



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES
Pacific Lutheran University
iss@plu.edu | Phone: 253-535-7195

Optional Practical Training (OPT) STEM Extension

General Information

You are eligible to apply for a 17-month extension, beyond the initial 12 months of OPT, if you meet all of the following conditions:

- You are currently approved for post-completion OPT.
- You completed a bachelor's or master's degree in a science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) field. Visit the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement website for the STEM Designated Degree Program List, <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>.
- You have a job or job offer from an *E-Verify employer*, <http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify>

When to Apply?

For 17-month STEM extension

- Apply **BEFORE** your current EAD expires. USCIS recommends you apply up to 120 days before its expiration.

Benefits while STEM OPT I-765 is pending

If a student's regular post-completion OPT expires after a STEM OPT I-765 is properly and timely filed, the student's employment authorization is considered automatically extended for up to 180 days while the STEM EAD application is pending.

How to Apply?

Step 1: Read Instruction for I-765, Application for Employment Authorization:

<http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765instr.pdf>

Step 2: Submit the following to ISS (by mail or in person):

- ✓ Completed I-765 Form: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf> (read tips for completing Form I-765 below)
- ✓ Name and address of current employer.
- ✓ Your job title.
- ✓ Your supervisor's contact information: name, email & phone number.
- ✓ Your email address.
- ✓ Your current mailing address.

Step 3: The ISS advisor will issue a new I-20 with a recommendation for the extension and will mail it back to you. Mail to USCIS the following:

- ✓ Original Form I-765
- ✓ \$380 check or money order payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"

- ✓ Two passport-style photos (read photo specification section below, lightly print your name and I-94# on back with a pencil)
- ✓ Photocopy of the front and back of your I-94 card or print-out of I-94
- ✓ Photocopy of valid passport photo page and passport expiration date
- ✓ Photocopy of all previous EAD cards
- ✓ Photocopy of all previous I-20s
- ✓ Photocopy of all previous Visas.
- ✓ Photocopy of new I-20 (make sure to sign the first page in blue ink before copying!)
- ✓ Original employment confirmation letter on company letter head
- ✓ Copy of STEM degree (official transcript, unofficial transcript, or copy of diploma showing level and program of study)
 - To request an official transcript, visit this link:
https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/secure_area/Transcript/to_bridge.asp?t=140011&LoginHome=to_home.asp
 - To print out unofficial transcript, log-in to Banner:
https://banweb.plu.edu/pls/pap/twbkwbis.P_WWWLogin
 - Click on Student Services
 - Click on Student Records
 - Click on Academic Transcript

Step 4: Be sure to mail your application to the USCIS Service Center, serving the area of your current residence. To find the address, review the I-765 instruction: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765instr.pdf>

Before sending out your application, make a copy of everything!

Photo specifications:

- U.S. Department of State Guidelines,
http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/composition/composition_874.html
- The two photos should have a white background.
- They should be unmounted, printed on thin paper, glossy, and not re-touched.
- The photos should show a passport-style, full-face image, with both ears visible.
- The photo should not be larger than 2 x 2 inches, with the distance from the top of the head to just below the chin about 1 3/8 inches.
- Lightly print your name and your I-94 number in sharpie on the back of each photo.
- Photographs must have been taken within the last 30 days and not previously used.

Tips for completing Form I-765:

- Item 3:
 - Your Receipt Notice and EAD will be mailed to the address you provide.
 - If you will move soon, note that government mail cannot be forwarded, even if you file a change of address request with the U.S. Postal Service. Our office will need a photocopy of your EAD card. If you use our office address, we will automatically make the photocopy after receiving the EAD and will email you to pick up your card. If it is mailed to your address, you must provide us with a photocopy.
- Item 10:
 - Use the number from your I-94 card (the small, white card in your passport). It is an 11-digit number.

- Item 11:
 - Check "yes" only if you have previously received an EAD card from USCIS.
- Items 12, 13, 14, 15:
 - Use the information from your I-94 card. In some cases you may have made recent short trips to Canada or Mexico, which are not reflected by your current I-94 card. This is standard and it will be fine to use the information from your I-94 card anyway. If you have changed to F-1 status within the U.S., include a copy of your Approval Notice.
- Item 16:
 - Use the following code:
 - 17-month extension for STEM degree recipients: (c)(3)(C)
- Item 17 (for 17-month extension for STEM degree recipients only):
 - On “Degree” section, list your major as it appears on your I-20
 - You must fill out “Employer’s Name as listed in E-Verify” and “Client Company Identification Number” sections.
- Certification
 - Sign the form in BLUE ink.

IMPORTANT: Special reporting requirements during STEM OPT extensions

There are enhanced reporting requirements for students approved for a 17-month STEM OPT extension. STEM OPT recipients must make a "validation report" to the DSO every six months starting from the date the 17-month extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status ends, the student changes educational levels at the same school, the student transfers to another school, or the 17-month OPT extension ends, whichever is first. ISS is not going to remind you to report. To keep your SEVIS record active, please submit your information through this [online form](#).

Still Have Questions?

Contact Heather Jacobson, Coordinator of International Student Services
 Email: jacobsha@plu.edu | Phone: (253) 535-7122
 To make an appointment, please visit <https://hjacobson.youcanbook.me/>