STEM OPT Application Checklist

Please review the STEM OPT FAQ to ensure you are eligible to apply. If so, please follow these steps:

1) Email Your Admissions and International Student Advisor (international@kgi.edu) with the following information:
   - The OPT Reporting form, with Section C completely filled out. Please note that Employer EIN and Supervisor information are required at the STEM OPT stage.
   - A copy of the completed Training Plan I-983 form, filled out by you and your supervisor.
   - Draft of I-765 form. You may also attach the supplementary items listed in #3 if you wish. Instructions for completing the I-765 form are listed below.

2) Make an appointment with your Admissions and International Student Advisor to complete the application. This appointment will last roughly 30 minutes. KGI will issue you a new I-20, showing the 24-month STEM OPT recommendation needed to complete your application. DO NOT submit your application without it. Please be sure to print, sign and date the I-20 when you receive it and before uploading it to your application.
   - NOTE: Your form must be received by USCIS before the end date of your current OPT and within 60 days of the issuance date of the I-20.

3) When I-20 is received, gather complete packet:
   - Application fee in the amount of $410
   - 2 color U.S. passport-style photographs. Photos must be taken within the last 30 days, measure 2 inches by 2 inches, and have a plain white or off-white background.
   - Completed Form I-765 draft (important: follow completion directions in this packet)
   - Current I-94 printout
   - Copy of your visa and passport identity page (and any renewal pages)
   - Copy of all previously issued I-20s (1st and 2nd page; do not copy instruction page).
   - Copy of the front and back of any previous EAD cards (i.e. previously done OPT)
   - Evidence that your degree meets the STEM degree/major requirements. Only one of the following must be submitted with your application:
     - Transcript—Official or copy that shows your degree and program of study
     - Copy of the diploma that shows your degree level and program of study

4) Next Steps
   - Create your online account and begin your application at https://www.uscis.gov/i-765
   - Print and physically sign the I-20 sent to you showing your STEM OPT recommendation. Upload a scanned copy of the 1st and 2nd page of your new I-20 to your application.
   - Email a copy of your application receipt to international@kgi.edu when received (formal receipt; no copy of the confirmation email is needed).  
     - Sign up for Informed Delivery by USPS at https://informeddelivery.usps.com. This will help you track the expected arrival of your EAD cards.
     - You will receive notices from USCIS when there is movement on your case, including notification of when your EAD card is mailed.
   - If you receive a Request For Evidence (RFE), please contact us immediately for assistance.
   - Email a copy of your new EAD card and I-797 approval notice to international@kgi.edu when received. You may continue working for 180 days while the application is pending; if it is past 150 days and you have not received your new card, please contact KGI for next steps.
   - Interested in travel? Please consult the Travel Guide on the Current Students page under Travel for specific guidance BEFORE making travel plans.
5) **Add important reporting dates to your personal calendar**

- You must “check in” with KGI via international@kgi.edu every 6 months to report any changes to your employer information (or to report no change in employment information).
- You and your employer must submit an I-983 form to update your employment information as soon as a material change occurs OR within 10 days of each 12-month evaluation.

**REMINDEERS: Reporting Requirements & Maintaining Legal Status during STEM OPT**

- You are required to report the following to KGI within 10 days of each occurrence:
  - any change in your home address each time that you move (use the OPT Reporting Form)
  - any change in the name and/or address of your employer, and any significant changes in your job duties/title, by submission of both the OPT Reporting Form and a new I-983 form
  - the loss/completion of your job (use the OPT Reporting Form)
- Your OPT will end if you accrue a total of 150 days of unemployment (counted from the start of your total OPT period) or if you transfer your SEVIS record to another school.
- As always, you need a valid passport and I-20 at all times. If travelling, you will need an F-1 visa and passport valid 6 months into the future. You will also need a travel signature on your I-20. Please plan ahead to account for mailing time.

**Hints for filling out I-983 Training Plan (please click here for a link to complete instructions)**

- **Section 1:** CIP Code – Found on “Major” section of I-20; begins with the number “30”
- **Section 1:** Based on Prior Degree – Answer is “no”
- **Section 1:** Employment Authorization Number – USCIS# found on EAD card
- **Section 3-5:** Must be completed by your employer
- **Section 3:** Start Date of Employment – Day after your current OPT ends
- **Section 5:** Employer Site Information – Must be your physical day-to-day site and supervisor information
- **Section 6:** Employer Official Certification – Should be signed by your immediate supervisor
- Evaluation Sections: Leave blank. These are required at 12 and 24 months.

**Completion Guide for filling out I-765 Application Form.** Please click here for a link to complete instructions issued by USCIS; it is advised that you read these instructions, including the penalties section, in addition to using the guide below to properly complete your application. It is your responsibility as the applicant to ensure that all information on the application is correct and valid.

**General Information:**

You can find helpful information on filing your online application at [https://www.uscis.gov/file-online](https://www.uscis.gov/file-online)

Make sure you select that you are applying for (c)(3)(C) – STEM Extension when starting your application

**Part 1:** Select 1.a. “Initial permission to accept employment”

**Part 2:**

- **Name:** Please write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20. If your name will not fit, fill it in as much as possible and then upload a page as “other evidence” spelling your name correctly. If you used previous names, including nicknames in official records or documentation, complete these sections as needed. Do not list nicknames that you did not use on official records.
- **Address:** Your US Mailing Address is where the receipt notice and EAD card will be mailed. This address must be valid for at least 3 months and may be a P.O. Box address. If you are using a friend or family's address, indicate the person's name in the In Care of Name line (note that this person must be listed with the US Postal Service as living at that address). If you listed a mailing address that is NOT your current physical living address, then you must indicate this, and provide your current physical address in the appropriate section.
- **Security Number:** If you already have an SSN indicate this and provide the number. If you do not already have an SSN, indicate this and select “Yes” to both follow up questions and give USCIS the ability to share your
information with the Social Security Administration and create your card. You will need to provide your mother and father’s names as well.

- **Information About Latest Arrival.** Complete this section using information from your I-94, passport, and I-20. Note that your SEVIS number is found at the top of your current I-20.

- **Eligibility Category:** The code is (c)(3)(C). Enter your degree, employer’s name as listed in E-Verify, and the employer’s E-Verify company identification number.

**Part 6: Additional Information** – MUST be completed if you had been issued a different SEVIS ID previously AND/OR completed practical training (CPT/OPT).

- **Explanation of previous work.** List all SEVIS ID numbers, level (i.e. bachelors or masters), and whether CPT or OPT was done. If CPT or OPT was done, explain the opportunity. **Examples:**
  - Student studied in the US for bachelor degree but did not do practical training. Returned to US later to earn masters degree at KGI and has done CPT. Answer would look something like: “Previous SEVIS ID N0001234567, bachelors degree, no CPT or OPT. Current SEVIS ID N0012345678, masters degree, CPT from 5-1-18 to 8-30-18, at Regeneron for internship requirement, 40 hr/wk.”
  - Student studied in the US at KGI only and has done CPT practical training. Answer would look something like: “Current SEVIS ID N0001234567, masters degree, CPT from 5-1-18-8-30-18, at Regeneron for internship requirement, 40 hrs/wk; CPT from 8-31-18 to 12-14-18 at Regeneron for internship course, 20 hrs/wk.”
  - Student studied in the US at bachelors level, completed OPT, and transferred to KGI for masters but did not do CPT. Answer would look something like: “Current SEVIS ID N0001234567, bachelors degree, OPT from 5-30-15 to 4-30-16 at Shire, 40 hrs/wk. Masters degree, no CPT, OPT at Regeneron from 7-15-17 to 7-14-18.”
Screenshots to Guide You Through the OPT Online Application

Click on Create an Account to set up your account OR log in to an existing account.

Once you have logged in, click on “File a form online” to begin your application process.
Screenshots to Guide You Through the OPT Online Application

Select “Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)” from the drop-down list.

Review the information on this page carefully. It will tell you everything you need to file online. Make sure you have all the items on the list of required evidence prepared before starting your application. Answer the form questions in order – do not skip ahead. The form has conditional logic that will display the next set of questions according to your answers. Go in order so that you only see the questions you need to complete. The form will autosave your answers in each section.
You will be applying for **(c)(3)(C) STEM Extension**. Make sure that you select this category

You must select "**Initial permission to accept employment**." If you have ever filed form I-765 before (even if it was denied), you must say Yes.
The next sections in the application will ask information about you. You will need your I-94, passport, and I-20 to complete the immigration information section.

If you do not have a social security number (SSN) already issued, you can apply for it at the same time as you apply for your EAD card!

Note: do not say yes if you were already issued an SSN and have simply misplaced your card. Contact your local Social Security Office to apply for a replacement document (non-citizens must apply for replacement cards in person).
For the government-issued photo ID, upload your passport picture page.

You will be given an I-20 showing your STEM OPT recommendation after your appointment with your International Student Advisor. **Do not submit your application until you have received, signed, and uploaded the new I-20 to your application. You will be preparing a draft of your I-765 for review at this time. Your I-20 must be printed and physically signed (in ink) before uploading.** Do not electronically sign or insert a digital signature on an I-20. This must be uploaded or your application will be denied.

You will also need to upload proof of your degree awarded by either uploading a copy of official transcripts or a copy of your diploma.

Leave the section about Institution’s Accreditation blank since you are not requesting the STEM OPT extension based off a previously earned degree that was not granted by KGI.

**Review the formatting requirements required for your uploads (see next page). It is your responsibility to format your documents properly for USCIS, according to their instructions.**
Examples of proper formatting are:
FamilyName_FirstName_OPTI20.pdf
FamilyName_FirstName_Passport.jpg

It is highly recommended that you do not take pictures. We recommend scanning your
documents from a scanner/copier machine and uploading “clean” clearly-legible PDFs, free of
shadows, and with nothing in the “background” – no fingers, tabletops, other paperwork, etc.
Before moving to payment, the application will check for errors and notify you if you may need to edit your response. **Errors will NOT be checking your answers for accuracy – you must make sure that the data you provided in your application is correct.** An “error” simply means you may have missed something on the application or formatted something incorrectly. If an error is highlighted in red, it must be corrected before you can submit your application. A “yellow” error calls your attention to something that may need correction. Review it to make sure your information is correct. If it is, you can submit without changing your response.

**DO NOT** move to the next step of payment and submission of your application until after you have had your STEM OPT appointment, received your STEM OPT I-20, and uploaded this evidence to your application. You will be preparing a draft of your I-765 for review at this time. **Download the draft snapshot and send it to your International Student Advisor.**
After reviewing your draft I-765, you will receive an email with any corrections. You will then be offered the opportunity to schedule your OPT appointment. After you have had your appointment, received your STEM OPT I-20, and uploaded it to your application, proceed to the submission and payment page.

You will electronically sign your I-765. This is the only electronic signature allowed (again, your I-20 copy must show a signature signed physically, in ink). You will then be directed to pay.gov to pay your application fee.
You may pay by bank transfer (ACH) or via a debit/credit card issued by a US bank. The US billing address provided must match the details on your bank/credit card account.
Screenshots to Guide You Through the OPT Online Application

Filling Out the Form—After You Submit

- You will receive confirmation your form was submitted
- Click on “Go to my cases” to see your case card and receipt notice

Tracking Your Case

All notices are posted to your account
- Receipt notice
- Biometrics notice
- Request for Evidence (RFE)
- PDF of completed form
- Decision letter

Make sure that you have completed submission. A confirmation will be displayed on the screen, and you will immediately get a receipt notice with your case number. Click on “Go to my cases,” then click on “Documents,” to download and send your receipt to your International Student Advisor.
If you previously paper-filed, you can link your paper-filed case to your account after you receive your receipt. You can then see all notices in the account after that step, just as if you had filed online.