



# NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY

The Office of  
International Affairs

## Optional Practical Training (OPT) Online Application Instructions

### STEM EXTENSION

*Note: Please remember that you are personally filing the I-765. This means that you are responsible for ensuring that the information on the application is correct and complete. Please read and follow USCIS's directions carefully as you complete the application. The Office of International Affairs at North Park University does NOT have access to your application thus cannot correct, edit, or change any information on your application for you. You are responsible for the submission of your application and any follow up communication with USCIS. OIA can provide some guidance and help if you do need to be in contact with USCIS, and we encourage you to communicate with OIA for any assistance.*

#### Eligibility Requirements

- You may apply up to 90 days before your post-completion OPT expires but you must apply before your post-completion period of OPT expires.
- Your program listed on your I-20 must be listed in the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#).
- You must currently be employed or have a job offer from an employer registered with [E-Verify](#).
- Your employer/supervisor must complete the [Form I-983 Training Plan](#) for STEM OPT Students. The form is to be completed jointly by the STEM OPT student and employer/supervisor.
- Your application must be sent to USCIS within 60 days of the date the STEM OPT Extension I-20 was issued. Please note that you may continue to work up to 180 days while your STEM OPT Extension application is pending with USCIS and you have your receipt notice.

#### Before Applying

1. Your employer/supervisor must complete the [Form I-983 Training Plan](#) for STEM OPT Students. The form is to be completed jointly by the STEM OPT student and employer/supervisor.
2. Complete the STEM OPT Extension request form (visit [OIA website](#) to access the form)

**\*DO NOT submit your online OPT application without your OPT I-20 issued by the Office of International Affairs. You will be contacted by OIA once your OPT request has been approved and your OPT I-20 has been issued. Then, you can proceed with the rest of the application process.**

## Step 1: Prepare Your Documents

When you submit the online I-765 application for the STEM OPT Extension, you will need to have the following documents ready to upload.

Save all documents as .pdf or .jpeg documents and follow USCIS's requirements for file names. Do not use foreign characters.

1. Passport identification page
2. Form I-94 arrival record - retrieve your most recent [I-94 record](#) and save as a .pdf
3. Digital Photos - you must upload a digital passport-style photo taken within the last thirty days and the photo must follow the U.S. Department of State [Photo Composition Template](#). You can visit a location like Walgreens or CVS to have an official passport photo taken, or you can use an app such as PhotoAid: <https://photoaid.com/ead-photo>. We recommend using one of these official resources. Be sure to check that your photo file has an acceptable name that follows USCIS's file name formatting outlined in the instructions and is saved as either a .jpeg / .jpg or .png file type. The online OPT application has a photo tool you can use to check your photo.
4. Current Employment Authorization Documents (EAD) card for your post-completion OPT.
5. [NPU Transcript](#) and scanned copy of diploma
6. *If needed: If you are applying for your STEM OPT extension based on a previously earned STEM designated degree prior to your degree at North Park, include your previous school I-20 and transcript/diploma.*
7. **Your new STEM Extension OPT I-20 obtained from the Office of International Affairs**
  - a) Complete the STEM Extension request form and send form to [tzanoni@northpark.edu](mailto:tzanoni@northpark.edu)  
*\*This form should be submitted to OIA. Do NOT submit with your online application to USCIS.*
  - b) OIA will contact you when your new I-20 has been prepared.
  - c) Be sure to sign your new I-20 in ink at the bottom of page 1, in the "Student Attestation" section
  - d) Confirm your I-20 has your STEM OPT recommendation on page 2 and that all information on your I-20 is correct.

## Step 2: Create Your myUSCIS Account

- **If you do not yet have any account**, you will set up your myUSCIS account by going to [uscis.gov](https://uscis.gov) and selecting "Sign In" --> "Create Account"
- Use a personal e-mail to create your myUSCIS account. Do not use your school e-mail.
- The system will send you a one-time PIN to log into your account; you will need to continue to use two-factor authentication when signing-in to your account.
- Follow all other USCIS instructions to finalize the account creation process.
- Save your log-in information as you will need to return to your account to continue your application.
- Once you create your [myUSCIS](#) account, read through USCIS's [Tips for Filing Forms Online](#) page. After you have reviewed the information, start your online I-765 application (next step).

### Step 3: Prepare and Submit Your Online I-765 Application for STEM OPT

Important Notes on Timing: You will be able to save and return to the application at a later time and date, **but you should complete all application steps and submit your application within 60 days of your STEM OPT I-20 issuance date and before your Post-Completion OPT expires, or your application will be denied.**

- Look for the option to "File a Form Online"
- Look for the option to file Form I-765 (toward the bottom) - be sure to select the correct form!
- Once you have selected Form I-765, you will be prompted to start the online I-765 application
- You should make an edit to you online application every 30 days or your form progress will reset, and you will need to start over.

#### *Section 1: "Getting Started"*

- Basis of eligibility: select the correct eligibility code
  - (c)(3)(C) for STEM Extension and enter your full degree
- Reason for applying:
  - Renewal of Permission to Accept Employment' extension and 'Yes'

#### *Section 2: "About You"*

- Your name:
  - Include any names you have identified as currently or in the past
- Your contact information:
  - Current mailing address: this should be a valid address where you can receive your STEM OPT application materials including the mailed paper receipt notice, approval notice, and EAD card. This should be an address where you can receive mail for approximately 6 months into the future in case of application processing delays.
    - If you will move from your current apartment or travel internationally earlier than 6 months into the future, it is recommended you include a friend or family member's address in your I-765. Put their name in the "in care of" field.
    - Mail from USCIS will come from the U.S. Postal Service, or USPS. You can sign up for [informed delivery](#) to receive notifications about mail you receive.
  - If you include a friend or family member's address, select "no" to the question "is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?"
  - Under "where in the United States do you live" enter your current address even if you will move during your STEM OPT application process.
- Other information:
  - A-number: You will find your A-Number on your current OPT EAD card (called a "USCIS number")
  - USCIS Online Account Number: Input your USCIS Online Account number, if known/created
- Fill-in all other requested information as applicable.

### Section 3: "Evidence"

To complete the online I-765 form, you will need to upload required documents and evidence, which you should have already prepared. Refer to specific instructions in Step One.

- ✓ **2 x 2 photo** of you taken within 30 days.
- ✓ **Form I-94**
- ✓ **Employment Authorization Document:** Upload your passport biographical page and your previous EAD card(s) here.
  - *If you do not have your previous EAD card, you can upload your approval notice or receipt notice for that period of OPT with a statement explaining your EAD card was lost, your OPT dates, and your program information.*
- ✓ **Form I-20:** Your new I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation
  - Be sure to print, sign (in ink) and then scan your I-20 before you upload it
  - **This I-20 must be uploaded and your complete I-765 application submitted to USCIS within 60 days from the OPT I-20 issue date and BEFORE your current OPT expires, or your application will be denied.**
- ✓ **College Degree:** upload a copy of your STEM Degree and your transcript
- ✓ **Any other evidence** relevant to your application and your particular circumstances.

### Section 4: "Additional Information"

This section is to provide additional explanation or information for your responses in your I-765 or for your uploaded evidence. This section does not allow for uploads.

In this section you can include additional information such as:

- Previous SEVIS ID #s or previous academic studies (Section: About You; Page: Your immigration information; Question: What is your SEVIS number?)
- If you have missing I-20s for previously authorized OPT, include those details (Section: Evidence, Page: Form I-20, Question: I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status)
- If you are applying for the STEM OPT Extension based on a previously obtained degree, include a statement here to explain that this application for STEM OPT is based on your previous degree. (Section: Evidence, Page: College degree, Question: College degree)

### Section 5: Review and Submit

[MyUSCIS](#) will review your I-765 for completeness. It is your responsibility to check that all uploaded documents are correct. Correct any errors under the "alerts and warnings" section. If there are no alerts or warnings, your I-765 has been checked for completeness. There is an option to print this page or save your draft I-765 as a .pdf file. Please review your application for accuracy and save a copy for your records.

**\* Do NOT submit your application without your STEM Extension I-20 from OIA!**

## **Section 6: Submit Payment**

- Once your application is complete, the system will direct you to Pay.gov, a US government payment site, to pay the required I-765 application fee.
- There, you will be able to pay the application fee using a US credit / debit card or through an ACH transfer (direct withdrawal) from your US checking account.
  - If you pay by direct withdrawal, you will need to provide your bank account number and your bank's ABA routing number
  - Look at a copy of a [bank check](#) or bank statement from your account for your account number and your bank's ABA routing number or contact your bank for assistance.
- **IMPORTANT: Once you submit your payment information and that payment is successfully received, USCIS considers your application OFFICIALLY SUBMITTED.**
  - You cannot change or edit your I-765 application responses after payment has been submitted.
  - The fee is non-refundable once payment has been made.
- Once your application is submitted, USCIS will assign a receipt number.
  - You can print out an electronic receipt from your myUSCIS portal.
  - A paper receipt will follow in the mail a few weeks after the electronic submission

## **Step 4: Monitor Your Account for Updates and Follow-up**

### **Monitor Your myUSCIS Portal**

After you have submitted your OPT application, you are responsible for monitoring your USCIS account for messages and updates. Through your account, you should be able to:

- print an electronic receipt (a paper receipt will also be mailed to you)
- send additional information, in case you receive a request for additional evidence (RFE) from USCIS
- print a PDF version of your application for your records

It is recommended that you notify the Office of International Affairs if USCIS requests any additional information regarding your case, so that we can help to advise you on your options.

### **Change of U.S. Address**

While your OPT is processing, it is recommended you do not change your mailing address. If you need to change your US address and need to have your EAD sent to another US mailing address, you should update your address information in your USCIS account portal by following the change of address instructions on USCIS's [Tips for Filing Forms Online](#) page.