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:

The current edition of Forms I-765 and I-765WS, dated 12/26/19

- If it is postmarked before Aug. 25, 2020, we will continue to accept the 12/26/19 edition.
- If it is postmarked on or after Aug. 25, 2020, we will not accept the 12/26/19 edition.

The updated edition of Forms I-765 and I-765WS, dated 08/25/20

- If it is postmarked on or after Aug. 25, 2020, we will accept the 08/25/20 edition.
- If it is postmarked before Aug. 25, 2020, we will not accept the 08/25/20 edition.

Item #27: Specify the appropriate code for Post OPT – (C)(3)(B)

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 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.

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 website https://globalaffairs.fiu.edu/product/test-product/. You must submit your confirmation email in order to process your STEM OPT application.

STEP 2: SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST

- Schedule an Appointment: Schedule an appointment with an ISSS Advisor. Visit our website to request a Virtual Appointment.
- Submit Documents to ISSS Advisor: You will receive an invite with the advisor assigned to your case and her/his contact information. Please upload your application documents on your FIU ISSS PORTAL before your appointment. Please note that incomplete requests cannot be processed.

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. Your U.S. mailing address in form I-765 determines where you should send your application (Please see the below USCIS chart). Your application must arrive at USCIS within 30 days from when your DSO signed the STEM Recommendation I-20.
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 [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 [FIU ISSS Panther Portal](#)