

Submitting your I-765 online for STEM Extension OPT

The guidance below is meant to avoid common errors and clarify frequent questions students have when filing for the I-765 online. *Please read the following carefully.* For further questions, please email international@utah.edu.

Reminders

- **DO** make sure you've received your STEM OPT I-20 from ISSS, you've printed it out, and hand signed it under *Student Attestation*. Then, scan and upload your signed STEM OPT I-20. If you submit your application **before** your STEM OPT I-20 is issued, your application will be denied.
- **DO** remember to include your STEM OPT I-20 with your I-765. Submitting your STEM OPT application *without* the STEM OPT I-20 from ISSS will result in denial.
- **DO** verify that your STEM OPT I-20 is valid. A STEM OPT I-20 is valid for **60 days** from the date of issue. The date of issue is listed next to the advisor's signature on page 1.
- **DO** verify you are applying for STEM OPT with category code **(c)(3)(C)**

FAQ

1. Do I have to apply online?

No, you do not have to file online. Students have the option of filing online or mailing their application to USCIS. Both options are available and accepted. If you file online, you do not need to mail in your application and vice versa; only one submission is needed.

2. If I file the I-765 online, do I have submit any documents to USCIS by mail as well?

No. If you choose to file online, you will be asked to upload your supporting documents online as well (e.g. passport photos, I-20, etc.).

3. Will my application be processed faster if I file online?

No, processing can take about 3 months or more for both online and paper applications. The benefits of filing online include getting a faster receipt number and not needing to mail your documents. You will be able to track your application online.

4. Will I get a receipt number (case number) right away?

Yes, you will receive your receipt number shortly after clicking “Submit.”

5. How can I pay the filing fee online?

At the end of the online application, you will be have the option of paying the fee using a credit card, debit card, or bank withdrawal.

6. If I file online, will all follow up documents (e.g. RFE, decisions) be sent electronically?

You will be notified through the online USCIS application system. You will also be mailed a copy of the document. Please check your email and mail every day.

7. If I file by paper, can I still access the online USCIS account?

Yes, you will need to create an account on my.uscis.gov and click “Add a paper-filed case”.

8. What type of passport photo can I upload?

You can upload a scanned photo that meets the [U.S. Dept of State Photo Requirements](#). It must be a JPG, JPEG or PNG file. The photo should be a recent photo that you have not previously used for a passport or other immigration documents.

9. I have questions about the STEM OPT timeline and my application window.

Please visit the [STEM OPT guide](#) for more detailed information.

10. What kind of questions will be asked on the online I-765?

The questions asked on the online version of the I-765 are similar to the ones asked on the I-765 PDF form. To learn more about those questions and to see an example, please view our [sample I-765](#).

11. If I previously did CPT or OPT, will I be asked to upload those I-20s?

Yes, if you previously were granted CPT or OPT authorization, you will be asked to upload your previous CPT I-20 and/or previous OPT I-20. It is your responsibility, as the student, to keep all your previous I-20 for your records.

12. What is 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 the University of Utah.

13. Did a preparer or interpreter help you complete your form?

A preparer is frequently an attorney, immigration consultant, or accredited representative who is often paid to complete and/or sign documents on behalf of the applicant. An interpreter is someone who translates the questions from one language to another. If you used a preparer or an interpreter, please answer “yes” to that question.

**** Please DO NOT submit your STEM OPT application without the STEM OPT I-20 from ISSS as it will result in denial of your request.****

Disclaimer: *International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) provides support and information related to U.S. immigration laws and regulations related to F and J status at the University of Utah. ISSS staff are not attorneys and any information provided by ISSS should not be construed as legal advice. Individuals are welcome to consult a qualified immigration attorney for specific legal advice, particularly in complicated cases. For a list of local Utah attorneys please visit our website [here](#).*

Employment: *ISSS reviews work related requests based upon the information provided to us by the student. If USCIS later determines that the student misused the work authorization or otherwise did not follow the required rules and regulations, additional immigration benefits could be denied by USCIS.*