

## 24 months STEM OPT: Online I-765 Tips

The instructions below are intended to act as a guide for you when applying for your 24 month STEM OPT application and to assist with the more difficult aspects of the online I-765 (most questions you need to answer will be about your personal information and your immigration documents). **We will review the [paper I-765](#) as part of your IPO OPT request. Most of the information can be copied from the paper I-765 to the online I-765.**

- **These instructions are not intended for students applying for 12 month OPT.** Please review these instructions on the IPO's [OPT website](#).

**\*\*DON'T FORGET!!! You must first follow the IPO's STEM OPT request process in order to get the STEM OPT I-20 to upload to the online I-765 application. If you do not have the STEM OPT I-20 from the IPO, STOP. Return to the IPO's [STEM OPT Application Process](#) to follow the process listed there. If you apply online with USCIS without the STEM OPT I-20, your STEM OPT will likely be denied.**

### Application Start

If at any point during the application you need to pause, USCIS will save your application. You will need to log back in to complete the save application.

Once you create your account and start the application, it will ask you what immigration benefit you are applying for. Select "Application for Employment Authorization" as this option has STEM OPT.

Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)

online. This includes:

- Pre-completion OPT - (c)(3)(A) eligibility category;
- Post-completion OPT - (c)(3)(B) eligibility category; or
- a 24-month extension for STEM students (students holding a degree in science technology, engineering, or mathematics) - (c)(3)(C) eligibility category.

For all other eligibility categories, you must submit a paper [Form I-765](#).

Petition for Alien Relative (I-130)

Application To Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (I-539)

Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)

Start form

### Getting Started

After choosing the I-765, the online application wants to know what type of STEM OPT you are requesting. These instructions are for STEM OPT ONLY. You should select "**c(3)(C) STEM Extension**." If you choose a different authorization code, you are applying for the wrong type of OPT.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

What is your eligibility category?

**Getting Started**

- Basis of eligibility
  - Reason for applying
  - Preparer and interpreter information
- About You
- Evidence
- Additional Information
- Review and Submit

**Warning:** You can file your request online only for certain eligibility categories. If your eligibility category does not appear on the drop-down list, you must file a paper [Form I-765](#). If you submit online and are not eligible for one of the listed categories, your application may be denied.

c(3)(A) Student Pre-Completion OPT  
 c(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT  
 c(3)(C) STEM Extension

Select 'Initial permission to accept employment' as your reason for applying (STEM OPT is technically a new type of work authorization and is therefore "initial." If you select "renewal," your STEM OPT will still be processed correctly but USCIS instructions indicate to select "initial" for STEM OPT).

What is your reason for applying?

- Initial permission to accept employment
- Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to US Citizenship and Immigration Services error
- Renewal of permission to accept employment

## About You

The next sections of the application are "About You" and you will answer basic questions about yourself. Most of these should be self-explanatory and few screen shots are provided as part of these instructions.

NOTE: If you are using the IPO as your mailing address so we can receive your I-797 receipts and EAD, use the address format below.

What is your current U.S. mailing address?

We will use your current mailing address to contact you throughout the application process. We may not be able to contact you if you do not provide a complete and valid address. Please provide a U.S. address only.

In care of name (if any)

UMass, IPO

Address line 1

70 BUTTERFIELD TER

Street number and name

Address line 2

Apartment, suite, unit, or floor

City or town      State      ZIP code

AMHERST      Massachu...      01003-9242

REMEMBER: If your mailing address is different from where you live, select “no” and put the address where you live (if using the IPO’s address for mailing—remember, you do not live at the IPO, we are just accepting your mail on your behalf) so you need to indicate where you actually live.

Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?

Yes

No

If you have moved, you must also update [SPIRE](#) with your new address.

NOTE: “In care of name (if any):” you need only put a name here *if someone else is accepting mail on your behalf*. If you live at the address where you are receiving the mail, you can leave this blank.

## Evidence

- Upload a 2 x 2 photo of yourself. Photo requirements will be listed in the application
- Upload Form I-94. This can be found here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>. Go to the “Get Most Recent I-94” tab at the top of the I-94 website. Enter in your personal information to the I-94 system to get your I-94. Confirm the information is correct and make the document into a .pdf/jpeg/etc. (Do NOT upload your travel history as this not the I-94).
- Upload previous EAD. Since you are applying for STEM OPT, you should upload a copy of your 12 month OPT EAD (front and back).
- Upload STEM OPT I-20 from the IPO
  - In order to apply for STEM OPT, you must have requested an STEM OPT I-20 from the IPO before submitting your online I-765 and submitted it to USCIS within 60 days of the STEM OPT I-20s creation.
  - The STEM OPT I-20 must be signed by YOU at the bottom of page 1 prior to uploading. The IPO should have already signed on page 1 and page 2. You will need to print, sign, scan, save, and then upload to the online I-765. USCIS will not accept digital signatures from students on the I-20s.

If you do not have the STEM OPT I-20, return to the IPO’s [STEM OPT Application Process](#) and proceed through the steps.

### I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status

Upload a copy of the Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status endorsed by the Designated School Official (DSO). For the (c)(3)(B) eligibility category, your DSO must have entered the recommendation for OPT into the SEVIS system within 90 days of your submitting Form I-765. If you fail to do so, we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765.

we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765.

If you have received the STEM OPT I-20 from the IPO and you are near/past 60 days since it was created, please contact your [IPO advisor](#) for a new STEM OPT I-20. You do not need to restart the IPO’s STEM OPT process.

- Upload official transcript here:

## College Degree

Upload evidence the degree that is the basis for the STEM OPT extension is in one of the degree programs currently listed on the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#) or a copy of your prior STEM degree.

- Institution Accreditation: If applying for STEM OPT based on **previous** degree (very rare), upload your previous degree here. If you are applying for STEM OPT based on your **current** UMass degree, do not upload anything here.

## Institution Accreditation

Upload evidence that the institution that granted your STEM degree is currently accredited by the U.S. Department of Education and certified by the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP), if this STEM OPT extension is based on a previously earned STEM degree.

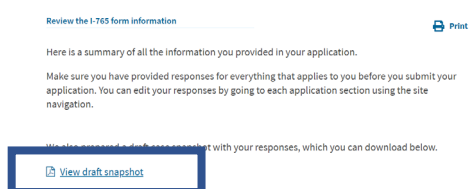
## Additional Information

Once you have completed the I-765 and uploaded all documents, the application will ask you if there is any additional information. It is rare to add anything here. You only need to add something if your name didn't fit into the application fields or there is something else to explain.

## Review and Submit

USCIS indicates they will review your application for accuracy and completeness. However, please keep in mind that you need to double check this for yourself. USCIS will not flag answers that are blank or missing uploads for you to fix prior to submission. The online application will indicate that you have everything needed *even if you have unanswered questions or missing file uploads*. Double check for yourself. The IPO will only review the paper I-765 as part of the OPT I-20 request process. We cannot review the online I-765.

Once you select 'next' in the Review and Submit section, they will give you the option to review the full application. We suggest clicking on 'View Draft Snapshot' as this will provide you with an I-765 to save for your records. You can use this to do a side by side comparison of the IPO's review of the I-765 and your own submission to the online I-765.



After you have reviewed everything and are confident it is correct, click 'next,' agree to the statements on the next pages, sign, and proceed to payment. Remember: Payment = I-765 submitted. Once you pay the fee, you have submitted your application and no additional changes can be made. You can upload additional evidence in your record later if you need too but it is unclear how USCIS will view this. If USCIS needs additional information, they will put the request in your USCIS online portal.

Good luck!