



# OPT/STEM OPT Guide

International Student Services  
Whitworth University

# First Things First...

## Important Terms:

- **DSO:** Designated School Official (Whitworth International Student Advisor)
- **USCIS:** U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- **SEVIS:** Student & Exchange Visitor Information System
- **OPT:** Optional Practical Training
- **STEM OPT Extension:** Extended OPT period for students with degrees in STEM fields
- **EAD:** Employment Authorization Document (card)

## Whitworth DSOs:



**Nick McKinney**  
**Assistant Provost**  
nmckinney@whitworth.edu  
509.777.4596  
McEachran Hall #219



**Trina Allen**  
**Associate Director of International Admissions**  
tallen@whitworth.edu  
509.777.3385  
Viren House #204



# OPT: Optional Practical Training

## Definition:

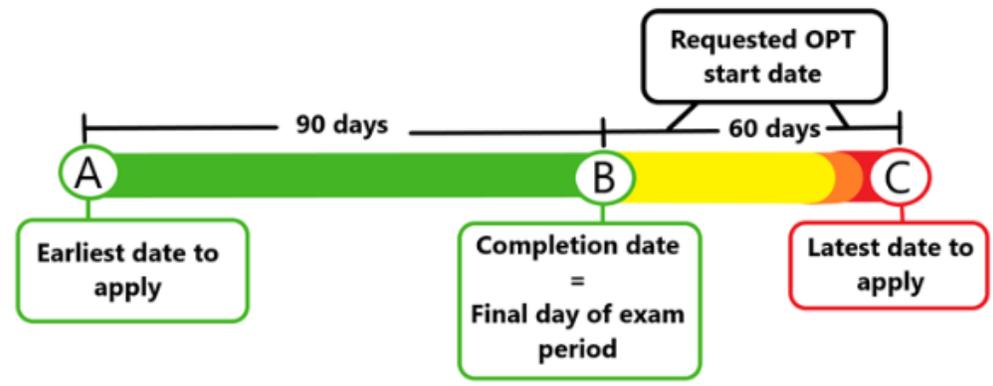
Employment authorization granted by USCIS for job/practical training that is directly related to the student's academic degree field.

## Types of OPT:

- *Post-Completion OPT*
- *STEM OPT Extension*

## Eligibility:

- Post-Completion OPT
  - *In the final semester of your degree program*
  - *Does NOT require having a job at the time of application*
- STEM OPT Extension
  - *Students in their regular post-completion OPT period with a qualifying STEM degree and working for an E-Verify employer may apply for the STEM OPT Extension (24 additional months of work authorization)*
  - *Must apply by the end of your current OPT expiration date*





# OPT: Optional Practical Training

## Steps to Apply:

1. Request OPT I-20: Contact a DSO (Nick McKinney or Trina Allen) who will issue your OPT I-20. Once issued, *you must submit your online OPT application within 30 days.*
2. Create an Online Account with USCIS: Follow the easy instructions outlined on the USCIS website:  
<https://www.uscis.gov/file-online/how-to-create-a-uscis-online-account>

Create an Account

This page provides step-by-step information on how to create a USCIS online account. Once you have an account, you will be able to file forms and pay fees from your computer, phone, or tablet. To learn more, visit the [Benefits of a USCIS Online Account](#) page.



# OPT: Steps to Apply

3. After Creating your Account: Select the “my USCIS” button.
4. Select “File a form online”.



## Welcome to your USCIS Account

Select what you want to do

**Edit My Account Profile**

Editing your profile includes making changes to your email, password, phone number, security questions, or the two-step verification method and backup code.

Login to a USCIS Service

**myUSCIS**

Apply for immigration benefits, find tools and resources to assist in preparation for naturalization, and search for doctors in your local community.

**FIRST**

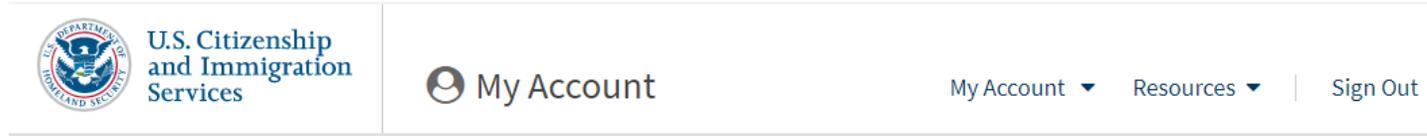
Submit, manage and receive Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

**myE-Verify**

Confirm your records for employment eligibility, track E-Verify or Self-Check case status, and protect your identity by locking your Social Security Number (SSN).

# OPT: Steps to Apply

5. Select Form: "I-765, Application for Employment Authorization"
6. Click "Start Form"



## File a Form

Select the form you want to file online. Once you start, we will automatically save your information for 30 days, or from the last time you worked on the form.

**Fee waiver:** If you are requesting a fee waiver, you cannot file online. You must file a paper version of both the Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver and the form for the specific benefit you are requesting. You can review the fee waiver guidance at [www.uscis.gov/feewaiver](https://www.uscis.gov/feewaiver).

Select the form you want to file online.

- I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
- I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings
- N-400, Application for Naturalization
- N-565, Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document
- N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship

# OPT: Steps to Apply

7. Eligibility Category: Select "(c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT"

*Students applying for STEM OPT Extension would select "(c)(3)(C) STEM Extension"*



My Account ▾ Re

I-765, Application for  
Employment  
Authorization

**Getting Started** ^

**Basis of eligibility**

Reason for applying

Preparer and interpreter  
information

About You ▾

Evidence ▾

Additional Information ▾

Review and Submit ▾

## What is your eligibility category?

**⚠** 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.

- (a)(12) Temporary Protected Status Granted
- (c)(3)(A) Student Pre-Completion OPT
- (c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT**
- (c)(3)(C) STEM Extension

# OPT: Steps to Apply

8. Select "Initial permission to accept employment" and "No".
9. Is someone assisting you? -Select "No"

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account ▾

**Getting Started** ^

- Basis of eligibility
- Reason for applying
- Preparer and interpreter information

About You ▾

Evidence ▾

Additional Information ▾

Review and Submit ▾

Is someone assisting you with completing this application?

Yes

No

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I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account ▾

**Getting Started** ^

- Basis of eligibility
- Reason for applying
- Preparer and interpreter information

About You ▾

Evidence ▾

Additional Information ▾

Review and Submit ▾

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

Have you previously filed Form I-765?

Yes

No

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# OPT: Steps to Apply

## 10. Complete the "About You" sections:

- *Your name*
- *Your contact information*
- *Describe yourself (gender, marital status)*
- *When and where you were born*
- *Your immigrant information (country of citizenship, I-94#)*
  - *\*Remember: When it asks for your immigration status/category, you are "F1"*
- *Other information*
  - *"A-Number" (mark "I do not have")*
  - *"USCIS Online Account Number" (mark "I do not have")*
  - *Social Security Number*

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ▼

**About You** ▲

Your name

Your contact information

Describe yourself

When and where you were born

Your immigration information

Other information

Evidence ▼

Additional Information ▼

Review and Submit ▼

## What is your current legal name?

Your current legal name is the name on your birth certificate, unless it changed after birth by a legal action such as marriage or court order. Do not provide any nicknames here.

Given name (first name)

John

Middle name

Family name (last name)

Smith

## Have you used any other names since birth?

Other names used may include nicknames, aliases and maiden names.

Yes

No

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# OPT: Steps to Apply

11. Complete the "Evidence" sections:
  - **2x2 Photo:** *standard passport photo style (Walgreens)*
  - **Form I-94:** Go to <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94>
  - **Employment Authorization Document:** *If you have never had an EAD (likely true for all students), then upload the photo page of your passport.*
  - **Previously authorized CPT:** *Scan and upload a copy of any I-20 you previously received for CPT authorizations
    - *If you have never had CPT, upload a Word document or PDF in which you explain that you have never had CPT authorization before.**
  - **Form I-20:** *This is a special I-20 that you must receive from a DSO (Nick or Trina). Do not upload any other I-20.*

## I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ▾

About You ▾

**Evidence** ▲

**2 x 2 photo of you**

Form I-94

Employment Authorization  
Document

Previously authorized CPT or  
OPT

Form I-20

Additional Information ▾

Review and Submit ▾

## 2 X 2 Photo Of You

Upload a recent color photograph of yourself that measures 2 inches by 2 inches, with your face measuring 1 inch to 1 3/8 inch from your chin to the top of your head. Your eyes should be between 1 1/8 inch and 1 3/8 inch from the bottom of the photo.

Make sure your whole face is visible, you are facing the camera directly, and the background is white or off-white. Your head must be bare, unless contrary to your religious beliefs.

If you need help understanding the photo requirements or want to resize, rotate, or crop your photo, you can use the Department of State's [photo composition tools](#). Please note that we cannot approve your application without your photo.

## File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Upload no more than one document at a time
- Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 12MB per file

**Choose** or drop files here to upload

# OPT: Steps to Apply

12. Additional Information section: Leave blank



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

[My Account](#) ▼ [Resources](#) ▼ | [Sign Out](#)

## I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

[Getting Started](#) ▼

[About You](#) ▼

[Evidence](#) ▼

**[Additional Information](#)** ^

**Additional information**

[Review and Submit](#) ▼

### Additional Information

If you need to provide any additional information for any of your answers to the questions in this form, enter it into the space below. You should include the questions that you are referencing.

If you do not need to provide any additional information, you may leave this section blank.

[+ Add a response](#)

[Back](#)

[Next](#)

# OPT: Steps to Apply

## 13. Review and Submit:

- *Note the filing fee: \$470*
- *Note any alerts/warnings about missing items in your application*
- *Review your application summary (you can download/print it)*
- *Electronically sign the agreement*
- *SUBMIT.*

## 14. Pay Filing Fee:

Once you have submitted the online OPT form, you will be directed to pay the fee via credit card, debit card, or bank account.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

- Getting Started
- About You
- Evidence
- Additional Information
- Review and Submit**

**Review your application**

- Your application summary
- Your statement

## Check your application before you submit

We will review your application to check for accuracy and completeness before you submit it.

We encourage you to provide as many responses as you can throughout the application, to the best of your knowledge. Missing information can slow down the review process after you submit your application.

You can return to this page to review your application as many times as you want before you submit it.

### Your fee

**i** Your form filing fee is: \$470

Refund Policy: USCIS does not refund fees, regardless of any action we take on your application, petition or request, or how long USCIS takes to reach a decision. By continuing this transaction, you acknowledge that you must submit fees in the exact amount and that you are paying the fees for a government service.

### Alerts and warnings

**✓** We found no alerts or warnings in your application.

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Next



# OPT: Optional Practical Training

## After Your Application is Submitted:

USCIS will email you confirmation of receipt of your application. Check your email regularly (and Spam folder).

## When Your Application is Approved:

USCIS will mail you your EAD card. You may not begin work until you receive your EAD card.

## Reporting Requirement – Your OPT Employer:

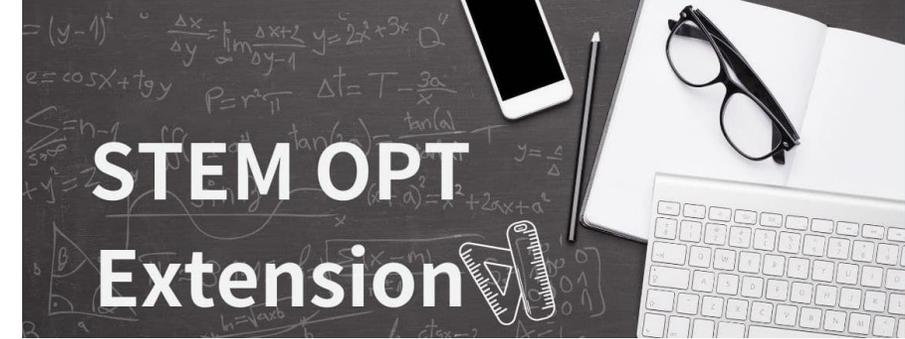
You are required to notify the international office ([iss@whitworth.edu](mailto:iss@whitworth.edu)) once you receive a job offer for OPT and begin work. Our office must update SEVIS with your OPT employer information.

Unlike H-1B visa, an OPT employer does not have any “sponsorship” requirements –there is no fee or paperwork for them.

You have a 90-day grace period to find an OPT employer. If you cannot find a job within the 90 days after your OPT start date, then your OPT is terminated and you must depart the U.S.



# STEM OPT Extension



## Definition:

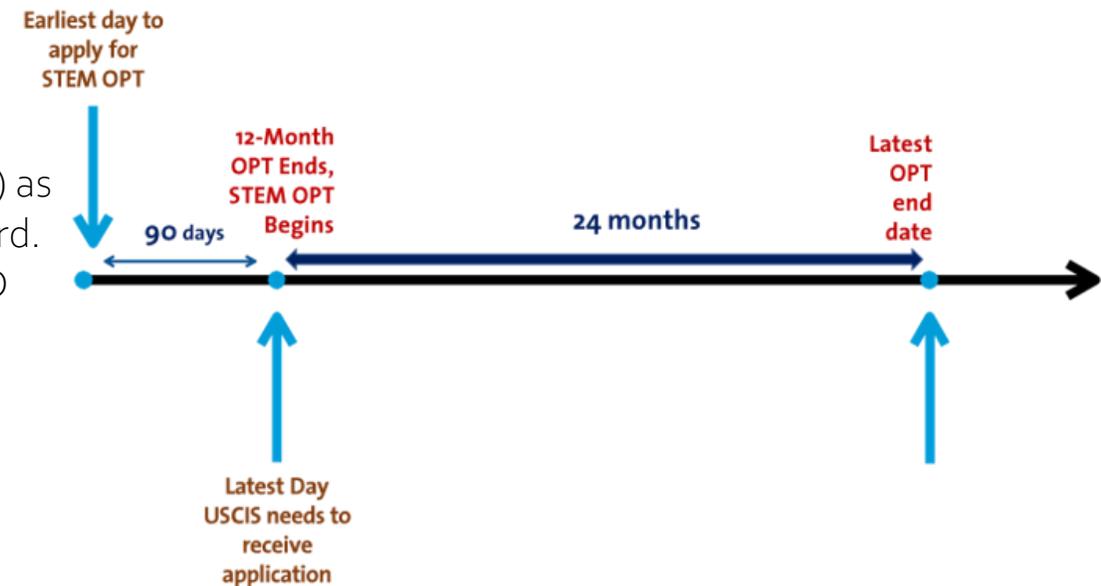
STEM OPT Extension allows students with qualifying STEM degrees to extend their OPT authorization for an additional 24 months.

## Eligibility:

- Be in active F-1 status
- BE currently working in OPT
- Have a bachelor's degree in an eligible STEM field
- Have a paid job offer with an employer enrolled in the E-Verify program

## When to Apply:

- You can request authorization for STEM OPT from a DSO (Nick or Trina) as early as 90 days before the expiration date on your current OPT EAD card. USCIS must receive your online STEM OPT application before your EAD card expiration date.



# STEM OPT Extension

## Steps to Apply:

1. Complete I-983 Training Plan: This is as required document which outlines your intended STEM OPT work plan, job duties, employer info, etc.  
*Download form here:* <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/i983.pdf>
2. Request STEM OPT I-20: A DSO (Nick McKinney or Trina Allen) will issue your STEM OPT I-20 only after we have received a copy of your completed I-983 form.
3. Login to your USCIS Account: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)



## Sign In

Email \*

Password \*

[Forgot your Password?](#)

[Show Password](#)

Sign In

One account for all of your USCIS needs.

[Create an account.](#)

[Didn't receive confirmation instructions?](#)

## Legal

- [Department of Homeland Security Consent](#)
- [DHS Privacy Notice](#)
- [FBI Privacy Notice](#)
- [Paper Reduction Act Burden Disclosure Notice](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)

# STEM OPT Extension

## Steps to Apply:

4. Select "File a form online"
5. Select "I-765, Application for Employment Authorization"
6. Click "Start Form"

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account Resources Sign Out

### Welcome To Your USCIS Account

Select What You Want To Do

- Add a case to your account**  
Enter your online access code (OAC) to add and manage a case to your account
- File a form online**  
Start a new form, upload evidence, and pay and submit online
- Enter a representative passcode**  
Review and sign forms prepared for you by your attorney or representative
- Verify your identity**  
Answer questions about your immigration history to verify your personal identity

## File a Form

Select the form you want to file online. Once you start, we will automatically save your information for 30 days, or from the last time you worked on the form.

**Fee waiver:** If you are requesting a fee waiver, you cannot file online. You must file a paper version of both the Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver and the form for the specific benefit you are requesting. You can review the fee waiver guidance at [www.uscis.gov/feewaiver](http://www.uscis.gov/feewaiver).

Select the form you want to file online.

- I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
- I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings
- N-400, Application for Naturalization
- N-565, Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document
- N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship

# STEM OPT Extension

## Steps to Apply:

7. Eligibility Category: Select "(c)(3)(C) STEM Extension" and complete the remaining fields.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

### Getting Started ^

#### Basis of eligibility

Reason for applying

Preparer and interpreter information

### About You v

#### Evidence v

#### Additional Information v

#### Review and Submit v

What is your eligibility category?

 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)(C) STEM Extension v

What is your degree?

Computer Science

What is your employer's name as listed in E-Verify?

Sample Employer

# STEM OPT Extension

## Steps to Apply:

8. Reason for applying: Select "Renewal of permission to accept employment".

Select "Yes" to the second question –you previously filed Form I-765 when you originally applied for OPT.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

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**Getting Started** ^

Basis of eligibility

**Reason for applying**

Preparer and interpreter information

---

About You v

Evidence v

Additional Information v

Review and Submit v

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

Have you previously filed Form I-765?

- Yes
- No

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Next

# STEM OPT Extension

## Steps to Apply:

9. Complete the "About You" sections:
  - *Your name*
  - *Your contact information*
  - *Describe yourself (gender, marital status)*
  - *When and where you were born*
  - *Your immigrant information (country of citizenship, I-94 #)*
    - *\*Remember: When it asks for your immigration status/category, you are "F1"*
  - *Other information*
    - *"A-Number" (mark "I do not have")*
    - *"USCIS Online Account Number" (insert if you know it)*
    - *Social Security Number*

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ▼

**About You** ▲

Your name

Your contact information

Describe yourself

When and where you were born

Your immigration information

Other information

Evidence ▼

Additional Information ▼

Review and Submit ▼

## What is your current legal name?

Your current legal name is the name on your birth certificate, unless it changed after birth by a legal action such as marriage or court order. Do not provide any nicknames here.

Given name (first name)

John

Middle name

Family name (last name)

Smith

## Have you used any other names since birth?

Other names used may include nicknames, aliases and maiden names.

Yes

No

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# STEM OPT Extension

## Steps to Apply:

10. Complete the "Evidence" sections:

- **2x2 Photo:** standard passport photo style (Walgreens)
- **Form I-94:** Go to <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94>
- **Employment Authorization Document:** Scan and upload the front and back of your current OPT EAD card
- **Form I-20:** Scan and upload a copy of the "STEM OPT I-20" you received from your DSO (Nick McKinney or Trina Allen)
- **College Degree:** Upload copy of official transcript showing your degree name as evidence that you earned a STEM degree
- **Institution Accreditation:** This is only required if your STEM degree was earned at a previous institution (not Whitworth). *If you are applying for STEM OPT based on your earned STEM degree from Whitworth, you do not need to upload anything in this section.*

### I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ▾

About You ▾

**Evidence** ▲

#### 2 x 2 photo of you

Form I-94

Employment Authorization Document

Form I-20

College degree

Institution accreditation

Additional Information ▾

Review and Submit ▾

## 2 X 2 Photo Of You

Upload a recent color photograph of yourself that measures 2 inches by 2 inches, with your face measuring 1 inch to 1 3/8 inch from your chin to the top of your head. Your eyes should be between 1 1/8 inch and 1 3/8 inch from the bottom of the photo.

Make sure your whole face is visible, you are facing the camera directly, and the background is white or off-white. Your head must be bare, unless contrary to your religious beliefs.

If you need help understanding the photo requirements or want to resize, rotate, or crop your photo, you can use the Department of State's [photo composition tools](#). Please note that we cannot approve your application without your photo.

## File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Upload no more than one document at a time
- Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 12MB per file

**Choose** or drop files here to upload

# STEM OPT Extension

11. Additional Information section: Leave blank



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

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I-765, Application for  
Employment  
Authorization

[Getting Started](#) ▼

[About You](#) ▼

[Evidence](#) ▼

**[Additional Information](#)** ^

**Additional information**

[Review and Submit](#) ▼

## Additional Information

If you need to provide any additional information for any of your answers to the questions in this form, enter it into the space below. You should include the questions that you are referencing.

If you do not need to provide any additional information, you may leave this section blank.

[+ Add a response](#)

[Back](#)

[Next](#)

# STEM OPT Extension

## 12. Review and Submit:

- *Note the filing fee: \$470 (same as initial OPT)*
- *Note any alerts/warnings about missing items in your application*
- *Review your application summary (you can download/print it)*
- *Electronically sign the agreement*
- *SUBMIT.*

## 13. Pay Filing Fee:

Once you have submitted the online STEM OPT form, you will be directed to pay the fee via credit card, debit card, or by bank account.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

- Getting Started
- About You
- Evidence
- Additional Information
- Review and Submit**

**Review your application**

- Your application summary
- Your statement

## Check your application before you submit

We will review your application to check for accuracy and completeness before you submit it.

We encourage you to provide as many responses as you can throughout the application, to the best of your knowledge. Missing information can slow down the review process after you submit your application.

You can return to this page to review your application as many times as you want before you submit it.

### Your fee

**i** Your form filing fee is: \$470

Refund Policy: USCIS does not refund fees, regardless of any action we take on your application, petition or request, or how long USCIS takes to reach a decision. By continuing this transaction, you acknowledge that you must submit fees in the exact amount and that you are paying the fees for a government service.

### Alerts and warnings

**✓** We found no alerts or warnings in your application.

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# STEM OPT Extension

## After Your Application is Submitted:

USCIS will email you confirmation of receipt of your application. Check your email regularly (and Spam folder).

## When Your Application is Approved:

USCIS will mail you your EAD card. You may not begin work until you receive your EAD card.

## RFE & Denied Applications:

If you receive a "Request for Evidence" (RFE) or denied application, notify ISS immediately ([iss@whitworth.edu](mailto:iss@whitworth.edu)).

## STEM OPT Reporting Requirements:

You must submit an address and employer validation report to ISS ([iss@whitworth.edu](mailto:iss@whitworth.edu)) every 6 months from the start of your STEM OPT. We will mark this off in SEVIS.

## After Your STEM OPT Period:

You are granted a 60-day grace period after the end date listed on your EAD card to either depart the United States, apply to a new academic program, or apply to change status to different visa category.





# Questions?



Resources:

International Student Services website

<https://www.whitworth.edu/cms/administration/international-student-services/>

Email: [iss@whitworth.edu](mailto:iss@whitworth.edu)