**STEM OPT Extension Application Instructions**

1. Apply for STEM Extension recommendation I-20 through Terra Dotta
2. Gather all required application materials
3. Mail your application packet to USCIS
4. Report the outcome of your application to ISS

**Your USCIS application packet must include IN THIS ORDER:**

- $410.00 filing fee. Pay by personal check, cashier’s check, or money order to the Department of Homeland Security.
  - Verify the current USCIS form I-765 filing fee: [https://www.uscis.gov/i-765](https://www.uscis.gov/i-765)
  - To pay by credit card, use Form G-1450 Authorization for Credit Card Transaction (PDF): [https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450](https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450)

- 2 color U.S. passport-style photos with a **white background** taken within 30 days of filing your application
  - No eyeglasses except if required by recent surgery or headwear except if required by your religious order
  - Write your full name and I-94 number on the back of each photo in pencil.
  - Verify the photo specifications: [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765instr.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765instr.pdf)

- **OPTIONAL:** Form G-1145: E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance for electronic notifications of your application receipt/approval.

- Completed and signed Form I-765 requesting **permission to accept employment**
  - STEM Extension Eligibility category: *(c) (3) (C)*
  - U.S. Mailing Address: see the guidelines below
  - For additional tips, please refer to: [ISS Guidance for USCIS Form I-765: STEM OPT](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765instr.pdf)

- Photocopy of your new I-20 with OPT STEM Extension recommendation on page 2.

- Photocopies of any I-20s for CPT, OPT or another employment authorization at current degree level (excluding on campus employment).

- Printout of most recent I-94 ([www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94)) or photocopy of front/back of I-94 card in passport.

- Photocopies of passport identity and expiry pages, current F-1 visa stamp, and front/back of any previous EAD cards.

- Official or unofficial transcript showing your earned STEM degree.

Photocopy all your application materials before you send. Request a **tracking number** when you mail it.

Revised 4/22/2021
STEM OPT Extension Application Instructions

Mailing Address on Form I-765

Use a U.S. address on the I-765 where you can receive mail for around six months from your application submission. U.S. Postal Service will not forward your USCIS mail.

If you move while your application is pending, you must update your address with USCIS: https://www.uscis.gov/addresschange.

Update your addresses (U.S. home and foreign) with ISS with the STEM Extension Reporting Form.

Secure Delivery of EAD card: USCIS will require applicants to present ID and sign a delivery confirmation with the U.S. Postal Service.

If you need, use one of these options to ensure the delivery of your EAD:
- Authorize someone you trust to sign for your EAD by completing the Postal Service’s PS Form 3801, Standing Delivery Order or PS Form 3801-A, Agreement by a Hotel, Apartment House, or the Like.
- Sign up for USPS Informed Delivery to receive delivery status notifications.
- Request that the U.S. Postal Service hold your EAD card for pick-up.
- Select your delivery options and access USPS forms at www.usps.gov or at your local U.S. Post Office


Where to file your I-765 application package

Source: “Direct Filing Addresses for Form I-765” https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses

Tracking your Application with USCIS
You should receive the Form I-797C receipt notice 3-8 weeks from the date USCIS receives your application.

If you submit Form G-1145, you should receive electronic notification of your case status 10-14 days from the date USCIS receives your application.

Track your application using your receipt number at www.uscis.gov under “Check Case Status.”

Note: USCIS adjudicating officers are not required to update the status of applications, so the information may not be accurate. If you have received a receipt notice, your application is being processed. USCIS processing may take 2-5 months. Check USCIS processing times at www.uscis.gov.
STEM OPT Extension Application Instructions

Keep your I-797C receipt notice.
If you timely filed your STEM application with USCIS, you can stay and work in the U.S. up to 180 days beyond the expiry date of your post-completion EAD card while your STEM application is pending. You will need to show to your employer the following: your Form I-797C, your expired post-completion EAD card, and your I-20 for OPT STEM Extension.

International Travel

Travelling while an application is pending with USCIS is risky and not recommended. You must have a valid EAD card to re-enter the U.S. If your priority is to work in the U.S., you should not travel without a valid OPT STEM Extension EAD card. Re-entry is solely at the discretion of U.S. Customs & Border Protection.

You will need a minimum of the following documents to re-enter the U.S.:
- Passport valid for 6 months into the future
- Valid F-1 visa stamp
- I-20 with travel endorsement signed within last 6 months
- Valid EAD card
- RECOMMENDED: Proof of employment (i.e. letter from employer, pay stubs, etc.). Proof of employment is required if applying for an F-1 visa.