STEM OPT EXTENSION APPLICATION: PREPARATION & MAILING

INSTRUCTIONS

Once you have received your STEM OPT Extension I-20 from the Dashew Center, please sign the bottom of page 1 and make copies of pages 1 and 2 to include with your STEM OPT Extension application.

Please keep the original I-20 for your records. The original I-20 is your new I-20 and replaces your previous I-20. Please retain your previous I-20s in your records as you will need them in case you apply for further U.S. visa benefits (you do not need to submit previous I-20s to the Dashew Center).

Please prepare your STEM OPT Extension application for submission to USCIS in the following order:

STEM OPT Extension Application Documents to Submit to USCIS

- **I-765 Form**
  - USCIS requires that you submit the most recent edition of the form with your OPT application. Do not save the form locally to complete or submit at a later time. If you submit an older version of the form, your application will be denied.
  - On 9/29/2020, a U.S. District Court issued a preliminary injunction on USCIS’ Fee Schedule and Changes to Certain Other Immigration Benefit Request Requirements rule. USCIS will continue to accept the 8/25/20 edition of the I-765 Form and $410 filing fee for applications postmarked on or after 10/2/2020 until further notice.
  - Make sure you have checked ‘Renewal of my permission to accept employment.’ in Part 1 (on page 1) of the I-765 Form.
  - Make sure you have provided your Alien Registration Number (‘A-number’ or ‘USCIS number’) on page 2 (Part 2, #8) and page 7 (Part 6, #2) of the I-765 Form.
  - Ensure that your signature on page 4 of the form is hand-signed in black ink. USCIS has announced that they will temporarily accept electronic (not digital) signatures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **2 U.S. style passport photos. Please see U.S. Style Passport Photo Guidelines**
  - Write your name and SEVIS ID number on the back of each photo (do not use ink pens as they can smear)

- **$410 check or money order made payable to ‘U.S. Department of Homeland Security’**
  - Write your date of birth and SEVIS ID number on the front of the check in the memo section
  - Do not sign or write anything on the back of the check. USCIS will not be able to cash the check if there is any writing on the back of the check.
  - Ensure that your check will be valid and you have sufficient funding in the account at the time USCIS receives your application
    - Personal checks expire in 90 days; money orders do not expire

- **1 copy of your current I-94 Admission Record**
  - Electronic I-94: Access and print record here: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home
  - OR Paper I-94: Please copy front and back sides

- **1 copy of your most recent U.S. entry stamp in passport**
  - If you did not receive an F-1/DS entry stamp for your most recent entry, print your Travel History page
☐ 1 copy of your passport biographical page
  ▪ Passports must be valid at least 6 months into the future from the date that USCIS will receive your
    STEM OPT Extension application.
  ▪ If you have more than one country of citizenship, please include a copy of any/all other passport
    biographical page(s). This must also be noted on page 2 (Part 2, #18.b) of the I-765 Form.

☐ 1 copy of EAD (front and back sides)
☐ 1 copy of your STEM degree diploma
☐ Employment Verification Letter
☐ 1 copy of your STEM OPT Extension I-20 (pages 1 and 2) with your signature
  ▪ USCIS must receive your OPT application within 60 days of your STEM OPT Extension I-20 issue
    date. Applications received by USCIS more than 60 days after your OPT I-20 issue date will be
    denied.

☐ 1 copy of your most recent OPT I-20 (pages 1 and 2)
☐ 1 copy of any previous EAD cards
  ▪ Previous employment authorization periods must be noted on page 7 of the I-765 Form

**USCIS Mailing Instructions**

USCIS filing locations depend on the U.S. state of the address you provided as your ‘Physical Address’ (# 5 or 7) on your I-765 Form. STEM OPT Extension application processing times are the same for both locations.

For USCIS filing locations, please see this table (also shown below):
Please mail your STEM OPT Extension application materials in the order listed to the USCIS Lockbox facility that processes applications for your state.

Please ship your application to USCIS using a courier service with mail tracking. The Dashew Center uses FedEx service. If you need USCIS’ phone number to process your STEM OPT Extension application shipment, please use: 800-375-5283.

**What Are the Next Steps?**

You will receive a *Notice of Action* receipt in the mail (to the ‘Mailing Address’ you provided on your I-765 Form) from USCIS approximately 3-4 weeks from the date your STEM OPT Extension application was received by USCIS. This receipt notice will include your application receipt number. You can check the status of your STEM OPT Extension application with your application receipt number at: [https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do](https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do)

You will receive your STEM OPT Extension Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card approximately 4 months from the date your STEM OPT Extension application was received by USCIS.