

Optional Practical Training (STEM-OPT)

Information & Guide for F-1 Students

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Introduction

F-1 students who completed a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in select government-designated science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) fields and are currently working with post-completion OPT may apply for the STEM extension of 24 months of additional employment if they have a job or job offer from an E-Verify employer and meet all the required criteria.

Who Can Apply?

F-1 students who:

- have successfully completed a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in a STEM field based on the government classification. You can find the CIP code for your previous degree on page 1 of the current format I-20 or at the top of page 3 of the old format I-20.
- are currently authorized for post-completion OPT and have reported your current local US address and primary employer through the SEVP portal.
- have a job with a company enrolled in the government's E-Verify program.
- have paid employment that is directly related to the STEM degree and is at least 20 hours per week.
- have not exceeded 90 days of unemployment on your current post-completion OPT.
- have not previously used STEM OPT more than once. Please note that you cannot have more than one STEM OPT extension based on the same degree.
- filed an application with the OIA and to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services before the current OPT period ends.

Who Can Apply?

Pratt has 12 areas of study that are eligible for the STEM OPT extension:

- Digital Arts (Undergraduate and Graduate)
- Information Experience Design (Graduate)
- Data Analytics and Visualization (Graduate)
- Architecture (Post-Professional) (Graduate)
- Architecture (First-Professional) (Graduate)
- Architecture and Urban Design (Graduate)
- Sustainable Environmental Systems (Graduate)
- Construction Management (Undergraduate)
- Facilities Management (Graduate)
- Architecture (Undergraduate)
- Library and Information Science (Graduate)
- Museums and Digital Culture (Graduate)

When Can I Apply?

The earliest you can apply is 90 days prior to the end date of your current OPT. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services must receive your STEM OPT application before your current OPT expires.

If you applied for STEM OPT before your current OPT expires, you can continue to work while your STEM OPT application is pending, until a final decision is made on your application or it has been pending 180 days with the US Citizenship and Immigration Services, whichever comes first.

How Can I Apply?

STEM extension (24 months) checklist:

- A personal check or money order for \$410; make payable to USCIS
- Two passport style photos on a white/light background - write name and SEVIS ID on back
- Maintaining Status While on Post Completion OPT
- STEM OPT Cover Letter
- G-1145
- Photocopies of all I-20s from every school you've attended in the USA (including high school, ESL, other U.S. institution, etc.)
- Photocopy of your unexpired passport (must be valid six months into the future)
- Photocopy of I-94 record. If you don't have a paper I-94 card, download your most recent I-94 record from: i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/recent-search. You may have a paper I-94 card if you entered before 2013, completed a change of status inside the U.S., or entered the U.S. via a land border of Canada or Mexico.
- Photocopy of F-1 entry visa
- Copy of front and back of current EAD Card
- Completed Form I-765

Make certain to answer #27 and #28 with the following information:

#27: (c) (3) (C)

#28a: Degree = your degree level (Bachelor's, Master's)

#28b: Employer's name as listed in E-Verify

#28c: Employer's E-Verify Identification Number (which you must request from your employer)

Please note the E-Verify Identification Number is DIFFERENT than the employer EIN listed on the I-983.

How Can I Apply?

STEM extension (24 months) checklist:

- Copy of Diploma that shows your degree level and program of student (applicable to the STEM field).
- Completed and signed Form I-983

Please note that “F-1 students cannot qualify for STEM OPT extensions unless they will be bona fide employees of the employer signing the Form I-983, and students may not provide employer attestations on their own behalf”.

- Recommendation I-20 for STEM OPT Extension (this can only be issued by OIA and is done after review of all your documentation)
- Checklist: Use this checklist to help you assemble your STEM OPT application. Check the boxes off and put it on top of your application when you come in to OIA.

If you are eligible for the STEM Extension and have all of the appropriate documentation, after reviewing your documentation, an OIA Advisor will issue you a new I-20 with a recommendation for the STEM OPT Extension.

How Can I Apply?

Form Details: 2 Passport Style Photos

2018 Update:

Please do not wear glasses in your photos. USCIS has changed their guidance and will reject applicants who are wearing glasses in their photographs.

Also make sure that your photos have never been used before, such as for your visa.

Composition Checklist

7 Steps to Successful Photos

- ☑ Frame subject with full face, front view, eyes open
- ☑ Make sure photo presents full head from top of hair to bottom of chin (height of head should measure 1 inch to 1 1/4 inch (25 mm to 32 mm))
- ☑ Center head within frame (see Figure 2 below)
- ☑ Make sure eye level is between 1 1/4 inch and 1 1/2 inch (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
- ☑ Photograph subject against a plain white or off-white background
- ☑ Position subject and lighting so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- ☑ Encourage subject to have a natural expression

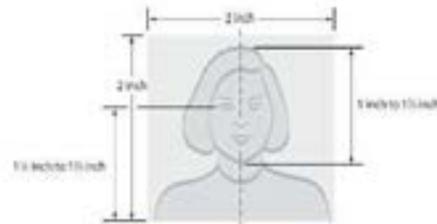


Figure 2. Head Position & Placement

Will Composed Photo



Head Position & Background

- Head should be positioned directly facing the camera
- Photo should capture from slightly above top of hair to middle of chest
- Eyes should be open and looking at the camera
- Eyeglasses should be worn if normally used by the subject
- Glare on eyeglasses can usually be avoided with a slight upward or downward tilt of the head
- Background should be plain white or off-white
- Include headpieces if worn daily for religious purposes; they should not obscure or cast shadows on the eyes or any other part of the face

Head Not Facing Camera



Head Facing Camera



Glare on Glasses



No Glare on Glasses



Background Not Plain



Plain Background



How Can I Apply?

Form Details: Form G-1145

This form is a USCIS form where you can request a text message and/or email when USCIS accepts your application.

e-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance
Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS
Form G-1145

What is the Purpose of This Form?
Use this form to request an electronic notification (e-Notification) when U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services accepts your immigration application. This service is available for applications filed at a USCIS Lockbox facility.

General Information
Complete the information below and clip this form to the first page of your application package. You will receive one e-mail and/or text message for each form you are filing.
We will send the e-Notification within 24 hours after we accept your application. Domestic customers will receive an e-mail and at least one text message; overseas customers will only receive an e-mail. Undeliverable e-Notifications cannot be resent.
The e-mail or text message will display your receipt number and will let you know to get updated case status information. It will not include any personal information. The e-Notification does not grant any type of status or benefit, rather it is provided to a customer as customer.
USCIS will also send you a receipt notice (I-797C), which you will receive within 10 days after your application has been accepted, use this notice as proof of your pending application or petition.

USCIS Privacy Act Statement
AUTHORITIES: The information required on this form is collected pursuant to section 101(x) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended (INA section 101, et seq).
PURPOSE: The primary purpose for providing the information on this form is to request an electronic notification when USCIS accepts immigration forms. The information you provide will be used to send you a text and/or email message.
DISCLOSURE: The information you provide is voluntary. However, failure to provide the requested information may prevent USCIS from providing you a text and/or email message accepting your immigration form.
NOTICE USE: The information provided on this form will be used by and the form is not to be disseminated and cannot be in accordance with approved release rules, as described in the mentioned published version of records notice (DHS/USCIS-047). [Detailed Information on how and when USCIS will share this information with other agencies, which can be found at \[www.dhs.gov/privacy\]\(http://www.dhs.gov/privacy\).](#) The information may also be made available, as appropriate for law enforcement purposes or in the context of national security.

Complete this form and clip it on top of the first page of your immigration form(s).

Application/Petition Full Last Name	Application/Petition Full First Name	Application/Petition Full Middle Name
Email Address		Mobile Phone Number (Text Message)

Form G-1145 (09/2014) E Page 1 of 1

How Can I Apply?

Form Details: STEM OPT Cover Letter

Date: _____

USCIS
Attn: ACES
2501 S. State Hwy, 121, Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

Dear Immigration Officer:

My name is _____

I am applying for STEM Extension Optional Practical Training.

My SEVIS# is: N_____

Enclosed are the following documents:

- Form G-1145
- My personal check for \$410.
- 2 Passport Style Photos.
- Copies of all I-20s including the recommendation for OPT.
- Copies of the DKO page of my passport, I-1 VISA, and I-94 RECORD.
- Form I-765
- Copy of previous EAD
- Copy of Diploma

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

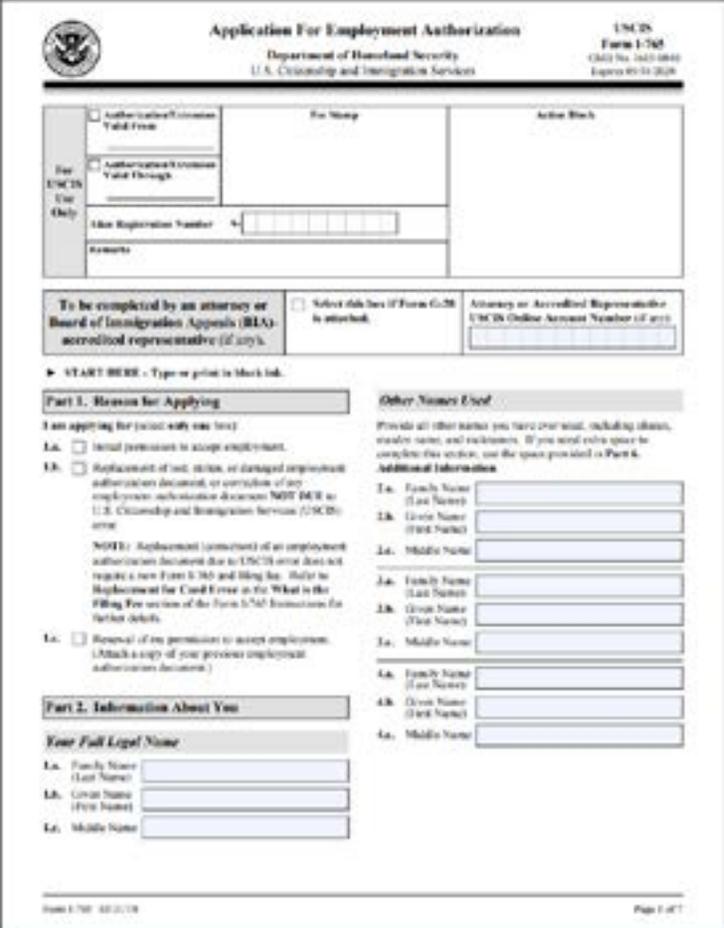
This letter will be the cover letter on all the documents you send to USCIS.

The mailing address for all your documents is on the top of the cover letter.

How Can I Apply?

OPT I-765 Application Checklist for USCIS Form Details: Form I-765

Please review our 'Specific Instructions for Form I-765' instructions on how to complete all 7 pages line by line.



The image shows the top portion of Form I-765, 'Application For Employment Authorization'. The header includes the USCIS logo, the title 'Application For Employment Authorization', the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and the form number 'Form I-765 (Rev. 04-21-2014) Expires 07-31-2025'. Below the header is a table with columns for 'For USCIS Use Only' and 'For Employer/Consentant Use Only'. The 'For USCIS Use Only' column contains fields for 'Authentication/Consentant Valid From', 'Authentication/Consentant Valid Through', and 'Date Registration Number'. The 'For Employer/Consentant Use Only' column contains a 'Remarks' field. Below the table is a section for 'To be completed by an attorney or Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) - accredited representative (if any)'. It includes a checkbox for 'Select this box if Form G-28 is attached' and a field for 'Attorney or Accredited Representative USCIS Online Account Number (if any)'. Below this is a 'START HERE' instruction: 'Type or print in black ink.' The form is divided into two main sections: 'Part 1. Reason for Applying' and 'Part 2. Information About You'. 'Part 1' includes questions about the reason for applying (initial permission, replacement of lost/damaged document, or renewal of permission) and a 'NOTE' about replacement documents. 'Part 2' includes a section for 'Your Full Legal Name' with fields for Family Name, Given Name, and Middle Name. There is also a section for 'Other Names Used' with similar fields for Family, Given, and Middle names, repeated for multiple instances. The bottom of the page shows 'Form I-765 (Rev. 04-21-2014)' and 'Page 1 of 7'.

How Can I Apply?

Form Details: I-20 Copies

- Include copies of all I-20s from every school you've attended in the U.S. (including high school, ESL, other U.S. institution, etc.).
- When you make copies, please only include the two pages which hold information on them (e.g. the first page with your SEVIS ID and the other page with the travel signature box). You do not need to make a copy of the page with the 'Instructions to Students'.
- Please make all your copies the same way, so that they all are single-sided or all are double-sided. We recommend copies in single-sided format to ensure USCIS cannot miss anything during the scanning process.
- If you lost any I-20s, please proceed to the next page for instructions.

How Can I Apply?

Loss of I-20

What if I lost or misplaced an I-20?

If you've lost or misplaced an I-20 you should contact the school for which the I-20 is missing. If they no longer have a copy of your documents, you can write a letter to USCIS explaining the missing document(s).

The letter should include the following:

- The school that you attended;
- The dates of attendance at that school;
- What you studied and what level (Associate, Bachelor's, Language Training, etc.) at that school;
- That you've never applied for off-campus employment **OR**
- If you did apply for any off-campus work permission such as Economic Hardship or any prior periods of Optional Practical Training whether Pre-Completion or Post-Completion, this must be disclosed.
- Make sure to sign and date the letter.

How Can I Apply?

Form Details: I-94 Record

You must access the most recent record of your I-94.

Please review the following:

- Most Recent Date of Entry (make sure this is accurate)

- Class of Admission (should read F1)

- Admit Until Date (should read D/S)

The screenshot shows the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website. The header includes the agency logo and the text "U.S. Customs and Border Protection" and "Securing America's Borders". Below the header, there are two tabs: "Get I-94 Information" and "I-94 FAQ". The "I-94 FAQ" tab is selected. The main content area is titled "Most Recent I-94". It displays the following information:

- Admission (I-94) Record Number: 12345678910 (highlighted with a red box)
- Most Recent Date of Entry: 2016 January 18
- Class of Admission: F1
- Admit Until Date: D/S

Below this information, there is a section titled "Details provided on the I-94 Information form:" with the following fields:

- Last/Surname: YOUR LAST NAME
- First (Given) Name: YOUR FIRST NAME
- Birth Date: YOUR BIRTH DATE
- Passport Number: YOUR PASSPORT #
- Country of Issuance: COUNTRY

At the bottom of the form, there is a "Get Travel History" button. Below the button, there are three bullet points of information:

- Effective April 29, 2013, DHS began automating the admission process. An alien lawfully admitted or paroled into the U.S. is no longer required to be in possession of a paper I-94. A record of admission printed from the CBP website constitutes a valid record of admission. See 6 CFR § 1.4(c).
- If an employer, local, state or federal agency requests admission information, present your admission (I-94) number along with any additional required documents requested by that employer or agency.
- Note: For security reasons, we recommend that you close your browser after you have finished retrieving your I-94 number.

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text "For inquiries or questions regarding your I-94, please click here." and "Accessibility | Privacy Policy".

What Happens After I Apply?

An OIA advisor will provide you with information on where to mail your application to request the STEM OPT Extension. You must mail your application within 30 days of when we issue the new I-20, and then it usually takes 3-4 months for your request to be processed.

After you receive your Employment Authorization Document (or EAD Card), you must provide OIA with a copy of the front and back of the document via email at ويا@pratt.edu. While on the STEM OPT Extension, your reporting requirements are greater than OPT.

You are required to report and verify specific information to OIA within very particular timeframes. See the 'OPT Reporting' link in the left menu for guidance on what you will need to report to us. You should receive automated emails from the government to remind you when your reporting is due to OIA.



Pratt

All The Best!