

## 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
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### 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**.
  - o Verify the current USCIS form I-765 filing fee: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
  - o To pay by credit card, use Form G-1450 Authorization for Credit Card Transaction (PDF): <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
  - o No eyeglasses except if required by recent surgery or headwear except if required by your religious order
  - o Write your full name and I-94 number on the back of each photo in pencil.
  - o Verify the photo specifications: <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**
  - o STEM Extension Eligibility category: **(c) (3) (C)**
  - o U.S. Mailing Address: see the [guidelines](#) below
  - o For additional tips, please refer to: [ISS Guidance for USCIS Form I-765: STEM OPT](#).
- 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.

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## 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](http://www.usps.gov) or at your local U.S. Post Office

Source: <https://www.uscis.gov/news/news-releases/uscis-begin-using-more-secure-mail-delivery-service> (April 27, 2018)

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## Where to file your I-765 application package

Source: "Direct Filing Addresses for Form I-765" <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses>

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## 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](http://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](http://www.uscis.gov).

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### **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.