

**KENTUCKY STATE
UNIVERSITY**

I N A L L T H I N G S E X C E L L E N C E

OPT Handbook for KSU F-1 Students

Office of Global Strategies and International Affairs

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Optional Practical Training (OPT) is temporary employment authorization that is directly related to an F-1 student's major area of study. Eligible students can apply to receive up to 12 months of OPT employment authorization before completing their academic studies (pre-completion) and/or after completing their academic studies (post-completion). However, all periods of pre-completion OPT will be deducted from the available period of post-completion OPT.

Types of OPT

All OPT must be directly related to your major area of study. If you are an F-1 student, you may be eligible to participate in OPT in two different ways:

- **Pre-completion OPT:** You may apply to participate in pre-completion OPT after you have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year at a college, university, conservatory, or seminary that has been certified by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to enroll F-1 students. You do not need to have had F-1 status for the one full academic year; you can satisfy the "one full academic year" requirement even if you had another nonimmigrant status during that time.

If you are authorized to participate in pre-completion OPT, you may work part time (20 hours or less per week) while school is in session. You may work full time when school is not in session.

- **Post-completion OPT:** You may apply to participate in post-completion OPT after completing your studies. If you are authorized for post-completion OPT, you may work part time (20 hours or less per week) or full time.

If you participated in pre-completion OPT, USCIS will deduct that amount of time from your post-completion OPT authorization period. For example, if you participated in 10 months of pre-completion OPT, you would be eligible for only up to 2 months of post-completion OPT.

- **STEM OPT Extension:** If you have earned a degree in certain science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, you may apply for a 24-month extension of your post-completion OPT employment authorization if you:

- ✓ Are currently participating in a regular period of OPT (Received an initial grant of post-completion OPT employment authorization based on your STEM degree)
- ✓ Are an F-1 student who received a STEM degree included on the [STEM Designated Degree Program List \(PDF\)](#),
- ✓ Are employed by an employer who is enrolled in and is using E-Verify
- ✓ Have completed and signed the Form I-983, “Training Plan for STEM OPT Students.”
- ✓ For more information about the specific eligibility requirements for the 24-month STEM OPT extension, please visit the [STEM OPT Hub on Study in the States](#).
- ✓ If you are interested in applying for a STEM OPT extension, please see USCIS [Optional Practical Training Extension for STEM Students \(STEM OPT\)](#) page for more information.

Note: You may continue to work on your expired EAD for OPT up to 180 days while your 24-month extension petition is pending if you meet the following conditions:

- You are currently in a period of post-completion OPT.
- You properly and in a timely manner filed your application for the 24-month extension with USCIS.

Eligibility and When to Apply

Authorization for OPT is granted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service and can take at least 90 days to obtain. You may apply up to 90 days before your program end date listed on your I-20 or within your 60-day grace period. Please note, the later you apply the more likely it is you will lose OPT work time. OPT has to be completed within 14 months of your program end date.

Eligibility Requirements, to be eligible to apply for OPT, you must:

- Have been in full-time student status for at least one full academic year.
- Maintain a valid F-1 status at the time of the application.
- Intend to work in a position directly related to your major field of study.
- Students enrolled in English language training programs are not eligible for OPT.

You must:

- Request that your designated school official (DSO) recommend the OPT. Your DSO will make the recommendation by endorsing your Form I-20, Certification of Eligibility for

Nonimmigrant Student Status, and making the appropriate notation in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

- Properly file Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization with USCIS, accompanied by the required fee and the supporting documentation as described in the form instructions.

REMEMBER, you must file the application 30 days after your DSO entering recommendation in SEVIS.

Reporting Requirements

The U.S. government checks that students with OPT authorization are engaged in practical training experience (work/internships/unpaid professional experience).

Please report to your DSO any changes you have, e.g. employment and address change. If you do not report your practical training/employment, the U.S. government will terminate your F-1 SEVIS record **90 days after the OPT start date print on your EAD card**. A terminated SEVIS record cancels OPT authorization and requires you to leave the U.S.

STEM OPT Extension Reporting Requirements

Notify your DSO the following updates during your STEM Extension.

- **6-month STEM OPT Report:** If there have been no changes in employment, submit a 6-month STEM OPT Report to confirm your SEVIS information every 6 months.
- **I-983 Annual Evaluation:** Upload the First Self-Evaluation <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983.pdf> within twelve months.
- **I-983 Final Evaluation:** Upload the Final Self-Evaluation <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983.pdf> at the end of practical training.
- **Changes in Employment/Practical Training:** Report employment changes within 10 days.
- Upload I-983 Final Evaluation (old position) and new I-983 Training Plan (new position).
- **24-month STEM OPT:** Do not exceed 150 days of unemployment.
- **Address changes:** Report within 10 days of moving.

- **Change of immigration status**
- **Final departure from the U.S.** (if earlier than your STEM OPT end date)
- **Request a new Form I-20**

Limits on Periods of Unemployment

- You cannot exceed 90 days of unemployment between the start and end date of your post-completion OPT authorization (the dates on your EAD).
- If you exceed 90 days of unemployment, or if you fail to report your employment, the U.S. government will terminate your F-1 SEVIS record 90 days after your OPT start date. A terminated SEVIS record cancels OPT authorization and requires you to leave the U.S.
- If you received a 24-month STEM extension, you are allowed an additional 60 days of unemployment, for a total of 150 days.
- Each day (including weekends) that you do not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment. There is no grace period after 90/150 days of unemployment.
- To avoid violating status, Immigration recommends that prior to reaching the unemployment limit, you should prepare to transfer to another school, change education level, depart the U.S., or change to a different immigration status.

Employment Requirements

OPT authorizes employment/practical training that is related to your major area of study and commensurate with your level of education.

OPT does NOT authorize employment unrelated to your major area of study.

If you work in a job unrelated to your major area of study, or that does not meet the government's requirements for your type of OPT (12-month standard, 24-month STEM extension) you are in violation of your F-1 status. Immigration and Customs Enforcement can terminate a student's F-1 SEVIS record if a student works in a position unrelated to their studies. A terminated SEVIS record cancels OPT authorization and invalidates F-1 status in the U.S.

It is your responsibility to evaluate how a job relates to your major area of study. Your DSOs CANNOT review job descriptions to assess if they are related to your studies. However, your DSO will update your SEVIS record with the job information you provide.

During the Post Completion OPT Period

You should be employed at least 20 hours per week in activities directly related to your major. Regardless of your job title or how the position is classified, such as an “intern,” “temp,” “freelance contractor,” “post-doc,” etc., the following employment options are allowed:

- **Multiple employers:** you may work in your field of study for more than one employer.
- **Short-term multiple employers (performing artists):** musicians and other performing artists may work for multiple short-term employers (gigs). Keep a list of all positions, dates, and duration.
- **Work for hire:** contract employment in your field of study
- **Self-employment:** you may start a business and be self-employed in your field of study. You must have a business license and document your active engagement in business related to your degree.
- **Employment in your field of study through an agency or consulting firm.**
- **Volunteer service:** you may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern in your field of study, as long as this does not violate any labor laws.

During the 24-month STEM Extension

You must work at least 20 hours per week for an employer that a) participates in the E-Verify program and b) agrees to follow all the employer requirements in the 24-month STEM rule.

The government has new guidance about acceptable types of activity during the 24-month STEM Extension that is substantially different than the past guidance for the STEM Extension.

Multiple Employers

The Department of Homeland Security has commented that although working for multiple employers is not prohibited, each employer must employ the student for no less than 20 hours per week, and must fully comply with the requirements of the new 24-month STEM rule.

Start-Ups

The Department of Homeland Security has also commented that students may be employed by new start-up businesses as long as all regulatory requirements are met, including that the employer:

-
- a) adheres to the training plan requirements
 - b) remains in good standing with E-Verify
 - c) will provide compensation to the STEM OPT student commensurate to that provided to similarly situated U.S. workers
 - For instance, alternative compensation may be allowed during a STEM OPT extension as long as the F-1 student can show that he or she is a bona fide employee and that his or her compensation, including any ownership interest in the employer entity (such as stock options) is commensurate with the compensation provided to other similarly situated U.S. workers.
 - d) has the resources to comply with the proposed training plan.

Volunteer and Uncompensated Activity

The government has commented:

“DHS carefully considered whether to allow volunteer positions to qualify under the STEM OPT extension program but has decided against permitting such arrangements. ... Requiring commensurate compensation for F-1 students – which does not include no compensation – protects both international and domestic students and ensures that the qualifying STEM positions are substantive opportunities. . . .”

Taxes

You will need a Social Security Number (<https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/>) in order to receive payment from your employer.

In general, as an F-1 student you will be exempt from Social Security (FICA) taxes for your first five years in the U.S., as long as you continue to declare nonresident status for tax purposes. Unless you qualify under a tax treaty between the U.S. and your home government, your earnings as an F-1 student will be subject to applicable federal, state and local taxes, and employers are required to withhold those taxes from your paychecks.

You may work on own, or use a local certified preparer, or web-based programs or software such as Glacier Tax Prep, or TurboTax. If you still need help or need information regarding taxes, consult the Internal Revenue Service.

Proof of Employment

Keep documentation of your OPT employment history for your own records. You might need it for future benefits applications. The immigration regulations do not specify what documents are “proof of employment.” Examples of employment documentation could include:

- Offer letter from your employer
- Letter from your supervisor on official letterhead that confirms continued employment (or internship/volunteer service)

If the connection between your field of study and your employment/practical training is not obvious, it might be helpful for the letter to explain how your practical training relates to your studies.

- Payment records
- Timesheet/activity log for unpaid practical training experience

EAD Errors

What happens if your EAD card has incorrect information on it?

1. Wait to receive a job offer so you can show your EAD to your employer. The correction process may require you to mail the incorrect EAD to USCIS. Ideally, you should wait to request the correction after your employer has copied your EAD for hiring purposes.
2. To correct the EAD, submit a request through the USCIS website to correct a typographic error.

Travel and OPT

Students have many questions about whether or not it is okay to travel while OPT is processing and/or during the OPT period. Here are the rules about travel and OPT, depending on your situation.

1. During your final semester, after you submit your Post-Completion OPT application:

You can travel and reenter the U.S. as a student during your final registration semester. You will use the new I-20 with the OPT recommendation printed on page 2, along with the other regular travel document (<https://kysu.edu/international-affairs/current-students-2/current-students-travel->

plans-abroad/). If you plan to return to the U.S. **before** the expiration date of the new I-20 (your program completion date), it does not matter whether your OPT application is still processing or is approved, and whether or not you have a job offer yet.

2. After graduation, while your Post-Completion OPT application is processing:

After your final semester ends, you can travel and reenter the U.S. while your post-completion OPT application is processing, with or without a job offer. You must carry your OPT receipt notice from USCIS, your OPT I-20, and the other regular travel document (<https://kysu.edu/international-affairs/current-students-2/current-students-travel-plans-abroad/>). . **However, be aware of these risks:**

- USCIS sometimes sends a request to OPT applicants asking for more information or for you to correct a problem with your documentation. These requests are sent by postal mail, so it might be difficult for you to respond if you are not inside the U.S. It is your application, so KSU or Office of International Affairs does not have the authority to respond for you.
- After your OPT application is approved, you must also have proof of employment and your EAD in order to reenter the U.S. If the OPT application is approved while you are abroad, and if you do not yet have proof of employment or your EAD, this could jeopardize your return to the U.S.
- You must have a valid F-1 visa to travel during the OPT year (except for short trips to Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean). It is risky to apply for an F-1 visa while your OPT application is pending. If your current F-1 visa is expired, we recommend waiting until your OPT application is approved and you have a job offer before applying for a new F-1 visa.

3. After graduation, and after your Post-Completion OPT application is approved:

After graduation, if your post-completion OPT has been approved and your EAD issued, you can travel and reenter the U.S. **only if you have proof of employment.** If you are still looking for practical training opportunities, you should not travel internationally.

For travel, carry the following documents with you:

- OPT I-20 signed for travel by an international student adviser within the last **6 months**
- Proof of employment (see above) in your field of study (letter of employment, written job offer)

- EAD card (on the EAD card, there is a statement “Not Valid For Reentry.” This means the EAD card cannot be used by itself for reentry to the U.S.)
- Valid passport
- Unexpired F-1 visa

You can apply for an F-1 visa during your OPT year. Follow the regular procedures to apply for an F-1 visa (<https://kysu.edu/international-affairs/prospective-students-3/prospective-students-prepare-for-your-travel-entry-to-us/>) outside of the U.S. For the F-1 visa application, plan to provide the documents listed above, as well as proof of financial ability to stay in the U.S. and proof of continuing ties to your home country.

After the OPT approval start date, time spent outside the U.S. will count as unemployment against the 90-day limit. However, travel while employed either during a vacation authorized by an employer or as part of your employment will not count as unemployment. Please keep your primary DSO informed of any travel plans while on OPT that may affect your status.

If you have dependents in F-2 status who will travel without you, be sure they carry a photocopy of your EAD card and proof of your employment along with their updated F-2 I-20 that is properly signed for travel.

4. During your pending or approved STEM OPT extension period (if applicable):

If your STEM OPT extension application is already **approved**, the travel document requirements are the same as those required during the post-completion OPT period.

If your STEM OPT extension application is **pending** with USCIS, it is okay to travel internationally. This is true even if your post-completion OPT EAD is already expired.

The preamble to the 24-month STEM OPT rule [[81 FR 13103 par. 774](#)] states:

“Students on STEM OPT extensions (including those whose application for a STEM OPT extension is pending) may travel abroad and seek reentry to the United States in F-1 status during the STEM OPT extension period if they have a valid F-1 visa that permits multiple entries and a current Form I-20 Certificate of Eligibility endorsed for reentry by the DSO within the last six months. The student’s status is determined by CBP upon admission to the United States or through a USCIS adjudication of a change-of-status petition.”

It is also possible to apply for a new F-1 visa during this time. The Foreign Affairs Manual, which instructs U.S. Department of State officials regarding visa issuance, states at [9 FAM 402.5-5\(N\)\(6\)\(e\)](#)

“As the STEM OPT extension is automatic for the first 180 days following regular post-completion OPT (when the student has properly filed Form I-765), the student may not necessarily have a renewed EAD. Therefore, any students having automatically authorized employment through the OPT extension may not be able to present a valid EAD when they apply to renew their visa. However, F-1 students in this situation can request an updated I-20 from the DSO, annotated for the STEM OPT extension, as well as proof that the I-765 petition was filed in a timely manner. You must confirm that the student’s electronic SEVIS record contains the same information as the updated hard copy Form I-20 before issuing a visa.”

For reentry to the U.S. with a pending STEM OPT application, you should carry:

- STEM OPT I-20 signed by an KSU adviser (DSO) within the last **6 months**
- USCIS receipt notice for your STEM OPT application
- Proof of employment
- Valid passport
- Unexpired F-1 visa

You can apply for an F-1 visa while the STEM OPT application is pending (up to 180 days pending status). Follow the regular procedures to apply for an F-1 visa (<https://www.kysu.edu/academics/college-acs/school-of-ace/international/prospective-students-prepare-for-your-travel-entry-to-us.php>) outside of the U.S. For the F-1 visa application, plan to provide the documents listed above, as well as proof of financial ability to stay in the U.S. and proof of continuing ties to your home country.

Study While on OPT and Grace Period

Study While on OPT

Studying while on OPT is generally prohibited. Enrolling full-time, taking classes at a higher educational level, or taking courses at another institution will terminate your employment authorization, even if the dates on your EAD are still valid.

Government guidance states that *recreational* and *avocational* study is OK, but they do not define these terms.

We cannot verify if specific courses or programs fall under the category of “recreational and avocational” because there is not official written guidance.

We recommend caution about beginning any kind of professional formal training outside of the work place.

An experienced immigration attorney is a great resource for questions such as this that fall into the regulatory gray area.

Grace Period

Students who do not exceed 90/150 days of unemployment and report employment to the DSO as required are automatically granted a 60-day grace period after the end date listed on the EAD (Employment Authorization Document). Within this 60-day grace period, you have the following options:

- Depart the U.S. Once you leave the U.S. (including trips to Canada and Mexico) after completing your studies and OPT period, you are not eligible to reenter with your current I-20. The grace period is meant for travel within the states and preparation to depart the U.S.
- Request a new I-20 if you will continue at the KSU in a new degree program.
- Transfer your SEVIS record to a new school.
- Apply to change status to another visa category.

Travel Signature and Emergency Travel

Travel Signature

Make sure you have a valid travel signature from your DSO prior to returning to the U.S. after international travel!

- You must have a valid travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 to return to the U.S. after travel abroad.
- Each signature is valid for one year. (**F-1 students on OPT: the travel signature is valid for SIX months**).
- A travel signature is issued by your DSO to confirm you are maintaining your F-1 or J-1 student status.

- The travel signature is required for returning to the U.S. It is not required for leaving the U.S.
- If your current travel signature will expire before you will return to the U.S., you must request an updated travel signature.
- The travel signature is on page 2 of your I-20 or the front page of your DS-2019.

Emergency Travel

If it happens you have an emergency travel need and you are not able to reach out to a DSO, just go ahead and depart the U.S.

The travel signature is required for **returning** to the U.S. but not required at the time you **depart** the U.S. Then we can ship you a new document with the travel signature to you before you return to the U.S. Please be advised that you may be asked to pay the shipping fee.

However, if your travel plans do not allow enough time for us to mail you a new valid document, then you must either change your anticipated return date, or travel without a valid travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019.

If you choose to return without a valid travel signature on your I-20, the Customs and Border Protection officer at the U.S. Port of Entry will issue you an I-515 form. If not, please request Form I-515A at the immigration port of entry. This form would allow you temporary admission to the U.S. for 30 days. If you receive a Form I-515A, alert your DSO as soon as you arrive on campus. It is critically important you work with your DSO to address the Form I-515A within the 30 days given to you.

Please note that temporary admission with an I-515 is at the discretion of the CBP officer and cannot be guaranteed by KSU. On rare occasions you may be denied entry to the U.S., and you should be aware of this risk before travelling.

FAQs from the U.S. ICE (<https://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel#wcm-survey-target-id>). This link will take you to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement website of frequently asked travel questions

Step-by-Step Instruction on OPT Application

We strongly encourage you to apply online! See Page 46

Step I: Request your OPT I-20

If you are eligible for OPT, and ready to apply, please talk to your DSO and request OPT. Your DSO will enter your information and recommend in SEVIS. Your DSO will issue you a new I-20 with OPT recommendation. After receiving your OPT I-20, please carefully check on the information for accuracy. Pay more attention to Education Level, Program End Date, DSO Signature, Your Signature, and the new Travel Signature. Report immediately to your DSO if there are any errors.

Step II: Prepare your application materials

Required documents for OPT application

- All documents should be printed or copied single-sided
- U.S. Passport Photos (with name and I-94 number written lightly in pencil on back of each), taken within the past 30 days.
- USCIS Fee of \$410. Check, Money Order, or Credit Card payment made payable to: "U.S. Department of Homeland Security." Write your SEVIS ID in the memo line.
- Form G-1145 to confirm receipt and obtain case number in advance of paper notification: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf>
- Original form I-765: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
- Copy of OPT I-20 (pages 1-3) issued by your DSO within the past 30 days. Don't forget to sign it!
- Copy of currently valid passport biographical page and F-1 visa stamp, if applicable.
- Copy of expired passport biographical page if you used that document to enter the U.S. most recently.
- Printout of electronic I-94 record (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/>) or copy of paper Form I-94 (both sides).
- Copies of all previous CPT I-20s (from KSU and/or previous schools), if applicable.
- Copies of all previous OPT I-20s and EAD card(s) (from KSU and/or previous schools), if applicable.
- SPECIAL CASES (RARE): If your KSU OPT I-20 shows less than 1 academic year (2 semesters) of enrollment

- Readmitted/Transfer students – 1) Copies of I-20s from previous Transfer schools and 2) KSU Adviser Transfer I-20 Letter
- Change of Status students – 1) Copy of Change of Status Approval Notice and 2) Official KSU transcript and 3) KSU Adviser Change of Status letter 27

Gather the Required Documents

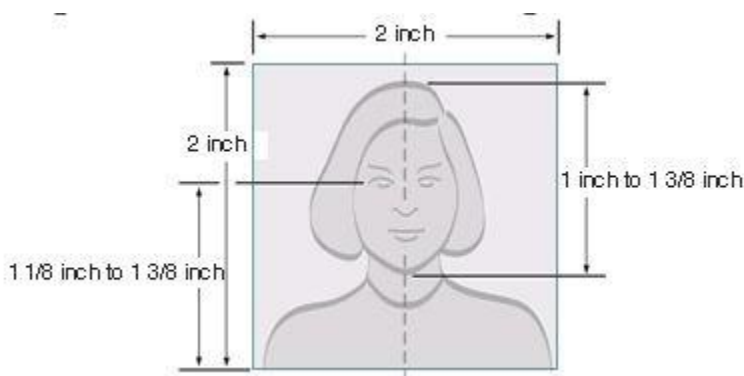
1. Passport Photo Requirements

The photos required to use for the OPT application must meet the specifications of U.S. style passport photos. To see a full description of these specifications, go to the U.S. Department of State website

(https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html/pptphotoreq/pptphotoreq_5333.html)

.Professional Photography USCIS has been examining passport photos more strictly. I recommend students have their photos taken professionally.

- Submit 2 identical color passport photos taken within 30 days of filing your application. The photos must have a white to off-white background, be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish, and be unmounted and unretouched. The passport-style photos must be 2” by 2”. You must remove your glasses and your head must be bare unless you are wearing headwear as required by a religious order of which you are a member.
- Using pencil or felt tip (soft) pen, lightly print your name and I-94 number on the back of the photo. Do not damage the photo surface by pressing hard while writing.



2. Check, Money Order, or Credit Card

- USCIS Payment Methods: Check/Money Order or Credit Card Payment for \$410.

- Check/Money Order should be made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" with SEVIS number in the memo line. Money orders can be purchased at banks, post office, and some local grocery stores such as Kroger. Make sure a name and address are printed on the check. If the address has changed, that is fine.
 - Do not use "temporary checks" often issued by the bank when opening a new account. These checks have no name or address in the upper left hand corner.
- For Credit Card payment, submit form G-1450 (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1450.pdf>) authorized payment amount \$410. You may only use a credit card account with a U.S. billing address—no foreign billing address is allowed. You can use cards with Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover. See Pay Your USCIS Fees with a Credit Card <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/pay-a-credit-card>
- MOST OPT DENIALS ARE DUE TO BAD PAYMENTS! IF YOU USE A CHECK OR CREDIT CARD MAKE SURE YOU MAINTAIN SUFFICIENT FUNDS IN THE ACCOUNT.

Credit Card, Personal Check, Cashier's Check, or Money Order:

- Money orders can be bought at many large grocery stores and places like the U.S. Post Office or Kroger.
- Usually you must have a checking account at a bank to either write a personal check or request a cashier's check.
- If you buy a money order or get a cashier's check from a bank, the amount of money written on the document is guaranteed to be available when USCIS processes your application.
- If you write a personal check, you could make a mistake and not have enough money in your checking account when USCIS processes your application fee. USCIS will reject your application!
- If using the Form G-1450, be sure to pay attention to detail as any error on the form will result in a processing delay or denial. Like with the personal check, make sure that you have enough money/ credit available in your account to cover the application fee.

SAMPLE personal check for OPT application



1027

Your Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____ **DO NOT ABBREVIATE** mm/dd/yyyy DATE

PAY TO THE ORDER OF U.S. Department of Homeland Security \$ 410.00

Four hundred ten and 00/100 DOLLARS

OPT Application, your SEVIS ID # _____ *Your signature*

1027

@22222222 @ 000 111 555 1027

3. Form G-1145

- Attach to the top of the OPT Application Packet
- Use this form to request text and email notification(s) regarding your application.
Download the form at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf>

WARNING! USCIS will rarely contact you by phone regarding the status of your OPT application. If you receive a phone call from a person claiming to work for USCIS or any other government agency, do not provide your personal information to them. Note the person's name, phone number, and email address, and contact your DSO before responding.

4. Form I-765

Download the I-765 form from the USCIS web site (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>) and review the I-765 instructions found there. Important: Use the most current version. It is best to download it just before mailing the application since USCIS updates it frequently.

Step III: Complete the Form I-765

These following directions are designed to help you complete the Form I-765 in order to apply for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). Please note that the following suggestions are not legal advice and provide a general overview of the most commonly misunderstood items—be sure to complete ALL relevant fields of the Form I-765. Be sure to use the most recent version of the Form I-765 by visiting the USCIS I-765 website (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>).

Important General Advice:

1) Type your I-765

- Typing is preferred. Typing helps prevent unclear handwriting from causing errors on your EAD and helps avoid mail delivery problems or delays. Use the fillable PDF I-765 on the USCIS website to type in your answers.
- If you can't type your form, clearly print answers in black ink.

2) Sign your I-765 in black ink

- Typed signatures are not acceptable. The government will reject and return I-765s that are not signed.
- Make sure that your signature fits within the box provided.

3) Answer all questions fully and accurately

- If a question does not apply to you, type or print "N/A" (short for 'Not Applicable') unless otherwise directed. If a question asks for a numerical response and does not apply to you, write "None".
- Include all pages of the Form I-765 along with your supplemental documents. The government will reject and return applications that do not include all 7 pages of the Form I-765.

4) If you need extra space, use Part 6. Additional Information (page 7 of Form I-765)

- Make sure to type or print your A-number (if any) at the top of the sheet.
- Use Part 6 to provide all previously used SEVIS numbers along with evidence of previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.
- Provide the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number to which your answer refers.
- Even if you do not need the extra space, include the blank page with the rest of your application materials.

5) Carefully prepare the I-765 fee (see also previous section)

- The government will reject and return OPT applications if there is not the exact amount of money available to pay the fee when the application arrives at the government center. Do

not send a check and plan to add money to your bank account later. Have 100% of the fee money ready when you mail your application to the government.

- The check or money order for the fee must be drawn from a bank or other financial institution located in the United States and must be payable in U.S. currency: Do not use a check or money order from a foreign bank with online U.S. accounts. This is most common for Canadian students with U.S. dollar Canadian bank accounts.
- Make the check or money order payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security. NOTE: Spell out U.S. Department of Homeland Security; do not use initials like “DHS”.
- Dates on a check or money order are critical! Write the current date on the check or money order; do not write a future date.
- Use the standard U.S. date style of Month Day Year (example: June 15, 2018).
- USCIS Form G-1450 (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1450.pdf>) allows you to send your credit card information in place of a check or money order.

I-765 Form Step-by-Step Walk Through

Part 1: Item 1: Reason for Applying

Applicants requesting authorization for standard 12-month post-completion OPT should select “1.a. Initial permission to accept employment”.

Part 2: Information About You:

Part 2: Item 1: Full Legal Name

Write your Family Name in CAPITAL letters. If you can’t fit your full name in the space, see Part 6: Additional Information for instructions. Please write your name exactly as it appears in the Surname/Family Name and Given Name fields on your I-20. Note your I-20 DOES NOT use the Middle Name field!

Part 2: Item 2-4: Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you have never used another name, write “N/A”

Page 2: Part 2: Item 5: U.S. Mailing Address

Important mail about your OPT application, including your official receipt and Employment Authorization Document (approval card), will be mailed to the address you write here. If your mail is sent to someone other than yourself, please include an “In Care of Name” as part of your mailing address.

This is very important! The address should be valid for at least 3-5 months, the length of time it will take to process the application. If you have plans to move during this time, use a reliable friend or family member’s address to receive the EAD (indicate this in #5.a.) It is also possible to use a P.O. Box for mailing addresses.

Warning! Government mail will not be forwarded to a new address by the U.S. Postal Service, even if you ask the U.S. Postal Service to forward your mail. The only way to change the address USCIS uses for your OPT-related mail is to submit an official change of address to USCIS using their website tool.

If you listed a mailing address in **Item 6** that is NOT your current physical living address, select “No” and complete #7.a-7.e. with your current physical address. If “Yes,” write “N/A” in #7.a-7.e. Physical address should reflect where you actually live.

Part 2: Item 8: Alien Registration Number (A-Number)

Only use this field if you have an A-number. It is likely that you will not have this number unless you have previously applied for OPT. Do not use your I-94 number in place of the A-Number. Instead, write “None”.

Part 2: Item 9: USCIS Online Account Number

F-1 students do not have a USCIS Online Account Number, write “None”.

Part 2: Item 10-11

The responses to these questions should be straightforward. Please complete them accurately.

Part 2: Item 12: Have you previously filed Form I-765

No: The most common answer for this question is “no”. Students with Curricular Practical Training (CPT) should answer “no”, because there is no EAD card for CPT employment. Students with on-campus jobs also answer “no.”

Yes: Check “yes” only if you have previously applied for an EAD card from USCIS. See the Instructions for Part 6 for more instructions.

Part 2: Items 13-17: related to the Social Security Number

Social Security Number (SSN) #13.a. Check “Yes” if you have been issued an SSN and enter your SSN with one letter in each box. #13.b. Skip this if you don’t already have an SSN. #14. Check “Yes” if you want a new or replacement SSN card and complete. #15-17.b. Check “No” if you do not want a new or replacement SS card. The responses to these questions are straightforward. Please complete them accurately

Part 2: Item 18: Countries of Citizenship,

List all as applicable (use Part 6 of the I-765 if needed) or write “N/A” in 18.b if you do not have multiple citizenships.

Part 2: Item 19-20: Place of Birth

List the name of the country as it was named when you were born, even if its name has changed.

Make sure your Date of Birth is in the correct format of MONTH - DAY - YEAR.
(01/15/2002 not 15/01/2002)

Part 2: Item 21: Information about Your Last Arrival

Use your current I-94 number. This is at the number found on the electronic I-94 record or on the top left corner of the paper Form I-94 card. I-94 numbers issued prior to May 2019 are 11 characters long and contain only numbers. Example: 01234567890. I-94 numbers starting in May 2019 have a format of 9 numbers, followed by a letter, then another number. Example: 012345678A1.

Passport Information: Enter the information directly from your passport. This passport should match the country on your I-20. In cases where you entered the U.S. on a passport that is now expired, enter the number of your expired passport. (You will provide information on the new passport on pg. 7 of the application.)

Travel Document: Write N/A here.

Part 2: Item 22: Date of Last Entry into the U.S.

Your most recent entry date can be found on your passport admission stamp, electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card.

Part 2: Item 23: Place of Last Arrival into the U.S.

Enter the Name of the Port of Entry city from your most recent entry. This information can be found on your passport admission stamp, travel history section of your electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card. If you drove across the border, write the name of the city where entered the U.S.

Part 2: Item 24-25: Status at Last Entry and Current Immigration Status

Most OPT applicants will write “F-1 Student” for items 24 and 25. If you have changed from a different immigration category to F-1 status by filing paperwork with the U.S. government, include a copy of your change of status Approval Notice.

Part 2: Item 26: Your SEVIS ID appears on the top left side of your I-20 and starts with N00...

Part 2: Item 27: Information about your Eligibility Category

Write the code **(c) (3) (B)** for eligibility category Post-Completion OPT. DO NOT USE a different code! Even if you have a STEM degree, you are applying NOW for your 12-Month Post-completion OPT, NOT the 24-Month STEM OPT Extension!

Part 2: Items 28–31: Further Questions about your Eligibility Category

Write “N/A” and/or “None” in response fields. These questions are NOT applicable to applying for your 12-month Post Completion OPT. Item 28 is for STEM OPT Extension applicants only.

Part 3: Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification and Signature:

Select 1.a. to indicate that you have read and understood the questions.

Write “N/A” in 1b and Item 2

Items 3-6: Provide your information as requested

Items 7.a.-7.b: Hand sign your name and provide the date of the signature.

NOTE: Your signature must be handwritten in black ink (not typed) and fit inside the box. Signatures that fit will be scanned and printed on your EAD card. If the signature is too big, your application could be delayed.

Part 4-5: Interpreter’s Contact Information, Certification and Signature

Complete all fields with “N/A”, unless an interpreter read and explained every question and instruction to you. This section is for those who use an interpreter or other paid preparer to complete the form.

Part 6: Additional Information

Complete this section only if:

- You do not have enough room to sufficiently answer any of the items contained in Parts 1-5
- You have been approved for CPT in the past
- You have been approved for OPT in the past
- You have used a different SEVIS ID in F-1 status in the U.S. (for example, you attended school for a while, left the U.S. to take a break from school, and returned with a new I-20, you would have a SEVIS ID from your first period of attendance that is different than your current SEVIS ID). Your SEVIS ID is on the top right corner of your I-20, and starts with N00...

If you need to complete this section because one or more of these apply to you, please complete Items 1 and 2 (if applicable). For each of the items listed above, complete **one** box in Part 6. We suggest using the following to complete the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number for any previous work authorization, as this information is required specific to Category (c)(3)(B) (per the I-765 instructions (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-765instr.pdf> page 4)).

Page 3, Part 2, Item 27

CPT: Please list your CPT approvals. We suggest this format: CPT Authorizations (as a title to the section). Employer; Start date – End date; Part-time or Full-time; Degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate). You can find your CPT details on the I-20 that was approved for each period of CPT.

OPT: Please list your past OPT approvals. We suggest this format: OPT Authorizations (as a title to the section). Start date – End date; Degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate). Make sure to also include a copy of any previously issued EADs.

Previous SEVIS IDs: Please list your other SEVIS IDs you have used in the past. We suggest this format: Previous SEVIS IDs (as a title to the section). SEVIS ID: N00...; program start date – program end date; Degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate). (Use **Page 3, Part 2, Item 26** to label your response in Part 6)

If you are using Part 6 to record any information that did not fit in the appropriate section in Parts 1-5, make sure to use the accurate locator. For example, if your family name does not fit in the box provided in Part 2, Item 1.a., in Part 6, you would complete a box as follows, in addition to writing your full, legal, family name.

3. a. Page Number	3.b. Part Number	3.c. Item Number
1	2	1a

You are done with the I-765. Include ALL pages of the Form I-765, even pages that do not apply to you, when you submit your application to USCIS for adjudication. Carefully, you must

- Review all the information on the form for accuracy. You must submit ALL 7 pages of the I-765.
- Make a copy of your completed I-765 application to keep for your records, in case there is a problem with the application.
- Next, gather the required documentation and copies...

Required Documentations to be Submitted (see Page 1)

1. Photocopy of KSU OPT I-20 (all pages):
 - Must be received by USCIS within 30 days of DATE ISSUED on page 1.
 - Original must be signed by your DSO before copying.
 - Original must be signed by the student at the bottom of page 1 before copying.
 - The requested OPT start and end dates will appear on page 2.
 - Do not mail the original I-20.
2. Photocopy of Passport and Visa:

-
- Photocopy the passport biographic page with the photo and passport expiration date. Use a valid passport even if it is not the passport you used to enter the US most recently. (You will provide information on the expired passport on pg. 7.)
 - Photocopy the F-1 visa, if applicable; visa does not need to be valid.
3. Photocopy of I-94 Information: The I-94 can be either:
- An electronic I-94 record. Visit: www.cbp.gov/i94 to access and print your record.
- OR
- A paper I-94 card stapled into your passport. Include a copy of both sides, even though the back side may be blank.
- OR
- A copy of an I-797 Change of Status Approval Notice which includes a new I-94
4. Photocopy of all previous OPT and CPT I-20s:
- Include copies of all previous CPT and OPT I-20s at KSU and previous schools.
 - Old and new versions of the I-20 are acceptable.
 - Copy **all 3 pages**.
 - Keep the originals for your records.
 - Copies of original I-20s are best, but you may need to request copies of any lost CPT/OPT I-20s.
 - KSU I-20s: request these from DSO when you turn in your OPT Request.
 - Previous School I-20s: contact them directly
 - If you have never used CPT or OPT in the past, you do not need to include previous I-20s.
 -
5. Photocopy of Previous EAD(s), if applicable:
- If an EAD was received in the past, include a copy of the front and back of the card.
 - Can be from OPT approved at a prior institution or different education level.
 - Include previous OPT I-20s and I-797 notice of approval as well if available.

FINANL Steps: Mail your application to USCIS:

Be sure to check all documents for completeness and accuracy.

- Refer to I-765 Instructions.
- Be sure to sign Forms I-20 and I-765.
- Keep a complete copy of your application for your records.
- We do not maintain copies of your OPT applications.
- All documents should be single-sided. Do not use staples.
- Keep a copy of your express mail receipt and money order receipt, if applicable.
- Mail completed application to the USCIS office that has jurisdiction over the address listed on your Form I-765 (see below):

Note: Your OPT application must arrive at USCIS within 30 days of I-20 issuance.

Always check the USCIS website to make sure of the correct filling address. Sometimes USCIS change the address without notice.

U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS
PO Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680

FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

I-797C Notice of Action: You should receive the notice by mail within 2-4 weeks after mailing the OPT application to USCIS.

- The I-797C is very important. If you lose the receipt, it may be very difficult to replace it.
- The I-797C is necessary if you want to:
 - inquire about the status of your OPT application.
 - travel outside the U.S. while your OPT is pending.

Receipt Number: The case number for the OPT application at USCIS. Check the status of the case on the USCIS web site at <https://www.uscis.gov>.

Received Date: Date when USCIS begins processing the application. (It may not be the actual the application was received, but it is when the case was entered into the system.)

Address Information: Verify your name, date of birth, and address on the I-765 receipt notice. If incorrect, contact your DSO immediately.

Contacting USCIS If you have any problems or questions with the OPT application, contact your KSU advisor (DSO) before calling the USCIS Customer Service

WHEN RECEIVED

- Review your EAD card to make sure the information is accurate. If it is not, contact your DSO immediately!
- Present your EAD to employers as proof of your legal work authorization in the US.
- The EAD is a required document for entry to the U.S. during OPT.
- You can ONLY work during the dates listed on the approved EAD card- not before and not after!
- Send a copy of your EAD card to your DSO

EAD Errors: What happens if your EAD card has incorrect information on it?

- Wait to receive a job offer so you can show your EAD to your employer. The correction process may require you to mail the incorrect EAD to USCIS. Ideally, you should wait to request the correction after your employer has copied your EAD for hiring purposes.
- To correct the EAD, submit a request through the USCIS website to correct a typographic error.

Track Your Case

Sign up for an account at <https://www.uscis.gov>. This will allow you to receive automatic updates and monitor your case. Click “Check Your Case Status” and then select “Sign Up.”

General Case Tracking: If you don’t sign up for an account, you can still track your case using the “Check Your Case Status” Tool.

Address Changes: If your address changes, you can update it online through the “Change of Address” tool. Keep in mind that address changes can take 10 business days to process, and could jeopardize your OPT EAD delivery. We recommend keeping the same address for your entire OPT processing, if possible.

USCIS Issues: Case Inquiries & Expedites

Case Inquiries & Processing times: You can submit inquiries and requests about your case using the Case Inquiry tool for these issues <https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do>:

- If you don't receive your receipt notice, EAD or other notifications
- If your case is pending longer than the normal processing time. See current USCIS processing times for Form “I-765” for “Potomac Service Center” here: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/i765>
- If there is an error on your receipt notice or EAD card

Deal with Application Problems: RFE and Rejection

Application Problems: **RFE and Rejection/Denial** If there is a problem with your application, the USCIS may send you a notice by mail called a “Request for Evidence (RFE).” An RFE does not mean that your application has been rejected. It simply means that you need to send in additional documents before your EAD can be issued.

- **Getting an RFE will delay the processing of your application.**

Rejection/Denial: In some cases, the USCIS will return the entire application to you. If this happens, you must make corrections and send a new application before the end date of your 60-day grace period.

Contact your DSO immediately if you receive an RFE, rejection, or denial. Notify your DSO that your OPT has been rejected or denied! You **MUST** request a NEW OPT I-20 recommendation from your DSO before you resubmit your OPT application. USCIS must receive your new, complete OPT re-application no later than 30 days after the OPT I-20 ISSUE DATE on page 1 of the I-20.

Good Luck!

STEM OPT Extension: How to Apply

Contents:

- Eligibility
- When to Apply
- Employment Requirements During the 24-month STEM Extension
- Step-by-Step How to Apply
 - Step-by-Step Walk-through Completing the I-983 Training Plan
 - Step-by-Step Walk-through Form I-765
- Employer Noncompliance
- Frequently Asked Questions

The STEM OPT extension allows some students with science, technology, engineering, or math degrees to apply to extend their post-completion OPT authorization. Students with STEM degrees and currently in their 12-month OPT period should review the eligibility requirements, application timeline, and instructions below.

Eligibility

To qualify for the 24-month STEM OPT extension, you must:

- **Be in F-1 status**
- **Be currently working in a period of post-completion OPT**
- **Have a bachelor's degree or higher degree in an eligible STEM field**
(<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension>)
 - You *may* be eligible to use a prior STEM degree earned in the U.S. for this requirement; to use a prior STEM degree, you must:
 - ✓ Have received your most recent degree (which does not need to be STEM-related) from a currently accredited Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified school in the U.S.
 - ✓ Have received your prior, qualifying STEM degree in the U.S. within 10 years of applying for the STEM OPT extension.
 - ✓ The qualifying STEM degree must be on the Department of Homeland Security's STEM Designated Degree Program list

(<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf>) at the time you submit your STEM OPT extension application (rather than at the time you received the degree).

- **Have a paid job offer that meets the following requirements:**
 - The job is with an employer enrolled in the USCIS E-Verify (<https://www.e-verify.gov>) program. Double-check with your employer to see if they are enrolled in E-Verify; sometimes the USCIS E-Verify database is not correct. (Kentucky State University participates in the E-Verify program. The KSU E-Verify ID number is 1352056.)
 - The job offers at least 20 hours of work per week
 - The job will provide formal training and learning objectives directly related to your qualifying STEM degree

- **Be able to complete the I-983 Training Plan (<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview>) with your employer**

Employment Requirements During the 24-month STEM OPT Extension

You must work at least 20 hours per week for an employer that a) participates in the E-Verify program and b) agrees to follow all the employer requirements in the 24-month STEM rule.

Unlike the 12-month OPT, volunteer/unpaid work or self-employment is not permitted under the 24-month STEM OPT Extension regulation.

Please review the new guidance about acceptable types of activity during the 24-month STEM OPT Extension <https://www.kysu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Employment-Requirements.pdf> that is substantially different than the 12 month OPT and past guidance for the STEM Extension.

When to Apply

- USCIS must receive your STEM OPT extension application before your current 12-month OPT EAD card expiration date.
- Apply as early as 90 days before your current 12-month OPT EAD card expiration date.
- Take into consideration:

- Contact your DSO early. It may take your DSO some more time to process your new I-20 due to tight schedules.
- Allow sufficient time to mail your application to USCIS.

Step-by-Step How to Apply

STEP 1: Confirm your 12-month OPT information is correct

Is your 12-month OPT information up-to-date? Check the SEVP Portal (<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevp-portal-help>). Your DSO must ensure the 12-month OPT information in your SEVIS record is accurate and updated before processing your STEM OPT I-20 request.

STEP 2: Contact your DSO and gather & Complete the following documents (Gather and complete the following documents)

- I-983 Training Plan (<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/form-i-983-overview>) (see our walk through guidance on Completing Form I-983 in the next Step)
- Completed I-765 Form (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>)
 - It is okay to leave the E-Verify field blank in the I-765 Form in this situation. Your DSO maintains a list of employers who do not share the E-Verify number with university officials because the employers will submit the OPT extension application on behalf of their employees. If your employer is not on the list, your DSO might contact you to ask for a confirmation letter from your employer that states their policy.
 - For help completing the Form I-765, please see the Step-by-Step Instruction on Form I-765 for STEM OPT Extension

Your DSO will review your documents and issue a new, updated I-20 with a STEM OPT Extension recommendation printed on the back page.

STEP 3: I-983 Training Plan Walk through for STEM OPT Extension

Your DSO needs to review your completed I-983 training plan before issuing you a 24 Month STEM OPT I-20. STEM OPT students and their employers are subject to the terms of the Form I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT Students, effective as of the start date requested for STEM OPT on the Form I-983. The I-983 Training Plan is intended to ensure educational benefits for F-1 students in their practical training experiences. You and your employer must complete and sign Form I-983. KSU OIA cannot provide advice to employers about the I-983 Training Plan requirements. However, the formal 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. When completing the I-983 Training Plan with your employer, please remember that you are an F-1 Student sponsored by KSU not a worker. So, focus more on how you want to learn and how training with your employer will benefit you and your education.

The information below is to assist students and their employers to properly complete the Form I-983. You can also review the [I-983 Training Plan instructions](#) provided by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP).

Section I: Student Information (completed by the student)

- **Student Name:** Enter your full name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name) exactly as it appears on your passport, on your I-20 and SEVIS record
- **Student Email Address:** Enter current email address
- **Name of School Recommending STEM OPT:** Enter Kentucky State University
- **Name of School Where STEM Degree Was Earned:** Enter Kentucky State University (if you are filing based on a non-KSU degree, you must meet with an KSU DSO prior to completing this form)
- **SEVIS School Code of School Recommending STEM OPT:** Kentucky State University's F-1 School Code is NOL214F10724000
- **DSO Name and Contact Information:** Enter the name and contact information of your DSO. Use the name of your DSO listed in the "School Information" box of your current I-20, and the following contact information. Dr. Wenzhong Yang, 105/109 Cooperative Extension Building, Kentucky State University, Frankfort KY 40601, eric.yang@kysu.edu, 502-597-6327
- **Student SEVIS ID Number:** Enter your SEVIS identification (ID) number (see "SEVIS ID" at top of Form I20, beginning with N)

- **STEM OPT Requested Period:** The duration of your STEM OPT extension is based exclusively on your current OPT end date, regardless of whether the authorized dates match actual training dates.
- **Qualifying Major and CIP Code:** Enter your major name as it appears on your diploma and then your CIP code.
 - If you have a Form I-20 issued in 2015 or later, the CIP code can be found in the “Program of Study” section on page 1. The CIP code is a six-digit code (XX.XXXX) following the major.
 - If you are basing your STEM on a prior degree and have a Form I-20 issued prior to 2015, you can find your CIP Code (XX.XXXX) at the top of page 3, preceding the specific major.
- **Level of Qualifying Degree:** enter your qualifying degree type upon which you are basing STEM OPT (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Ph. D)
- **Date Awarded:** Enter the date from your diploma. Or you can log in to your WEIRD account. Find “Unofficial Transcript.” Scroll to the bottom of the transcript, and you will see what date your KSU degree was earned.
- **Based on Prior Degree?** Select No. If you are filing based on a non-KSU degree, you must meet with a KSU DSO prior to completing this form.
- **Employment Authorization Number:** This is the USCIS# on your Employment Authorization Document (EAD card). The SEVP Training Plan slides reference the “A” number. However, EADs issued after October 24, 2011 do not have the “A” prefix before this number. Enter your 9-digit USCIS Number (XXX-XXX-XXX) found on your EAD card, but NOT your Card Number (WAC-XX-XXX-XXXX)

Section II: Student Certification (completed by the student)

Please review this section carefully, sign and date it before you submit it to your DSO. Scanned copies of original signatures or verified electronic signatures could be accepted.

Section 3: Employer Information (Completed by the Employer)

- **Employer Name:** Must be the full legal name of the employer or the company. If at KSU, Enter Kentucky State University – better with specific department. For example, Kentucky State University – College of Agriculture, Communities, and the Environment.
- **Street Address, Suite, City, State, Zip Code:** Must be the employer or the company's mailing address. If at KSU, Enter 400 E. Main Street, Frankfort, KY 40601
- **Employer Website URL:** if available. If at KSU, Better Enter specific department or lab website link. For example: <https://kysu.edu/academics/cafsss/>, If no website, list N/A
- **Employer ID Number (EIN):** Enter the employer’s EIN. If at KSU, Enter Kentucky State University’s EIN: 61-1099712

- **Number of Full-Time Employees in the United States:** Provide the employer's number of full-time employees in the United States. If at KSU, Enter Kentucky State University's total number of employees as 500 (confirm with HR as the number may change each year).
- **North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code:** This code is used by federal statistical agencies to classify business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. If at KSU, Enter Kentucky State University's NAICS code: 611310.
- **OPT Training Hours Per Week:** Enter the agreed-upon number of average working hours per week. In order to qualify for STEM OPT, the student must work a minimum of 20 hours per week for each job.
- **Start Date of Employment:** Enter the date when the student will begin STEM OPT with the employer.
- **Compensation:** Enter the dollar amount of salary, stipend, and/or other compensation, and the frequency of pay (per hour, per week, bi-weekly, monthly).
- **Other compensation** may include housing, tuition waivers, transportation costs, etc.

Note: The terms and conditions of a STEM practical training opportunity (including duties, hours, and compensation) must be commensurate with those applicable to similarly situated U.S. workers, except that a STEM OPT participant must work at least 20 hours per week while employed.

Section 4: Employer Certification (Completed by the Employer)

This section should be reviewed carefully and completed by the employer. The Employer Official with Signatory Authority, who is an appropriate individual in the employer's organization, who is familiar with the student's goals and performance, and who is an employee who has signatory authority for the employer should review the certification and affirm the statement by signature.

Employer = Kentucky State University

If you are employed by Kentucky State University, the Chair or Dean of your hiring department, or PI or faculty supervisor, should sign as the Employer Official with Signatory Authority.

Employer = non-KSU

If you are working for an employer other than Kentucky State University, your employer will need to determine who can sign this section.

Please review this section carefully, sign and date it before you submit it to your DSO. Scanned copies of original signatures or verified electronic signatures could be accepted.

Section 5: Training Plan for STEM OPT Students (completed by student and employer)

In order to better ensure the academic benefit and integrity of the extension, Federal regulations require each STEM OPT student to prepare and execute with his or her prospective employer a formal training plan that identifies learning objectives and a plan for achieving those objectives. The STEM OPT student and his or her employer must work together to finalize the plan.

- **Student Name:** Enter student's full name (Surname/Primary Name, Given Name) exactly as it appears on the student's SEVIS-issued Form I-20.
- **Employer Name:** Enter the employer's name, as it appears in "Section 3: Employer Information."
- **Site Name:** Enter the employer's site name, which may be the same as employer name in Section 3. However, if the student is working for a branch or subsidiary of a large entity, or anywhere other than the headquarters, provide the name of this work site. If working at KSU, Enter Kentucky State University – better with specific department. For example, Kentucky State University – College of Agriculture, Communities, and the Environment.
- **Site Address:** Enter the exact address of the work site where the STEM OPT will take place.
- **Name of Official:** Enter the name of the appropriate individual in the employer's organization who is familiar with, and will monitor, the student's goals and performance. This may or may not be the same Employer Official as in Section 4.

If at KSU, you can enter the name of the Dean, or Chair, or Principal Investigator (P.I.) or Faculty Supervisor who signed the Employer Certification.

- **Official's Title:** Enter the title of the appropriate individual in the employer's organization who is familiar with, and will monitor, the student's goals and performance

If at KSU, Enter Dean or Department Chair, the KSU title of the Principal Investigator (P.I.) or Faculty Supervisor

- **Official's Email:** Enter the email address of the appropriate individual in the employer's organization who is familiar with, and will monitor, the student's goals and performance.

If at KSU, enter the email address of the Dean or Department Chair, or Principal Investigator (P.I.) or Faculty Supervisor

- **Official's Phone Number:** Enter the phone number of the appropriate individual in the employer's organization who is familiar with, and will monitor, the student's goals and performance.

If at KSU, enter the phone number of the Dean or Department Chair, or the Principal Investigator (P.I.) or Faculty Supervisor

- **Student Role:** This section should be completed by the employer in consultation with the student. Describe what tasks and assignments the student will carry out during the training and how these relate to the student's STEM degree. The plan must cover a specific span of time, and detail specific goals and objectives.
- **Goals and Objectives:** This section should be completed by the employer in consultation with the student. 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.
- **Employer Oversight:** This section should be completed by the employer in consultation with the student. 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 the question.
- **Measures and Assessments:** This section should be completed by the employer in consultation with the student. 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 measures and assessments, a description of this program or policy may suffice to answer the question.
- **Additional Remarks:** Use this section to provide any additional information about the training plans

Section 6: Employer Official Certification

Certification of Official with Signatory Authority: Note: The individual who signs this Certification need not be, but can be, the same individual who signed the Employer Certification in Section 4. An employee with signatory authority for the employer should review the certification and affirm the statement by signature. On the material change certification (#4),

please note that material changes in the plan can include (but are not limited to) the following: any change of Employer Identification Number resulting from a corporate restructuring, any reduction in compensation from the amount previously submitted on the Form I-983, “Training Plan for STEM OPT Students,” that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked, any significant decrease in hours per week that a student engages in a STEM training opportunity, and any decrease in hours below the 20-hours-per-week minimum required under this rule.

Please review this section carefully, sign and date it before you submit it to your DSO. Scanned copies of original signatures or verified electronic signatures could be accepted.

If you are employed by Kentucky State University, the Chair or Dean of your hiring department, or PI or faculty supervisor, should sign as the Employer Official with Signatory Authority. However, you’d better confirm with your supervisor on who has the signatory authority.

Evaluation(s) on Student Progress

This page can be left blank when you submit your I-983 Training Plan to DSO to request your STEM OPT extension I-20. However, you must complete these evaluations annually during your STEM OPT extension period. In other word, this section must be completed at the 12 and 24 month points of the STEM OPT Extension. So, be sure to mark your calendar now.

STEP 4: I-765 Walk through for STEM OPT Extension

Overview

These directions are designed to help you complete the Form I-765 in order to apply for the STEM OPT Extension. Please note that the following suggestions are not legal advice and provide a general overview of the most commonly misunderstood items—be sure to complete ALL relevant fields of the Form I-765. Be sure to use the most recent version of the Form I-765 by visiting the USCIS I-765 website.

Important General Advice:

1) Type your I-765

- Typing is preferred. Typing helps prevent unclear handwriting from causing errors on your EAD and helps avoid mail delivery problems or delays. Use the fillable PDF I-765 on the USCIS website to type in your answers.

- If you can't type your form, clearly print answers in black ink.

2) Sign your I-765 in black ink

- Typed signatures are not acceptable. The government will reject and return I-765s that are not signed.
- Make sure that your signature fits within the box provided.

3) Answer all questions fully and accurately

- If a question does not apply to you, type or print "NA" (short for 'Not Applicable') unless otherwise directed. If a question asks for a numerical response and does not apply to you, write "None".
- Include all pages of the Form I-765 along with your supplemental documents. The government will reject and return applications that do not include all 7 pages of the Form I-765.

4) If you need extra space, use Part 6. Additional Information (page 7 of Form I-765)

- Make sure to type or print your A-number (if any) at the top of the sheet.
- Use Part 6 to provide all previously used SEVIS numbers along with evidence of previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.
- Provide the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number to which your answer refers.
- Even if you do not need the extra space, include the blank page with the rest of your application materials.

5) Carefully prepare the I-765 fee

- The government will reject and return OPT applications if there is not the exact amount of money available to pay the fee when the application arrives at the government center. Do not send a check and plan to add money to your bank account later. Have 100% of the fee money ready when you mail your application to the government.
- The check or money order for the fee must be drawn from a bank or other financial institution located in the United States and must be payable in U.S. currency:
 - Do not use a check or money order from a foreign bank with online U.S. accounts. This is most common for Canadian students with U.S. dollar Canadian bank accounts.

- Make the check or money order payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
NOTE: Spell out U.S. Department of Homeland Security; do not use initials like “DHS”.
- Dates on a check or money order are critical! Write the current date on the check or money order; do not write a future date.
- Use the standard U.S. date style of Month Day Year (example: May 20, 2021).
- USCIS Form G-1450 allows you to send your credit card information in place of a check or money order

Credit Card, Personal Check, Cashier’s Check, or Money Order:

- Money orders can be bought at many large grocery stores and places like the U.S. Post Office or Kroger.
- Usually you must have a checking account at a bank to either write a personal check or request a cashier’s check.
- If you buy a money order or get a cashier’s check from a bank, the amount of money written on the document is guaranteed to be available when USCIS processes your application.
- If you write a personal check, you could make a mistake and not have enough money in your checking account when USCIS processes your application fee. USCIS will reject your application!
- If using the Form G-1450, be sure to pay attention to detail as any error on the form will result in a processing delay or denial. Like with the personal check, make sure that you have enough money/ credit available in your account to cover the application fee.

SAMPLE personal check for OPT application

Your Name _____ 1027
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____ DO NOT ABBREVIATE mm/dd/yyyy DATE
PAY TO THE ORDER OF U.S. Department of Homeland Security \$ 410.00
Four hundred ten and 00/100 DOLLARS
FOR OPT Application Your signature
⑆22222222⑆ 000 555 1027

I-765 Form Walkthrough

Part 1: Item 1: Reason for Applying

Applicants requesting authorization for the STEM OPT Extension should select “1.c. Renewal of my permission to accept employment”.

Part 2: Information About You:

Part 2: Item 1: Full Legal Name

- Write your Family Name in CAPITAL letters.
- If you can't fit your full name in the space, see Part 6: Additional Information for instructions.

Part 2: Item 2-4: Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you have never used another name, write “N/A”

Page 2: Part 2: Item 5: U.S. Mailing Address

Important mail about your OPT application, including your official receipt and Employment Authorization Document (approval card), will be mailed to the address you write here. If your mail is sent to someone other than yourself, please include an “In Care of Name” (part 2, item 5.a.—see screenshot below for example) as part of your mailing address.

Warning! Government mail will not be forwarded to a new address by the U.S. Postal Service, even if you ask the U.S. Postal Service to forward your mail. The only way to change the address USCIS uses for your OPT-related mail is to submit an official change of address to USCIS using their website tool.

Part 2: Item 8: Alien Registration Number (A-Number)

The A-number is printed on your EAD (labeled ‘USCIS number’).

Part 2: Item 12: Have you previously filed Form I-765

Yes: Check “yes” - all STEM OPT Extension applicants will have previously filed the I-765 when applying for their 12-month post-completion OPT. See the **Instructions for Part 6** for more instructions.

Part 2: Item 21a.: Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record Number

See our website for more instructions on how to retrieve your I-94 number:
<https://www.kysu.edu/academics/college-ac/school-of-ace/international/current-students.php>. In some cases, your most recent entry to the U.S. was after a short trip to Canada or Mexico, and there will not be updated trip information in your I-94 record or in your passport. This is standard, and you can have different information in Questions 16 & 17 from what appears on your I-94.

Part 2: Item 24-25: Status at Last Entry and Current Immigration Status

- Most OPT applicants will write “F-1 Student” for items 24 and 25.
- If you have changed from a different immigration category to F-1 status by filing paperwork with the U.S. government, include a copy of your change of status Approval Notice.

Part 2: Item 27: Information about your Eligibility Category

Write ‘c 3 C’ if you are applying to extend your post-completion OPT based on your qualifying STEM degree

Part 2: Items 28.a.,b.,c.: STEM OPT Eligibility Details

- a. Degree: write your degree level and major, for example: Bachelor’s in Biology.
- b. Provide your employer’s name as it is listed in E-Verify
- c. Employer’s E-Verify number—confirm this number with your employer; it is not public knowledge.

Part 2: Items 29–31: Further Questions about your Eligibility Category

These questions not apply to 'c 3 C' applicants—leave checkboxes blank, write “N/A” or “none” in response fields.

Part 3: Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification and Signature:

Part 3: Item 7.a.: Applicant’s Signature

Your signature must be handwritten in black ink (not typed) and fit inside the box. Signatures that fit will be scanned and printed on your EAD card. If the signature is too big, your application could be delayed.

Part 4: Interpreter’s Contact Information, Certification and Signature

Complete all fields with “N/A”, unless an interpreter read and explained every question and instruction to you.

Part 5: Contact Information, Declaration, and Signature of the Person Preparing this Application, if Other Than the Applicant

Complete all fields with “N/A”, unless another person completed this form on your behalf.

See the following page, **Instructions for Part 6**, for detailed instructions.

Reminder: Include ALL pages of the Form I-765, even pages that do not apply to you, when you submit your application to USCIS for adjudication.

Part 6: Additional Information

Part 6: Item 1-2: Additional Information

Complete this section only if:

- You do not have enough room to sufficiently answer any of the items contained in Parts 1-5
- You have been approved for CPT in the past
- You have been approved for OPT in the past
- You have used a different SEVIS ID in F-1 status in the U.S. (for example, you attended school for a while, left the U.S. to take a break from school, and returned with a new I-

20, you would have a SEVIS ID from your first period of attendance that is different than your current SEVIS ID). Your SEVIS ID is on the top right corner of your I-20, and starts with N00...

If you need to complete this section because one or more of these apply to you, please complete Items 1 and 2 (if applicable).

For each of the items listed above, complete one box in Part 6.

I suggest using the following to complete the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number for any previous work authorization, as this information is required specific to Category (c)(3)(C) (per the I-765 instructions, page 4 <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-765instr.pdf>): Page 3, Part 2, Item 27

CPT: Please list your CPT approvals. We suggest this format: **CPT Authorizations** (as a title to the section). Employer; Start date – End date; Part-time or Full-time; Degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate). You can find your CPT details on the I-20 that was approved for each period of CPT.

OPT: Please list your past OPT approvals. We suggest this format: **OPT Authorizations** (as a title to the section). Start date – End date; Degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate). Make sure to also include a copy of any previously issued EADs.

Previous SEVIS IDs: Please list your other SEVIS IDs you have used in the past. We suggest this format: Previous SEVIS IDs (as a title to the section). SEVIS ID: N00...; program start date – program end date; Degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate). (Use Page 3, Part 2, Item 26 to label your response in Part 6).

If you are using Part 6 to record any information that did not fit in the appropriate section in Parts 1-5, make sure to use the accurate locator. For example, if your family name does not fit in the box provided in Part 2, Item 1.a., in Part 6, you would complete a box as follows, in addition to writing your full, legal, family name.

3. a. Page Number

1

3.b. Part Number

2

3.c. Item Number

1a

STEP 5: Pick up Your New I-20 and Prepare Your Application

1. When you receive an email or phone call from your DSO (or any other agreement contact methods), go and pick up your new STEM OPT Extension endorsed I-20
 - Sign the new I-20 at the bottom of page 1.
 - Photocopy after signing; you will send the photocopy, not the original I-20

2. Gather the following documents
 - Copy of Form I-20 with your signature and STEM Extension endorsement by your DSO (must arrive at USCIS within 60 days of issuance)
 - Form I-765 (Be sure to include your employer's name as listed in E-Verify and E-Verify Company Identification Number or valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number)
 - Copy of your transcript
 - A copy of Form I-94 (which can be obtained at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>)
 - A copy of your current EAD card (front and back)
 - 2 passport-style photos. Lightly write your name and I-94 number on the back of each photo. (Review number 2. C on page 8 of the "Required Documentation" section of USCIS photo instructions <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html>.)
 - [Form I-765 filing fee](#) (extra \$85 biometric services fee is **not** required for OPT applications) paid by money order, personal check, cashier's check, or credit card using [Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions](#). If you pay by check, you must make your check payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
 - Completed [G-1145 Form](#) (optional; it signs you up for email/text message notification of your application's arrival at USCIS)
 - Note: the I-983 Training Plan does not need to be submitted to USCIS (unless USCIS requests a copy during STEM OPT extension processing). You should keep a copy of the plan for your own records, and your DSO also keeps a copy.
 - Also, USCIS I-765 filing instructions (both general and STEM OPT) do not require copies of previous I-20s, passport biographical page, nor F-1 visa page. You may include these copies if you want to, but they are not required.

FINAL Steps: Mail your application to USCIS:

Be sure to check all documents for completeness and accuracy.

- Refer to I-765 Instructions.
- Be sure to sign Forms I-20 and I-765.
- Keep a complete copy of your application for your records.
- We do not maintain copies of your OPT applications.
- All documents should be single-sided. Do not use staples.
- Keep a copy of your express mail receipt and money order receipt, if applicable.
- Mail completed application to the USCIS office that has jurisdiction over the address listed on your Form I-765 (see below):

Mail all documents listed in item 2 from STEP 5 to:

Note: Your STEM OPT application must arrive at USCIS within 60 days of I-20 issuance.

Always check the USCIS website to make sure of the correct filing address. Sometimes USCIS change the address without notice.

U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS
PO Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680

FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Prior to this change, such applications were filed either at the Phoenix or Dallas lockboxes, depending on where the student resided. These changes were made without advance notice, although on the afternoon of Friday, January 8, 2021 USCIS finally posted the following update on the [Form I-765 launch page](#):

"On Jan. 8, we adjusted the filing location for certain foreign students filing Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization. Please review our [Direct Filing Addresses for Form I-765](#) page to see where you should file your application."

Employer Noncompliance

If you believe your STEM OPT employer is not complying with the terms and conditions of the 24-month STEM OPT extension regulations, and the Form I-983 instructions, you may:

- Contact the Student and Exchange Visitor Program at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) by following the instructions found on [ICE.gov](https://ice.dhs.gov).
- Report violations through this [Homeland Security Investigations tip submission form](#)

Steps for Completing the I-765 Application Online

Contents:

General Information

Suggested Application Details

Post-Completion OPT, Category C3B

STEM Extension OPT, Category C3C

General Information

1. **Create your online USCIS account:** <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/>
2. **Gather the following documents:**
 - 1) Digital 2x2 color passport photo that meets USCIS specifications
 - 2) A scan of your passport photograph page
 - 3) A scan of the front and back of any previous EAD cards (if applicable)
 - 4) A scan of any previous I-20s with CPT or OPT information (if available)
 - 5) A digital copy of your I-20 with an OPT recommendation
 1. Must be issued within the last 30 days for post-completion OPT and within the last 60 days for STEM extension OPT. You MUST consult with your DSO to receive a new I-20 before filing for your OPT online.
 2. The I-20 must be signed by your DSO and by you. You can use a digital or handwritten signature.
 - 6) Your most recent form I-94.
 1. Your I-94 can be obtained <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>
 2. Select “Get Most Recent Form I-94”
 - 7) A credit card with which you can pay the filing fee

3. File the form online

The Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization

Suggested Application Details

I. Post-Completion OPT

Getting Started

- Basis of eligibility
 - ✓ Select C3B
- Reason for applying
 - ✓ Select Initial permission to accept employment
- Have you previously filed Form I-765?
 - ✓ Check No if you have not previously applied for work authorization with an I-765
 - ✓ Check Yes if you have previously filed an I-765 (provide evidence)
- Is someone assisting you with completing this application?
 - ✓ Check No

Your Information

- Your Name
 - ✓ What is your current legal name?
 - ✓ Have you used any other names since birth?
- Your contact information
 - ✓ How may we contact you?
 - Daytime telephone number
 - Email address
 - What is your current U.S. mailing address?
 - Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?
- Describe yourself
 - ✓ What is your gender?
 - ✓ What is your marital status?
- When and where you were born
 - ✓ What is your city, town or village of birth?
 - ✓ What is your state or province of birth?
 - ✓ What is your country of birth?

- ✓ What is your date of birth?
- Your immigration information
 - ✓ What is your country of citizenship or nationality?
 - ✓ What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number?
 - ✓ When did you last arrive in the United States?
 - Date of Arrival
 - Place of arrival (airport)
 - Status at last arrival
 - Select F-1 unless you changed your status after your most recent arrival
 - ✓ What is the passport number of your most recently issued passport?
 - ✓ What is your travel document number (if any)? In most cases, leave this section blank. Likely you don't have one.
 - ✓ What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?
 - ✓ What country issued your passport or travel document?
 - ✓ What is your current immigration status or category?
 - Select F-1
 - ✓ What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number?
 - Check on your I-20. Your SEVIS ID number is listed at the top left of your most recent I-20.
 - ✓ Other Information
 - What is your A-number?
 - Check "I do not have or know my A-Number."
 - ✓ What is your USCIS Online Account Number?
 - Check "I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number."
 - ✓ Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security Card to you?
 - ✓ Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?
 - If you do not have a social security number or do not have your card, you should check "yes." You will need to complete the required information so that the SSA can issue you a social security card.
- Evidence
 - ✓ 2x2 photo
 - ✓ Form I-94
 - ✓ Previous Employment Authorization Document if applicable.

- **If you do not have a former EAD, you should upload a copy of the photo page of your passport here.**
- ✓ I-20s with former CPT or OPT details, if applicable. You should include previous degree level CPT and OPT here if available. If you do not have these document available, see “Additional Information” below.
- ✓ Form I-20
 - This is the I-20 you will receive from your DSO for OPT recommendation endorsed (your new I-20). **DO NOT upload a previous I-20 without an OPT recommendation from the last 30 days on page 2.**
 - The I-20 must be signed by your DSO and by you. You can use a digital or handwritten signature.

➤ **Additional Information**

- ✓ If you have previously authorized CPT or OPT and do not have former I-20s with these details, you should do the following:
 - Section: Evidence
 - Page: Post-completion CPT or OPT
 - Question: Post-completion CPT or OPT
 - Additional Information:
 - Type of previously authorized practical training (CPT, OPT, etc.)
 - Dates of previously authorized practical training
 - Application status (approved, denied, or withdrawn)
 - Degree Level (bachelors, masters, PhD, etc.)
 - Receipt or Card Number if known

➤ **Review and Submit**

- ✓ Review your application
- ✓ Read and agree to the “applicant’s statement”
- ✓ Digitally sign
- ✓ Pay the application fee
- ✓ Submit your OPT application

Good Luck!

II. STEM Extension OPT

Getting Started

- Basis of eligibility
 - ✓ What is your degree?
 - List your STEM eligible major and degree level
 - ✓ What is your employer's name as listed in E-Verify?
 - List your employer's name
 - ✓ What is your employer's E-Verify company identification number or a valid E-Verify client company identification number?
 - List the 5 - 7 digit number here. Note that this IS NOT the same thing as the Employer Identification (EIN) number that is required on the Form I-983.
 - ✓ Reason for applying
 - Check initial permission to accept employment (as this is your first time applying for category C3C)
 - Have you previously filed Form I-765
 - Check Yes
 - Preparer and interpreter information
 - Is someone assisting you with completing this application:
 - Check No

Your Information

- Your Name
 - ✓ What is your current legal name?
 - ✓ Have you used any other names since birth?
- Your contact information
 - ✓ How may we contact you?
 - Daytime telephone number
 - Email address
 - What is your current U.S. mailing address?
 - Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?
 - ✓ Describe yourself
 - What is your gender?
 - What is your marital status?

- ✓ When and where you were born
 - What is your city, town or village of birth?
 - What is your state or province of birth?
 - What is your country of birth?
 - What is your date of birth?
- ✓ Your immigration information
 - What is your country of citizenship or nationality?
 - What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number?
 - When did you last arrive in the United States?
 - Date of Arrival
 - Place of arrival (airport)
 - Status at last arrival
 - Most likely F1
 - What is the passport number of your most recently issued passport?
 - What is your travel document number (if any)? In most cases, leave this section blank. Likely you don't have one.
 - What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?
 - What country issued your passport or travel document?
 - What is your current immigration status or category?
 - F1
 - What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number?
 - Check on your I-20. Your SEVIS ID number is listed at the top left of your most recent I-20.
 - Other Information
 - What is your A-number?
 - You should include the USCIS number listed on your post-completion OPT EAD card here.
 - What is your USCIS Online Account Number?
 - You will most likely check "I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number" since the online filing is employed recently.
 - Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security Card to you?
 - Mostly yes
 - What is your Social Security number?
 - Enter your SSN

➤ Evidence

- ✓ 2x2 photo
- ✓ Form I-94
- ✓ Previous Employment Authorization Document if applicable. **If you do not have a former EAD, you should upload a copy of the photo page of your passport here.**
- ✓ I-20s with former CPT or OPT details, if applicable. You should include previous degree level CPT and OPT here if available. If you do not have these document available, see “Additional Information” below.
- ✓ Form I-20
 - This is the I-20 you will receive from your DSO for STEM OPT recommendation endorsed (your new I-20). . **DO NOT upload a previous I-20 without a STEM OPT recommendation on page 2.**
 - The I-20 must be signed by an ISS advisor and by you. You can use a digital or handwritten signature.
- ✓ Your diploma showing proof of the STEM eligible degree
- ✓ Institution Accreditation
 - You do not need to upload anything for this section unless you are applying for STEM OPT based on a PREVIOUS degree; as in a degree prior to the one you obtained at Kentucky State University.

➤ Additional Information

- ✓ If you have previously authorized CPT or OPT and do not have former I-20s with these details, you should do the following:
 - Section: Evidence
 - Page: Post-completion CPT or OPT
 - Question: Post-completion CPT or OPT
 - Additional Information:
 - Type of previously authorized practical training (CPT, OPT, etc.)
 - Dates of previously authorized practical training
 - Application status (approved, denied, or withdrawn)
 - Degree Level (bachelors, masters, PhD, etc.)
 - Receipt or Card Number if known

➤ Review and Submit

- ✓ Review your application
- ✓ Read and agree to the “applicant’s statement”
- ✓ Digitally sign
- ✓ Pay the application fee
- ✓ Submit your STEM OPT application

Good Luck!

Frequently Asked Questions

OPT

1. **I am a graduate student and I’ve completed all required coursework. I only have thesis or dissertation remaining. Can I apply for OPT authorization to begin before I graduate?**

You can apply for either pre-completion OPT or post-completion OPT. There are advantages and disadvantages to consider when deciding which option works best for you. Here is an overview. We recommend you schedule an appointment with your DSO to further discuss your options.

Pre-completion OPT

Pre-completion OPT is only valid while you are a student finishing your thesis or dissertation. The OPT start and end date must fall before your I-20 expires and your final semester of enrollment.

Pros

- You are not subject to the 90-day unemployment limit.
- Your I-20 can be extended if you need more time to complete your thesis/dissertation.

Cons

- You must continue to register full-time (which may or may not be a requirement from your department depending on your funding and/or defense semester.)
- When you graduate, you must submit a separate *post-completion* OPT application and another application fee.

- There is the risk of a gap in employment authorization if you must submit a second OPT application and the timing is not perfect.
- It is challenging to take advantage of the full 12 months of OPT allotted to you because of the dual applications.

Post-completion OPT

Post-completion OPT can begin either while you complete your thesis/dissertation or after you graduate. Procedurally, however, the OPT start date can only fall after the I-20 end date, so your I-20 will be shortened to the end of the semester in which you submit the OPT application.

Pros

- You will only submit one application and fee.
- You are not required to register for the purpose of maintaining F1 status (though you must consult with your department about registration requirements depending on your funding, defense semester, and ability to apply for on-leave status).

Cons

- You are subject to the 90-day unemployment limit, an added pressure if you still need to focus on your thesis/dissertation.
- The I-20 cannot be extended. If you do not complete your thesis/dissertation within the OPT period, your F-1 status ends when the OPT expires, and you must travel and reenter with a new I-20 to continue your studies.

2. What is the start date and which date should I select for start date?

- The “start date” is the date your work permission begins. You cannot work earlier than the start date, but you can start working later.
- Your requested start date must be within 60 days after your program completion date. For example, if you graduate or if your final enrolled semester ends on May 8, your start date can be no later than July 7. However, if you think it will be challenging to find a job, you should select a later start date to ensure you do not waste your OPT time. Keep in mind if you find a job before this date, you won’t be able to start working until you have the EAD card in hand and the OPT period has begun.
- Changing the requested OPT dates after the application has been mailed to USCIS can be very difficult. Choose your dates carefully.

- Your *approved* start date is likely to be different from your *requested* start date, based on USCIS processing times.
- Your 90 days of unemployment begin counting on the *approved* OPT start date.
- If you are applying for Pre-completion OPT, you should select the date that is your desired start date of employment. Keep in mind that it can take up to 3 months before you will be able to start working.

3. What happens if I move after I mail my OPT application

Warning! The only way to change the address USCIS uses for your OPT-related mail is to submit an official change of address to USCIS using their website tools. The U.S. Postal Service can't forward official government mail (like OPT cards) to a new address.

4. How long does it take to get approved for OPT?

Between 3-5 months from the date USCIS receives your application, though it can be faster depending on the time of year.

You may use the case number on your receipt notice to check the status of your application online. You will need to choose 1) I-765 as the application type and 2) Potomac Service Center (all OPT applications go there). Then look at the chart line that says “qualified F-1 academic student”.

5. I have heard there is a 60-day grace period after I graduate to depart the US. Do I have to leave if the government hasn't finished my OPT processing?

No. The 60-day grace period does not apply to students who are waiting for the government to process their OPT application. As long as your application arrived by the government's deadlines, you can stay in the US and wait until it is processed.

6. What is my immigration status while my OPT is pending?

You are still an F-1 Student while your OPT application is pending. OPT is a benefit of F-1 status, it is not a new visa type or status.

7. If I change my mind and decide not to work, can I cancel my OPT authorization?

The answer depends on your situation. If you were issued a new I-20 with the OPT recommendation but have not yet mailed your application to USCIS, please notify your DSO of your change in plans. Your DSO can cancel the OPT recommendation.

If you have already mailed your application to USCIS, a request can be submitted to USCIS to halt processing. Your application fee will not be returned and we cannot guarantee that your request will be honored. Please contact your DSO for help.

If you have received your EAD card and wish to cancel the authorization, notify your DSO of your change in plans. A cancellation in this situation is highly unlikely. OPT applications are not meant to be cancelled.

8. I didn't submit my OPT application early enough, and I realize I might not get the OPT start date I requested. How do I know what date USCIS will authorize?

Unfortunately, it is difficult to estimate. The authorization depends on when the application arrives and the workload at USCIS. If they process your application after your requested start date, they might push back the start date to their day of processing, up to 60 days after your program end date. However, there is no way to predict what date it will be.

9. How long does it take to get the Receipt Notice/Notice of Action (NOA)?

Approximately two to three weeks after USCIS receives your application. You might verify with your bank whether your check has been cashed. If so, the NOA is likely on the way.

10. What shall I do if my application is taking a long time?

If your application has been pending for more than 5 months from the day the US government received your application, we suggest you take the following actions:

1. Check the status of your application on the [USCIS website](#).
2. Let USCIS know that your case is outside normal processing time by submitting a [case inquiry](#) with them.
3. You can also call the USCIS Customer Service Center for the status of your application at 1-800-375-5283. You will have to submit your receipt number to them when you call.

If you have taken all of the above actions, 15 days after submitting a case inquiry, please contact your DSO. When you contact, be sure to tell your DSO when you last checked the USCIS website for your case status, when you submitted a case inquiry with USCIS, and when you called their Customer Service Center. Please also include a copy of your receipt notice from the USCIS on your OPT application.

Please note, the soonest your DSO can check with USCIS on your behalf is 15 days after the date you last contacted them. We can only request a courtesy inquiry and there is no guarantee that they will consider our request.

11. What shall I do if I received a notice from USCIS that I need to send them more information?

As soon as you receive the letter from USCIS, contact your DSO. She/he will review the reason for the letter together and help you prepare the requested document(s).

12. When I receive my EAD card, should I give a copy to DSO?

No, it is not required. You do not need to provide a copy of your EAD to your DSO. Also, your DSO does not have to make copies of EADs. Be sure to make both digital and paper photocopies of your EAD for your own records. However, it is a good idea to send a copy to your DSO.

13. What happens if my EAD card has incorrect information on it?

- Wait to receive a job offer so you can show your EAD to your employer. The correction process may require you to mail the incorrect EAD to USCIS. Ideally, you should wait to request the correction after your employer has copied your EAD for hiring purposes.
- To correct the EAD, submit a request through the USCIS website to [correct a typographic error](#).

14. I have heard that I can apply for a “temporary” EAD card. Is this true?

In the past, students were able to apply for a temporary EAD card if their application was pending for more than 90 days. Processes have changed, and the government no longer issues temporary EADs. If your application is pending for more than 5 months, contact your DSO to get help.

15. I didn't receive my EAD card by mail. What shall I do if I think it is lost in mail?

You need to create an [inquiry with USCIS](#).

If you haven't received your EAD and believe it is being lost or misdirected, consider completing this [USCIS case assistance request form](#). Your DSO can also contact USCIS regarding your issues if you can provide consent by sending her/him your signed statement.

16. What if I lose my EAD card?

If you lose your card, you must apply and pay for a replacement. Complete a new Form I-765 and resubmit it to USCIS with all supporting documents, including the fee. Contact your DSO and request an updated I-20. We recommend you keep your EAD at home (not in your wallet) because of the expense and time in applying for a replacement.

17. Can I travel while the OPT application or my STEM OPT application is pending? Can I travel while on OPT?

Please check on our OPT page about travel <https://kysu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Travel-and-OPT.pdf>

18. What shall I do if I can't find a job?

Once your OPT begins—see the start date as listed on your EAD, the card you'll receive once your OPT is approved—you have a total of 90 days of unemployment during your OPT. If you cannot find a job within 90 days of the start of your OPT, then you must make plans to depart the US immediately or change to some other status in the US. Keep in mind that the 90 days of unemployment is for the entire OPT period. This means that if you use up 60 days of unemployment time looking for a job in the beginning, you only have 30 days of unemployment time for the remainder of your OPT period.

19. I have an EAD for 12 months of pre-completion OPT, but I have just finished my course of study early, can I continue to use the EAD issued for pre-completion OPT after the program end date?

No. The EAD was issued for pre-completion OPT. Accordingly, the EAD is only valid for OPT prior to the program end date. You will have to stop working on or before the program end date and file a separate application for post-completion OPT. But you will not lose any unused OPT from the original EAD. You will only lose the OPT completed prior to the program end date. So, if you applied for part-time pre-completion OPT from January 02, 2020, to January 01, 2021, but finished the course of study on June 1, 2020, you will still have nine months of OPT available (the six months of part-time OPT you used would account for three months of the total amount available at that education level).

20. I am actively seeking a job. What types of jobs are allowed while on OPT?

First of all, all OPT employment must be in a job that is related to the student's degree program. For students who are not on a 17-month extension, this employment may include (please refer to

Employment Requirements <https://kysu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Employment-Requirements.pdf>):

- **Multiple employers.** A student may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to the student's degree program and, for pre-completion OPT, cannot exceed the allowed per week cumulative hours.
- **Short-term multiple employers (performing artists).** A student, such as a musician or other type of performing artist, may work for multiple short term employers (gigs). The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration.
- **Work for hire.** This is also commonly referred to as 1099 employment, where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. If requested by DHS, the student must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract period and the name and address of the contracting company.
- **Self-employed business owner.** A student on OPT may start a business and be self-employed. The student must be able to prove that he or she has the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to the student's degree program.
- **Employment through an agency or consulting firm.** A student on post-completion OPT must be able to provide evidence showing he or she worked an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.
- **Paid employment.** A student may work part time (at least 20 hours per week when on post-completion OPT) or full time.
- **Unpaid employment.** A student may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern, where this practice does not violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week for a student on post-completion OPT. A student must be able to provide evidence acquired from the student's employer to verify that the student worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment.

21. How should I report employment/unemployment information and changes to that information to my DSO?

The preferred and best way to report is using e-mail, as it provides both evidence of reporting and the date reported (We may use electronic means, such as a Web page, to accept reports). You should keep a record of all reports made to the DSO and the method by which the reports are made.

22. What should I report to ensure that my status does not expire due to excessive unemployment time?

You should report changes in employment to your DSO as soon as possible. SEVP recommends that you report any change within 10 business days of the change to avoid situations where a DHS official may determine the student is out of status. The following summarizes the best way you should report, if:

New Job:

- Name of the employer
- Job description
- Start date of employment
- Mailing address for the employer

Change to a new job:

- Name of the previous employer
- Ending date of the employment with the previous employer
- Name of the employer
- Start date of employment
- Job description
- Mailing address for the employer

More than 10 days of unemployment

- Indicate “unemployed”
- Ending date of last job

Decides to exit the United States and complete your F-1 status prior to the end date of OPT

- Indicate “Completing OPT and exiting the United States”
- Date of exit

STEM Extension OPT

1. Where can I find additional government resources about the STEM OPT extension?

[STEM OPT Hub](#) –from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) Study in the States

[OPT Extension for STEM Students \(STEM OPT\)](#) –from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [Last Updated: 01/24/2018]

2. Where can I find my CIP code?

I-20s from June 2015 or earlier: the CIP code is printed at the top of page three of your I-20. The code is 6 digits long (xx.xxxx). Once you find your code, you can consult the entire list of individual [eligible CIP codes](#) for the STEM extension available on the SEVP website.

I-20s from July 2015 to present: the CIP code is printed next to your major on page one of your I-20.

3. What is the KSU SEVIS School Code?

NOL214F10724000

4. What's KSU's Employer ID number (EIN)?

61-1099712

5. What's KSU's North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code?

611310

6. How can I find out what date my KSU degree was awarded?

Check on your diploma.

Or Log in to your WEIRD account. Find it on your "Unofficial Transcript." Scroll to the bottom of the transcript, and you will see what date your degree was earned.

5. If I have a dual major, can I qualify for the 24-month extension based on one of the degree programs?

Yes, if one of the degrees is on the STEM Designated Degree Program List <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf> and any job worked while on the extension is related to your STEM degree.

6. Can I qualify for the 24-month extension based on my minor or certificate program?

No.

7. When does my 24-month extension of OPT start?

If you have properly filed for a 24-month STEM extension, the period of extension starts the day after the expiration of your original OPT period.

8. Can I work with an expired EAD while my 24-month extension is pending?

Yes. Your work authorization is automatically extended for up to 180 days while the 24-month STEM extension application is pending. There is no interim documentation of the extended authorization. If your employer needs information about what documents to collect as proof of extended work authorization, please refer to them to [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services I-9 Central](#).

9. Can I travel outside of the U.S. if my original EAD expires and my 24-month extension is still pending?

Yes, your EAD is considered extended for up to 180 days while your STEM OPT extension application is pending with USCIS. During that period, you can travel outside the U.S. even if your previous EAD is expired.

For more information about what documents to carry, and citations for this rule, see our Travel and OPT section <https://kysu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Travel-and-OPT.pdf>.

10. Do I need to use the KSU OIA or Registrar address on the I-765?

No, you are not required to use the KSU Office of International Affairs address on #3 of I-765 form. However, be sure to provide an accurate and valid address for at least 4 months into the future so you can receive your EAD card. The post office will NOT forward OPT mail. If you might change your address while your OPT application is pending, consider renting a post office P.O. Box or using a friend's address.

11. Can I change employers while the 24-month extension is pending?

Yes, you can change employers while your 24-month STEM OPT extension application is pending with USCIS.

If you change employers, report the change to your DSO and explain that your STEM OPT extension application is still pending with USCIS. Regulations state that employment changes must be reported within 10 days.

Your DSO will provide a copy of an updated I-20 directly to USCIS.

No Updated I-983 Needed

Students must report but are not required to submit an updated I-983 for the following changes:

- New personal address within the US
- New personal address outside of the US

New/Updated I-983 Needed

Students must report and are required to submit a new/updated I-983 for the following material changes:

- New employer
- Change in supervisor and/or supervisor contact information
- Employer street address (company/headquarter address)
- Employer site address (physical work location)
- Change to employer's EIN
- Any reduction in student compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked
- Any significant decrease in hours per week that a student engages in a STEM training opportunity
- Changes to the employer's commitments or student's learning objectives as documented on the Form I-983
- Company Acquisition/Merger