

Wesleyan University
Office of International Affairs

Procedures for Filing your STEM OPT Application

Important: *OISA provides general guidance on your STEM OPT Extension application based on information obtained from reliable sources and reflecting our years of experience in working with F-1 students. We make every attempt to ensure that we provide you with the most up-to-date information available. **Any advice provided to you by OISA does not constitute legal advice.** The STEM OPT Extension application is a **personal application for which you are responsible**; the application preparation and USCIS case decision will vary depending on the facts of your particular case. OISA does its best to provide you with the most current guidance, but please be mindful that USCIS may change its interpretation of these policies, procedures, regulations, and eligibility requirements at any time. OISA is not responsible for any errors or omissions, or for the results obtained from USCIS. Please reference the official [USCIS instructions for I-765](#) and [Checklist of Required Initial Evidence for Form I-765](#) if you have questions.*

The following guidance is for if you are submitting your STEM OPT Extension application to USCIS via mail. If you are applying online via the USCIS website, you must carefully follow the instructions to complete each part of your Form I-765 and submit the required materials and evidence.

Please send the following materials in the following order to the USCIS Lockbox in Chicago (see page 2):

1. The two identical passport-style photos must be 2 inches by 2 inches. The photos must be in color with a full face, frontal view on a white to off-white background. Head height should measure 1 to 1 3/8 inches from the top of your hair to the bottom of your chin, and eye height is between 1 1/8 to 1 3/8 inches from the top of your eyes to the bottom of the photo. Your head must be bare unless you are wearing headwear as required by a religious denomination of which you are a member. Please be aware that: 1) photos cannot be more than **30 days old** when you send the application and, 2) you should write your name and SEVIS ID number on the back of each photo using a pencil or felt pen.
2. **\$410.00** in the form of a bank check or money order made out to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**. If you do not know how to complete a money order, visit [the money order page on the OISA website](#).
3. Cover letter (sample attached on page 3 of this document).
4. Original form I-765 (www.uscis.gov > FORMS > I-765). Use a black pen for your signature (no electronic signatures). Everything else should be in black ink or typed. Ensure you use the most recent version of the form. Double check the edition date of the form on the day you plan to mail your application by visiting the USCIS website (www.uscis.gov/i-765 > Form Details > Edition Date)
5. OPTIONAL but highly recommended: To receive e-notifications by text message or email from USCIS when your I-765 is received, please fill out form [G-1145](#) and clip it to the front of your package. (www.uscis.gov > FORMS > G-1145)

6. Copy of Form I-20 with STEM recommendation on page 2 (you keep the original). **PLEASE sign and date the bottom of your Form I-20 in the “Student Attestation” section before you photocopy it.**
7. Copies of all previous Forms I-20s for all schools attended. If you cannot find your old I-20s, use the missing I-20 template (sample attached on page 4 of this document).
8. Copy of current I-94: Print-out of online admission record (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>) OR white card stapled to passport OR I-94 attached to I-797 approval notice (if you changed to F-1 from another visa category within the U.S.)
9. Copy of most recent F-1 visa stamp, even if expired, and most recent entry stamp (if any). The entry stamp is a stamp that may have been placed in your passport by immigration officers when you last entered the U.S.
10. Copy of the passport ID page, showing expiration date (must be valid at least 6 months into the future at the time of the application).
11. Copies of all previous Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) issued to you, including your current OPT.
12. Copy of your transcript and diploma for the degree on which your STEM Extension is based. You can request an official copy of your transcript by visiting this link:
https://www.wesleyan.edu/registrar/general_information/transcripts.html

Send all materials by certified mail with return receipt requested or by express mail, to the USCIS Lockbox

Please be advised that:

- USCIS will accept your application up to 90 days before and no later than your current OPT end date listed on your EAD card, AND within 60 days of the date that your STEM OPT Extension recommendation was issued by an OISA staff member (“School Attestation” section on page 1 of your I-20). Your application will be rejected or denied if received outside of this filing window.
- ALL employment conducted while on the STEM OPT Extension must be with an E-Verify employer and directly related to your field of study.
- You must submit a new Form I-983 to OISA any time there is a substantial change to your employment situation.
- During your STEM Extension, you may accrue an additional 60 days of unemployment plus any unused unemployment from the 90 days of unemployment permitted during the 12-month post-completion OPT period (150 cumulative unemployment days). Accrual of more than 150 days of unemployment will lead to termination of your SEVIS record.
- Remember to sign your I-20 and your Form I-765 in black ink!
- You are expected to understand and adhere to the STEM reporting requirements as noted on the OISA [STEM OPT extension page](#) and the [SEVP STEM OPT Reporting Requirements page](#).

Instructions for Mailing your STEM Application Package

We recommend that you mail your application via certified mail with a return receipt or tracking number, e.g. FedEx, UPS, USPS. For your convenience, we are able to offer a link to create a slightly discounted shipping label through eShipGlobal (see instructions below):

Optional: Creating a Shipping Label Through eShipGlobal

1. Register for an account with UEMS at <https://study.eshipglobal.com/register/> if you do not already have an account.
2. [Log into UEMS.](#)
3. Click on the "OPT Application" image or the "Send Documents To USCIS" button.
4. Find your address already prepopulated in the "Sender Address." If you would like to change your address, simply enter your new address in the "Sender Address" fields.
5. Select appropriate USCIS Lockbox depending on where you live and shipping method (see chart below)
6. Select OPT Application, select the carrier, and enter your payment information.
7. Print your label, attach it to the shipping envelope and drop it off at the nearest shipping carrier location. If you don't have a shipping envelope and are local, you can get one free of charge at the Office of International Student Affairs (Fisk Hall Room 105).

Your application must be submitted within 60 calendar days of the signature in the "School Attestation" section on page 1 your STEM recommendation I-20.

- ✓ Mail your application to the address indicated below.
- ✓ Make a copy of the **entire application package**, including money order and tracking number. Keep these documents for your records.

NEW Application Mailing Addresses:

U.S. Postal Service (USPS)	FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries
USCIS Attn: I-765 C03 P.O. Box 805373 Chicago, IL 60680-5374	USCIS Attn: I-765 C03 131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Sample Cover Letter

[Your Full Name]

[SEVIS ID: Nxxxxxxxxxxxxxx]

[I-94: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx]

RE: Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization STEM Optional Practical Training (c)(3)(C),
F-1 Student

[Date used on I-765; application date]

Dear USCIS Officer:

STEM OPT Requested Dates [xx/xx/xxxx – xx/xx/xxxx]

This STEM Optional Practical Training (c)(3)(C) application includes the following:

Section 1

- Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
- Money order of \$410 made out to U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- 2 passport-style photographs taken within the last 30 days with my name and SEVIS Number on the back of the photo in pencil
- Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
- Copy of transcript
- Copy of diploma

Section 2

- Copy of OPT I-20
- Copies of all previously issued I-20s

Section 3

- Copy of passport
- Copy of visa (remove this line if you are a Canadian citizen)
- Copy of most recent entry stamp
- Copy of most recent Form I-94
- Copy of EAD

Section 4 (Use only if you have had a previous SEVIS number and/or missing any previous issued I-20.

Examples include: transferring your status at the same academic level; changing levels — e.g. Bachelor's to Master's; leave of absence)

- Statement explaining previous history. Be as detailed as possible.
- Documentation verifying statement above. Items include: EADs, I-20s with CPT, letters from previous school(s) verifying practical training authorizations.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

[Your Signature]

[Your Full Name]

Missing I-20 Letter Template for STEM

[Date used on I-765; application date]

[Your Full Name]

[SEVIS ID: Nxxxxxxxxxxxxxx]

[I-94: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx]

Dear USCIS Officer:

I am applying for F-1 STEM OPT Extension in connection with my Wesleyan degree program, but I am missing some of my previously issued Form I-20s. I attempted to find the forms but was unable to locate copies for this application.

Below is a description of the missing I-20 forms:

I attended [insert name of school] for a [insert degree level or program type] from [insert start and end dates attended].

Only if applicable. This is not necessary if you did not have an CPT or OPT in the past or if you do have your CPT/OPT I-20s: I received [CPT or OPT] work authorization from [enter dates].

Sincerely,

[Your Signature]

[Your Printed Full Name]