPT Portal or STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Update within 10 days of change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Employer (new employer, new position title, end of job, etc.)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit completed STEM OPT Reporting Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit Final Evaluation of I-983 Training Plan of previous employer (pg 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Submit new I-983 Training for new employer (pg 1–4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Update within 10 days of change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please complete the documents to ISS office or email at internationalstudents@ucr.edu
Please complete this form for:

- Validation Report
- Change in Employer
- 12-Month Evaluation
- 24-Month Final Evaluation

This form is available at the ISS office or you can email at internationalstudents@ucr.edu
Updating your Personal Information

- Changes to your personal information include:
  - Name
  - Address
  - Phone Number

- Changes must be updated within 10 days

- Please update information through:
  - SEVP OPT Portal (click here)
  - STEM OPT Reporting Form
Updates in Employer Information

● Updates/Changes in employment must be done through the ISS office

● Must submit a new Form I-983 Training Plan if you get a:
  ○ New position/job title
  ○ New employer
  ○ New job description

● If you end your employment, you will need to submit a Final Evaluation (last page of Form I-983) for your old position.

● Changes must be updated within 10 days

● Allowed an additional 60 days of unemployment (including Post-Completion OPT it will be a total of 150 days)
If you change STEM OPT employers,

Please submit the following:

1. STEM OPT Reporting Form

2. Final Evaluation of I-983 with previous employer (last section of page 5)

3. I-983 Training Plan for your new employer (pages 1~4)
Unemployment Time

- You will have an additional 60 days of unemployment time on top of 90 days during Post-Completion OPT.
- In total, you will have 150 days of unemployment time:
  - 90 days (Post-Completion OPT) + 60 days (STEM OPT) = 150 days

Diagram:
- Post-Completion OPT
  - Start with 90 unemployment days
- STEM OPT Extension
  - Extra 60 unemployment days
  - Rolls over if unused
After STEM OPT Extension Ends
After your STEM OPT Extension Ends

When your 24-Month STEM OPT extension ends, F-1 students will have a 60-day grace period to decide on their steps. During the 60-day grace period, students may decide on the following options:

- Start a new program at UC Riverside
- Transfer to another institution
- Apply for a change of visa status
- Return to home country

COVID-19 Reminder:
- If you are unable to apply changes by the end of 60-day grace period, please contact the ISS office.
Helpful Resources

UCR Resources

- STEM OPT Website
- STEM OPT Application Checklist
- STEM OPT Reporting Form

Government Forms

- Form I-983
  - Instructions for I-983
- Form I-765
- Form G-1145

Government Resources

- Study in the States - STEM OPT
- Study in the States - I-983 Overview
- USCIS - STEM OPT
- USCIS - Practical Training

For more UCR F-1 Workshops

UCR ISS Events Calendar
COVID-19 Resources

LinkedIn Learning Classes
Finding a Job during Challenging Economic Times
New to Working Remotely?

Job Searching Sites
Indeed -COVID-19

Government COVID-19 Updates
SEVP COVID-10 FAQ Scroll to ‘Employment’ Section
ICE COVID-10 Guidance
Study in the States - COVID-19 Resources
Additional Questions?

Where we are located:
Skye Hall 321
Riverside, CA 92521
Phone: 951-827-4113

Office Hours:
Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Walk-in Hours: 10 AM – 12 PM
1 PM - 4 PM

COVID-19:
Email/Virtual/Phone Meetings Only

Who to contact:

General Email
internationalstudents@ucr.edu

Heidi Nam
International Student Advisor, Career Empowerment
heidi.nam@ucr.edu
Zoom Link: https://ucr.zoom.us/my/heidinamucr

Kelly Hinosawa
Associate Director, International Students
kelly.hinosawa@ucr.edu
Zoom Link: https://ucr.zoom.us/j/116880876