STEM OPT Information and Application Workshop

Outline

STEM OPT Overview

General Requirement

You must meet all the following criteria in order to be eligible to apply for STEM OPT:

➢ You are currently engaging in Post-Completion OPT (not Pre-Completion OPT) in your major field of study and have not exceeded 90-days of unemployment.

➢ You have completed degrees in a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approved STEM field.

➢ You are not self-employed or volunteering.

➢ Your employer has agreed to complete and sign the Form I-983, Training Plan For STEM OPT Student. (See Form I-983 tutorial).

➢ Your employer is participating in the USCIS E-Verify Program.

➢ Your employer has an Employment Identification Number (EIN) used for tax purposes.

When to Apply

To apply for STEM OPT, you must request a new I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation from the Office of International Programs (OIP). Send your request to OIP no more than 90 days before your current OPT end date.

Once you received the new I-20, you must mail the applications and other supporting documentation to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The filing fee for STEM OPT is currently $410. USCIS' processing time for each OPT application is 90 days/3 months.

Your STEM OPT application must be received by USCIS **before** the expiration date of your current 12-month Post-Completion OPT, and no later than 60 days from the date OIP issued I-20 with STEM OPT recommendation.

The regulations allow you to continue working while your STEM OPT application is pending, for up to 180 days beyond the expiration of the your Post-Completion OPT. All work done during this 180-day time period is considered STEM OPT extension time that counts towards the 24-month total. **However, you cannot leave the U.S. if your current Post-Completion OPT has ended and your STEM OPT application is pending.**

Types of Employment

The rule requires that an STEM OPT student must have a **true employer-employee relationship** with an employer to obtain a STEM OPT extension. You must work at least 20 hours per week for an employer in a position directly related to your STEM major.

Unacceptable types of employment:

Volunteer/Unpaid Position:
A student is NOT allowed to use a volunteer opportunity as a basis for the extension.

Self-Employment: A student may be employed by start-up businesses, however, the purpose of STEM OPT is to provide training for student. Therefore, a student cannot be his or her own supervisor. Student must have a supervisor who oversees his or her work.

Unemployment Period

In addition to the 90-day maximum period of unemployment during the initial period of post-completion OPT, a student is allowed to have an additional 60 days (for an aggregate of 150 days) for students who obtain a 24-month STEM OPT extension.

If you received…..	You may be unemployed for	For al total of (during OPT period)
Post- Completion OPT	Up to 90 days	90 days
24-month extension	An additional 60 days	150 days

Previously Obtained STEM Degrees

You are allowed to use a previously obtained STEM degree from a currently accredited and SEVP-certified institution as a basis to apply for a STEM OPT extension, even if it did not serve as the basis for the student's standard 12-month post-completion OPT, under the following conditions:

➢ The prior degree was earned no more than 10 years before OIP receives your request.

➢ The prior degree was awarded by a U.S. educational institution that is accredited and SEVP-certified at the time OIP receives your request.

➢ The practical training opportunity that is the basis for the 24-month STEM OPT extension must directly relate to the prior degree.

Eligibility for Second STEM OPT

If you have already obtained one STEM OPT extension, you may be eligible for a second STEM OPT extension (i.e., a total of two lifetime STEM OPT extensions) after:

➢ Earning another qualifying STEM degree at a "higher degree level" and,

➢ Obtaining 12-month post-completion Optional Practical Training based on that higher degree.

Employers' Responsibilities

Employers play a key role in maintaining and strengthening the integrity of the STEM OPT extension program. The new rule requires significant responsibility of the employer to provide a training plan related to the field of study, and attestations to wages and compensation being commensurate with "similarly situated U.S. workers."

See employer's responsibilities at Study in the States STEM OPT hub.

Your Reporting Responsibilities

You have several types of report requirements:

- **General Reporting:**
  - Report **within 10 days** of any changes to the following information:

To change your legal name	Email F-1 advisors at f1@sfsu.edu for instructions
To change U.S. address and phone number	**For U.S. Immigration:** Update your account at SEVP Portal http://www.sevp.ice.gov/opt **For SF State:** Update your student record at online SF State student center.
To change employers information	Upload an updated Form I-983 at http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting

  - Report Loss of employment **within 5 business days** by uploading an updated Form I-983 form at http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting

- **Changes to an existing Form I-983 with <u>CURRENT</u> employer:** An updated Form I-983 must be submitted to OIP at http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting if there is any "material changes". "Material changes" may include, but are not limited to
  - ✓ Any change of the 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

As long as you and employer meet the regulatory requirements and the modified Form I-983 meets the specified requirements, your employment authorization will not cease based on the change to the plan.

Your Reporting Responsibilities

- **Change to a NEW employer:** You may change employer during STEM OPT. The new employer must be enrolled in E-Verify before you start working for pay. You must also submit a new Form I-983 to OIP by email **within 10 days** of starting the new employment. You will also need to must submit the final evaluation (page 5 of the Form I-983) within 10 days following the end of previous employment.

- **Validation Reporting:** 3 validation reports (6-month, 12-month and 18-month) must be reported to the DSO. This confirms that your name, address, phone number, employer name and address, and employment status are correct. Submit your validation report through OIP's OPT reporting form at http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting

- **Two Annual Evaluation Reporting (page 5 of the Form I-983):** You must complete the first "Evaluation of Student Progress" portion of Form I-983 within 12 months of the listed STEM OPT start date. At the end of the STEM OPT extension, you must conduct a second, final assessment. Read the "Evaluation of Student Progress" section at Study in the States website before you start working on the evaluation. Submit your completed, signed and scanned evaluation forms at http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting.

STEM OPT
Application Procedures

STEM OPT Application Materials

Submit the following documents to OIP.   Do not staple your documents or print double sided. All forms are fillable PDF.

You must TYPE all the forms instead of filling out by hand.

1. A blank envelope (at least 9 inches by 11 inches) – the envelope must be big enough to fit all your extension application materials.

2. **TYPED**, completed and signed STEM OPT Request Form (Microsoft Excel, 45KB)

3. **TYPED**, completed and signed Form I-983 (Click link to access form). The DSO contact info on the I-983 should be:
    Yuka Sakata (PDSO), San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94132, 415.338.1293, f1@sfsu.edu

4. Completed and signed Form I-765.

5. Photocopy of the identification page(s) in your passport (must include name, current expiration date, and photo).

6. Photocopy of your current EAD.

7. I-94 admissions verification printout from https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov.

STEM OPT Request Form

This is a fillable Excel form. Please type all fields in section 1 and 3 and sign at the bottom in section 10.

STEM OPT Request Form

Section 5: Applicant Requirements
· I have been maintaining valid F-1 status and my passport must be valid all the times during my entire 24 month of STEM OPT period.
· I have viewed the 24 month STEM OPT information and application workshop at http://oip.sfsu.edu/stemopt, and I confirm that I have met all STEM OPT requirements and that the information I provided in the application is accurate.
· STEM OPT extension will be recommended by OIP on a new I-20 form. This does not guarantee that USCIS will approve of my STEM OPT request. OIP is not responsible for the amount of time it takes for USCIS to process my application.
· I must pick up my STEM OPT application from OIP within 5 working days, and mail it to USCIS immediately. My STEM OPT application must be received by USCIS before the expiration date of post-completion OPT EAD card. My application will be denied if it is not received by USCIS within 60 days of I-20 issue date.
· I may continue to work up to 180 days past the expiration of post-completion OPT EAD while my STEM extension application is
· I must report the following changes within 10 days: To change your legal name Email F-1 advisors at f1@sfsu.edu for instructions To change U.S. address and phone number For U.S. Immigration: Update your account at SEVP Portal http://www.sevp.ice.gov/opt For SF State: Update your student record at online SF State student center. To change employers information and report loss of employment Upload an updated Form I-983 at http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting.
· I must complete 3 validation reports (6-month report, 12-month report and 18-month report) during STEM OPT.
· I must complete two annual evaluations during STEM OPT period by submitting completed, signed and scanned evaluation forms (the last section of the Form I-983) at http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting.
· I cannot be unemployed for more than a total of 150 days during my entire 12-month OPT period and 24-month STEM OPT period, including periods between jobs.
· It is my responsibility to obtain a travel signature from OIP if I am going to travel outside of the U.S. while I am on STEM OPT. USCIS does not permit me to travel outside of the U.S. while my initial post-completion EAD card is expired and my STEM OPT application is pending.
· STEM OPT will be automatically terminated if I transfer to another school or start a new degree program.

Section 6: Your reporting responsibilities:
You must maintain F-1 status on STEM OPT by completing three types reporting: On-going requirements, 6-month validation reports, and Evaluation on student progress/self-evaluation.

Your current EAD end date:	MM/DD/YYYY
The 24-Month OPT Extension Start Date will be:	#VALUE!
The 24-Month OPT Extension End Date will be:	#VALUE!

Section 7: On-going Reporting Requirements
Report any of these changes to the DSO within 10 days:

What to report	How to report
· Name change	Contact f1@sfsu.edu
· Residential address change	Report at SF State student center and SEVP Portal
· Employer name or address change	You and your employer must complete and sign a new Form I-983. Submit Form I-983 at http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting
· Employment status	
· Material changes on Form I-983	

Section 8: 6-month Validation Reports
Every 6 months, and within 10 days of the due date, student must validate current employer inofmration at

6-Month Validation Report is due on:	#VALUE!
12-Month Validation Report is due on:	#VALUE!
18-Month Validation Report is due on:	#VALUE!

Section 9: Evaluation on student progress/Self-evaluation
You must evaluate your progress towards the training goals in the Form I-983 (Page 5). Your supervisor must sign the evaluation. Submit the entire Form I-983 (Not just page 5 of the Form I-983) within 10 days of the following due date at http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting.

First training evaluation is due by:	#VALUE!
Final training evaluation is due by:	#VALUE!

Note: if you left training position earlier than the above due dates (i.e. loss of employment or change employer), you must complete a Evaluation on Student Progress/Self-Evaluation, signed by your supervisor, and submit it at http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting before or within 10 days of the date you

Section 10: I have read, and understand the above requirements. It is my responsibility to abide by the regulations governing the F-1 STEM OPT extension and to maintain F-1 status. Failure to abide by the requirements will terminate my F-1 status and thus my ability to work and otherwise remain in the U.S.

Signature:		Date:	

Updated 7/26/18

Page 2

Read the **Applicant Requirements** on the 2nd page

Review and note the auto populated section 6, 8, and 10 for reporting dates based on your EAD end date

Sign at the bottom.

Form I-765

Go to USCIS' I-765 page and download the most current Form I-765. USCIS does update Form I-765 frequently and you should use the most current form.

If you are applying for STEM OPT for the very first time, check the box for 1.a. "Initial permission to accept employment".

Helpful Tips

✓ **I-765 is a fillable PDF.** **Do not fill it out by hand.**

Form I-765

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)

1.b. Given Name (First Name)

1.c. Middle Name

Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you need extra space to complete this section, use the space provided in **Part 6. Additional Information.**

2.a. Family Name (Last Name) **N/A**

2.b. Given Name (First Name)

2.c. Middle Name

3.a. Family Name (Last Name)

3.b. Given Name (First Name)

3.c. Middle Name

4.a. Family Name (Last Name)

4.b. Given Name (First Name)

4.c. Middle Name

Form I-765 (**1 of 7 Pages**)

Item# 1.a.to 1.c: Provide your full legal name as shown on your passport.

Item#2.a to 4.c: Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name and nicknames.

If you do not have other names, type **"N/A"** in 2.a.

Form I-765

Your U.S. Mailing Address

5.a. In Care Of Name (if any)

5.b. Street Number and Name

5.c. ☐ Apt. ☐ Ste. ☐ Flr.

5.d. City or Town

5.e. State ___ **5.f.** ZIP Code ___

(USPS ZIP Code Lookup)

6. Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address? ☐ Yes ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered "No" to **Item Number 6.**, provide your physical address below.

U.S. Physical Address

7.a. Street Number and Name

7.b. ☐ Apt. ☐ Ste. ☐ Flr.

7.c. City or Town

7.d. State ___ **7.e.** ZIP Code ___

Part 2: U.S. Mailing Address

The address you put here is where the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card will be mailed.

➢ This address needs to be valid for at least 3 months, the length of time it may take to process your OPT application.
➢ If you think you might move in the months after you mail your application, use a reliable friend or family member's address to receive your EAD. Type in their name in 5.a.
➢ The address you put here should be in California. If you wish to use a address **outside** the California, visit http://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses for the appropriate USCIS lockbox to send your OPT application.
➢ You may change your mailing address after you receive a Form I-797C, Notice of Action, a receipt notice with your case number, from USCIS.

Form I-765 (**2 of 7 Pages**)

Form I-765

Other Information

8. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any)

    ► A- [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

9. USCIS Online Account Number (if any)

    ► [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

10. Gender   ☐ Male   ☐ Female

11. Marital Status

    ☐ Single   ☐ Married   ☐ Divorced   ☐ Widowed

12. Have you previously filed Form I-765?

    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Item # 12: Previous Employment Authorization

Check "yes" if you have received an EAD.

Form I-765

13.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered "No" to **Item Number 13.a.**, skip to **Item Number 14.** If you answered "Yes" to **Item Number 13.a.**, provide the information requested in **Item Number 13.b.**

13.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known).

► [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

14. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? (You must also answer "Yes" to **Item Number 15.**, **Consent for Disclosure**, to receive a card.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered "No" to **Item Number 14.**, skip to **Part 2.**, **Item Number 18.a.** If you answered "Yes" to **Item Number 14.**, you must also answer "Yes" to **Item Number 15.**

15. **Consent for Disclosure:** I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.

☐ Yes ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered "Yes" to **Item Numbers 14. - 15.**, provide the information requested in **Item Numbers 16.a. - 17.b.**

Father's Name

Provide your father's birth name.

16.a. Family Name (Last Name)

16.b. Given Name (First Name)

Mother's Name

Provide your mother's birth name.

17.a. Family Name (Last Name)

17.b. Given Name (First Name)

Form I-765 (**2 of 7 Pages**)

Item # 13.a: Social Security Number (SSN)

Check "yes"

Item # 13.b: Provide your SSN

Form I-765

Information About Your Last Arrival in the United States

21.a. Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)

21.b. Passport Number of Your Most Recently Issued Passport

21.c. Travel Document Number (if any)

None

21.d. Country That Issued Your Passport or Travel Document

21.e. Expiration Date for Passport or Travel Document (mm/dd/yyyy)

Item # 21.a: Form I-94 Number

Print your Form I-94 at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/ . Type the 11-digit "Admission (I-94) Record Number".

Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number : 12345678910

Most Recent Date of Entry: 2017 August 1

Class of Admission : F1

Admit Until Date : D/S

Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Item # 21.b: Enter your most recent passport number

Item # 21.c.: Type "**None**" if you do not have "Travel Document Number".

Item # 21.d.: Enter the country that issued your passport

Item # 21.e: Enter passport expiration date

If you have the paper Form I-94, enter the "Admission Number" on the top left hand side of the corner.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Departure Record

Admission Number

123456789 01

Form I-765

Item # 22: Date of Last Entry into the U.S. or about (mm/dd/yyyy)

This is the date of your most recent entry into the U.S. This entry date can be found on the admission stamp on your passport or your Form I-94.

Item # 23: Place of Last Entry into the U.S.

This is the name of the city where you landed in the U.S. This information is also can be found on the admission stamp on your passport (usually as a code like "SFR" for San Francisco). If you drove across from Canada or Mexico, write the name and the city where you entered.

Item #24: Status at Last Entry

This is the status you had upon entering the U.S. For example, you may have last entered with a H-4 dependent visa and changed status to F-1.

Item # 25: Current Immigration Status

Type "Students".

Form I-765

Item # 26: SEVIS Number

You can find your SEVIS number on your I-20.

You must provide all previously used SEVIS numbers (both at SF State or previous U.S. schools) and all previously authorized CPT and OPT on **Part 6. Additional Information (Page 7)**

26. Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)

► N-

Form I-765 (**3 of 7 Pages**)

Part 6. Additional Information

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the **Page Number**, **Part Number**, and **Item Number** to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)

1.b. Given Name (First Name)

Form I-765 (**7 of 7 Pages**)

Form I-765

Part 6. Additional Information

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the **Page Number**, **Part Number**, and **Item Number** to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

1.a. Family Name (Last Name) **Smith**

1.b. Given Name (First Name) **John**

1.c. Middle Name

2. A-Number (if any) ▶ A-

3.a. Page Number **3**   3.b. Part Number **2**   3.c. Item Number **26**

3.d.
I have previously used the following

SEVIS ID number(s):

N000123456789

N000123456781

List all previously used SEVIS numbers on "Part 6. Additional Information" (Page 7):

Item # 1.a. to 1.c.: Enter your family name and given name

Item # 2: Skip if you do not have an A-Number

Item # 3.a.: Type "2" for page 2

Item # 3.b.: Type "2" for part 2

Item # 3.c.: Type "26" for item 26

Item #3.d: Type "I have previously used the following SEVIS ID number(s)" and list all the SEVIS ID number(s) you had in the past (at SF State and previous U.S. schools)

Form I-765

Part 6. Additional Information

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the **Page Number**, **Part Number**, and **Item Number** to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

1.a. Family Name (Last Name): **Smith**

1.b. Given Name (First Name): **John**

1.c. Middle Name:

2. A-Number (if any) ▶ A-

3.a. Page Number:

3.b. Part Number:

3.c. Item Number:

3.d.
```
Previously authorized CPT
1. Full-time CPT: 6/4/2016 -
8/15/2016, ABC College, Associate
degree
2. Full-time OPT: 12/24/2016 -
12/23/2017, ABC College, Associate
degree
3. Part-time CPT: 1/23/2018 -
6/1/2018, SF State, Bachelor's degree
```

List all previously authorized CPT or OPT "Part 6. Additional Information" (Page 7):

Item # 1.a. to 2: Complete the information

Item # 3.a. to 3.c: Leave it blank

Item #3.d: Type all previously authorized CPT and OPT (at SF State and previous U.S. schools) in the following format:

"Type of work authorization, start and end date, school name, academic level"

For example:

1. Full-time CPT: 6/4/2016 - 8/15/2016, ABC College, Associate degree
2. Full-time OPT: 12/24/2016 - 12/23/2017, ABC College, Associate degree
3. Part-time CPT: 1/23/2018 - 6/1/2018, SF State, Bachelor's degree

Form I-765

Part 6. Additional Information

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the **Page Number**, **Part Number**, and **Item Number** to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

1.a. Family Name (Last Name) **Smith**

1.b. Given Name (First Name) **John**

1.c. Middle Name

2. A-Number (if any) ▶ A-

3.a. Page Number **3.b.** Part Number **3.c.** Item Number

3.d. **N/A**

Form I-765 (7 of 7 Pages)

If you do not have any additional information to provide, you should still indicate that on page 7:

Item # 1.a. to 2: Complete the information

Item # 3.a. to 3.c: Leave it blank

Item #3.d: Type "N/A"

Form I-765

Information About Your Eligibility Category

27. **Eligibility Category.** Refer to the **Who May File Form I-765** section of the Form I-765 Instructions to determine the appropriate eligibility category for this application. Enter the appropriate letter and number for your eligibility category below (for example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii)).

(**C**) (**3**) (**C**)

28. **(c)(3)(C) STEM OPT Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(3)(C) in **Item Number 27.**, provide the information requested in **Item Numbers 28.a - 28.c.**

28.a. Degree   *M.S. in Computer Science*

28.b. Employer's Name as Listed in E-Verify
Employer's E-Verify Name

28.c. Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number
Employer's E-Verify Number

Item # 27: Eligibility Category

Use the following code (c)(3)(C) for STEM OPT Extension

Item # 28.a. – 28.c

Provide your degree information (for example, "MS in Computer Science") and your employer's E-Verify information - your employer should be able to provide you with this information. This information is REQUIRED!

Form I-765

Applicant's Declaration and Certification

Copies of any documents I have submitted are exact photocopies of unaltered, original documents, and I understand that USCIS may require that I submit original documents to USCIS at a later date. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information from any and all of my records that USCIS may need to determine my eligibility for the immigration benefit that I seek.

I furthermore authorize release of information contained in this application, in supporting documents, and in my USCIS records, to other entities and persons where necessary for the administration and enforcement of U.S. immigration law.

I understand that USCIS may require me to appear for an appointment to take my biometrics (fingerprints, photograph, and/or signature) and, at that time, if I am required to provide biometrics, I will be required to sign an oath reaffirming that:

1) I reviewed and understood all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application; and

2) All of this information was complete, true, and correct at the time of filing.

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that all of the information in my application and any document submitted with it were provided or authorized by me, that I reviewed and understand all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application and that all of this information is complete, true, and correct.

Applicant's Signature

7.a. Applicant's Signature

➡ | *Your Signature* |

**7.b.** Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

NOTE TO ALL APPLICANTS: If you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents listed in the Instructions, USCIS may deny your application.

7.a. Applicant's Signature

Sign your name in **BLACK** ink (Not blue). Your signature must fit between the lines. If your signature touches the signature box, your application will be returned to you. Be conservative and use a signature smaller than your normal handwriting.

Two 2" by 2" U.S. Passport Style Photos

- The photos you are required to use for the OPT application **MUST** meet the specifications of U.S. passport style photos.

- The photos must be taken within 30 days of the date you sign the I-765 application – do not use the same photos that you used to apply for the 12 month OPT.

- Write your name and I-94 number lightly on the back of each photo in case they get separated from your application.

Helpful Tips
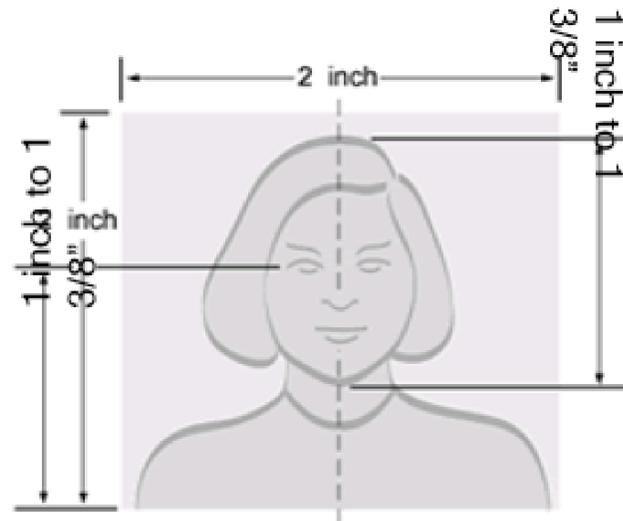
- ✓ Read a **full description** of these specifications at **U.S. Department of State web site**

- ✓ **Most places that take passport photos are already familiar with the specifications**

→ Go back to 'Outline'

Pick Up Your Application Materials

➢ After you submit the completed STEM OPT application materials to OIP, your request will be reviewed by an F-1 student advisor. Once OIP determined you are eligible for STEM OPT, a new I-20 with the STEM OPT recommendation will be issued within 5 business days (excluding weekends and holidays).

➢ Pick up your new I-20 and the rest of the STEM OPT application materials at OIP front desk 5 business days (excluding weekends and holidays) from the day you submitted the OPT application materials.

➢ If your new I-20 and the rest of the STEM OPT application materials are ready for pick up in less than 10 business days, OIP will e-mail you a pick up notification.

Mail Your OPT Application

Prepare Your Application for Mailing

Step 1: Prepare your application package

❑ **Completed and signed Form I-765 (all 7 pages)**

❑ **Photos:** Two U.S. passport-style photographs. Write your full name and I-94 number gently at back of your photos and place the photos in a small envelope.

❑ **Filing Fee: $410**. Fee can be paid by personal check. Make check payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security". Your photos and the personal check should be paper clipped on top of the Form I-765.

❑ **Photocopies of the I-20:** make photocopies of your new I-20 and sign it with a blue ink pen. Sign under the "Student Attestation" section at the bottom of page 1.

❑ **I-94.** Print from http://www.cbp.gov/i94 or attach photocopies of both the front and back sides of your I-94 card.I-94

❑ **Photocopy of your passport.** The photocopy must include name, current expiration date, and your photo.

❑ **Photocopy of your current EAD**

❑ **Copy of your degree:** Unofficial transcripts or copy of the diploma showing the level and program of study.

❑ (Optional) G-1145 E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance. If you would like to receive a receipt notification of your application electronically either via email or text, complete the G-1145 and send it with your application.

Mail Your Application to USCIS

STEP 2: Mail Your Application

If your address is **IN** California, mail the above documents to:

For U.S. Postal Service:	Private Courier (FedEx, DHL or UPS)
USCIS, PO Box 21281 Phoenix, AZ 85036 (OIP recommends that you send your application by **Priority Mail** - additional fee will apply)	USCIS, Attn: AOS 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034

If your address is **OUTSIDE** California, visit http://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses for the appropriate USCIS lockbox to send your OPT application. OIP will provide you a mailing instruction sheet with your new I-20. Please read the instruction sheet carefully.

Application Sent! What Now?

➢ As long as you have submitted your application to USCIS, your F-1 student status remains valid and you can continue to work.

➢ You cannot leave the U.S. if your current Post-Completion OPT has ended and your STEM OPT application is pending.

➢ USCIS will mail Form I-797C Notice of Action to you after they received your extension application. This is the proof that your application is being processed and your application fee has been received by USCIS.

➢ Your receipt number (usually starts from "YSC") is printed on this I-797C. You can check the status of your OPT application by entering your receipt number under "Check your case status" at http://www.uscis.gov/.

➢ **The Received Date on the Notice of Action:** This is the date when the USCIS begins processing your application. It may not be the actual date they received your application but it is when your case was entered into the system.

➢ **The Notice Date on the Notice of Action**: This is the date the Notice of Action is issued.

➢ If you do not receive any Form I-797C, Notice of Action within 4 weeks after mailing your application, request the receipt letter to be sent to you by using the USCIS online tools at https://www.uscis.gov/tools or call USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.

Request for Evidence (RFE)

➤ If there is a problem with your application, USCIS will send you a notice by mail called the "Request for Evidence (RFE)." In most cases, the USCIS will NOT call you at the telephone number you put on the Form I-765.

➤ We strongly advise you to contact a F-1 International Student Adviser at OIP if you receive an RFE. An RFE does not mean that your application has been rejected. It simply means that you need to provide the missing documents before your EAD can be issued.

➤ USCIS usually give applicant 30 days to respond to RFE. Your application will be denied if you fail to provide missing documents within 30 days of RFE issue date.

➤ Getting an RFE will delay the processing of your application usually by 4 weeks. For this reason, you should read the mailing instruction when you pick up the STEM OPT application materials at OIP, and send the COMPLETED application package to USCIS.

Helpful Tips

✓ **The standard processing time for extension application is 90 days/3 months.**

✓ **Spring/Summer tends to be peak period.**

Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

USCIS will send you an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) upon approval.

Please upload an image of your STEM EAD at OIP's online reporting form: http://oip.sfsu.edu/optreporting

If you do not receive your EAD within 90 days of your "Received Date" on Form I-797C Notice of Action, follow up by using the USCIS online tools at https://www.uscis.gov/tools or call USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.

The End

Good luck and we wish you all the best!