

# Guide to Completing OPT STEM Extension I-765 Online

International Student Scholars Office  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte





# Instructions

Please note this presentation is for instructional purposes only. The following screenshots have been provided directly from USCIS. ISSO is not responsible for any changes made to the online application by USCIS.

Ultimately, it is your responsibility to carefully review the USCIS I-765 instructions and I-765 form, and to properly complete and file your application in a timely manner.

You must pay the \$225 STEM OPT Services Fee and request an I-20 from ISSO before you begin the STEM OPT 24 month extension process.



# Important Reminders

- Your actual I-765 application for a STEM EAD from USCIS can be submitted up to 90 days in advance of when your current OPT EAD expires.
- You may only file Form I-765 online from within the U.S. You are not eligible to apply for OPT from outside the country.
- While filing Form I-765 online may be quicker and easier than filing by mail, it does not speed up the time required for USCIS to adjudicate your application. See the USCIS website for current processing times.
- Once you submit your application, you cannot go back to edit or change information. Please contact an ISSO advisor immediately if you believe you have provided incorrect or incomplete information when filing Form I-765. Failing to do so can result in Requests for Evidence (RFEs), processing delays, or the denial of your application by USCIS.
- You can still choose to file your I-765 using the paper process. However, do not apply both online and paper.



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

## Sign Up

Your USCIS account is only for you. Do not create a shared account with family or friends. Individual accounts allow us to best serve you and protect your personal information.

You must provide your own email address below if you are the one who is filing a form online, submitting an online request, or tracking a case.

Email \*

Email confirmation \*

Your email address is used to log in to your USCIS Account. All USCIS email communications will be sent to this address.

Sign Up

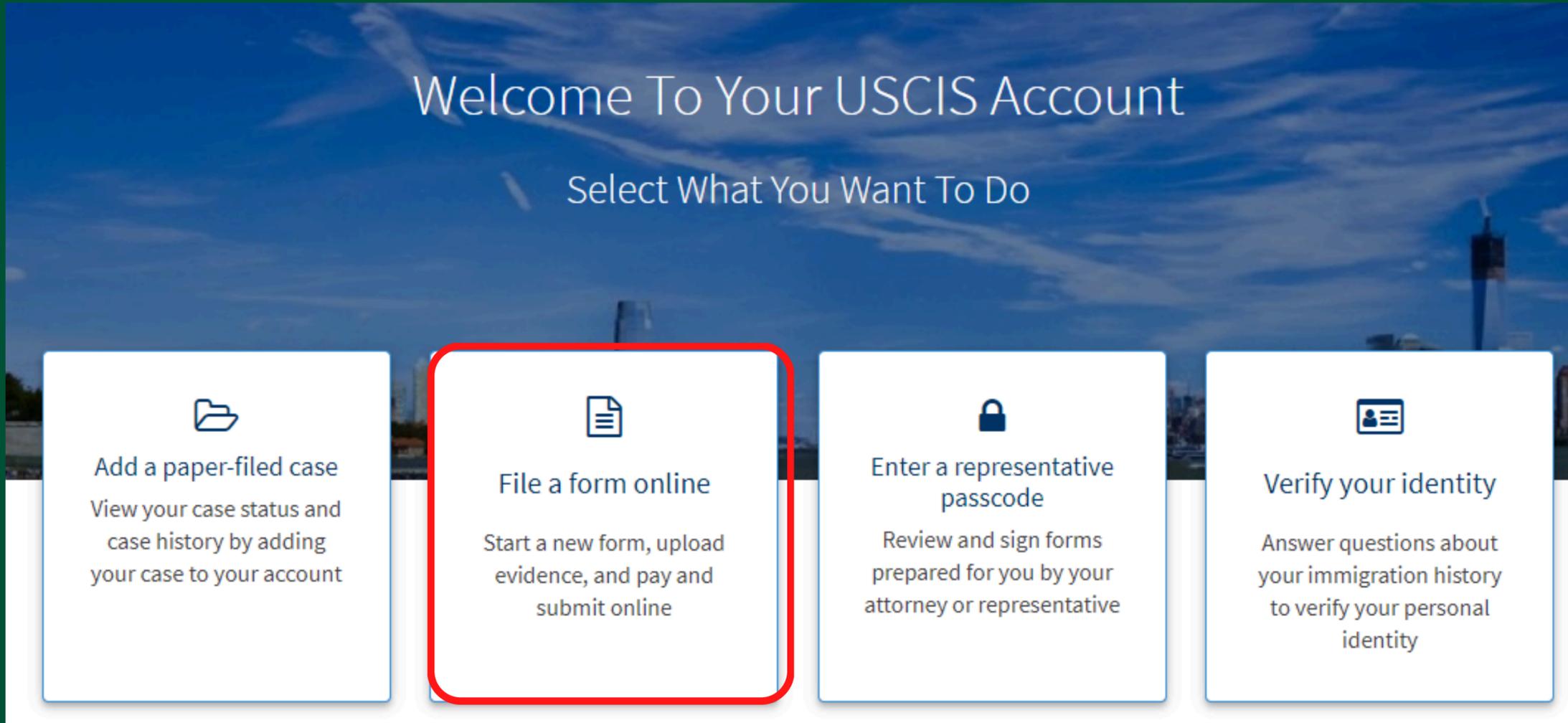
Already have an account?

[Sign In](#)

## Step 1: Sign-in or create a USCIS Account

If you have previously created an account with USCIS, use that account information to sign in. If not, use your UNC Charlotte email address or personal email address to sign up.

## Step 2: Click "File a form online"



Welcome To Your USCIS Account

Select What You Want To Do

 Add a paper-filed case  
View your case status and case history by adding your 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



Select the form you want to file online.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

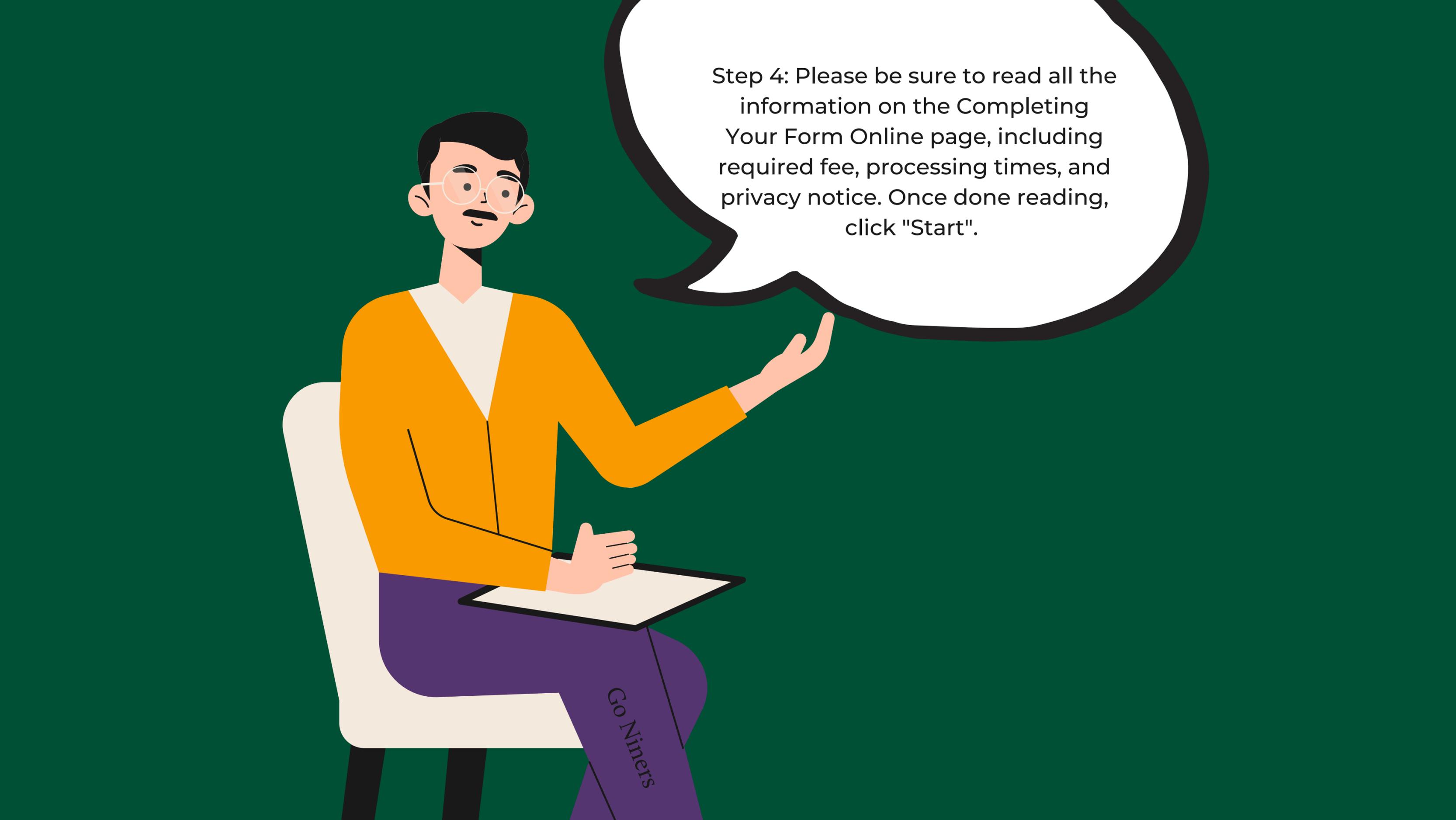
What is your eligibility category?

If your eligibility category is not listed in the drop down menu, you can submit a paper form by mail.

(c)(3)(C) STEM Extension

**Step 3a:**  
Select "Application for Employment Authorization" (I-765).

**Step 3b:**  
Select (c)(3)(c) STEM Extension



Step 4: Please be sure to read all the information on the Completing Your Form Online page, including required fee, processing times, and privacy notice. Once done reading, click "Start".

## 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

## Step 5a: Select Eligibility Category

Choose c(3)(c) STEM Extension

## Would you like to request Premium Processing Service?

Premium Processing Service guarantees that USCIS will take one of several possible actions (issue an approval notice, a denial notice, a notice of intent to deny, or a request for evidence or open an investigation for fraud or misrepresentation) on your Form I-765 within 30 days.

If you request premium processing, you will be asked to complete the Form I-907 after you sign your Form I-765. You will then be able to pay for and submit both forms at the same time.

Yes

No

## Step 5b: Premium Processing

USCIS premium processing is an optional service that allows USCIS to process an application within (up to) 30 calendar days from the day they receive the request for an additional \$1780 on top of the \$470 filing fee (\$2250 all together).

If you need STEM OPT approval sooner than can be provided by normal processing, you may want to consider filing your application for USCIS premium processing. Please speak with an ISSO advisor before you apply for premium processing.

## Step 6: Select Eligibility Category

List degree level and major field of study for your STEM OPT qualifying degree

Ask your employer for how their name is listed in E-Verify

Ask your employer for their E-Verify number

What is your degree?

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

What is your employer's E-Verify company identification number or a valid E-Verify client company identification number?

## 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

## Step 7: Reason for Applying

Since this is a new eligibility code that you are filing for, you will choose "Initial permission to accept employment"

## Have you previously filed Form I-765?

Select "Yes" since you have previously filed an I-765 (you will be required to upload a copy of your last EAD card in the "Evidence" section).

Is someone assisting you with completing this application?

Yes

No

## Step 8: Preparer and interpreter information

Select "no" unless someone (e.g., an interpreter) is assisting you with the application.

## 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)**

**Middle name**

**Family name (last name)**

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## Have you used any other names since birth?

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

Yes

No

## Step 9: Enter your full legal name(s)

Enter your full legal name in this section. If you have used any prior names, be sure to select yes to the second question and enter all prior names.

**TIP: If you don't have a middle name, please leave blank.**



## How may we contact you?

### Daytime telephone number

### Mobile telephone number (if any)

This is the same as my daytime telephone number.

### Email address

Step 10:  
Enter your phone number  
and email address

## What is your current U.S. mailing address?

We will use your current mailing address to contact you throughout the application process. We may not be able to contact you if you do not provide a complete and valid address. Please provide a U.S. address only.

**In care of name (if any)**

**Address line 1**

Street number and name

**Address line 2**

Apartment, suite, unit, or floor

**City or town**

**State**

**ZIP code**

**Step 11:**  
**Enter your U.S. mailing address\***

\*If your current mailing address is not the same as your physical address, enter your physical address.

What is your gender?

- Male
  - Female
- 

What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

Step 12:  
Select your gender  
and marital status

What is your city, town, or village of birth?

What is your state or province of birth?

What is your country of birth?

What is your date of birth?

## Step 13: Enter your birth information

### **\*IMPORTANT\***

Be sure to enter your date of birth in **month/day/year format**. Incorrect date of birth formatting is one of the most common EAD card errors. As a reminder, errors caused by incorrect information provided on Form I-765 will require an additional filing fee.

What is your country of citizenship or nationality?

List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national.

[+ Add country](#)

**Step 14:**  
**Enter your country or countries of citizenship or nationality**

What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)?

When did you last arrive in the United States?

List your arrival date, place of arrival, and status at arrival.

**Date of arrival**

MM/DD/YYYY

**Place of arrival**

**Status at last arrival**

## Step 15:

# Enter information about your last entry to the U.S.

### **\*IMPORTANT\***

Access Your I-94 & Travel History Online  
To retrieve your I-94 and travel history information, click [here](#).

If you have trouble accessing your I-94 information, try your prior passport number(s), if possible. If you continue to have issues accessing your I-94 information, email your ISSO advisor.

What is the passport number of your most recently issued passport?

What is your travel document number (if any)?

What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?

What country issued your passport or travel document?

## Step 16: Enter passport information

If you have renewed your passport since your last arrival in the US, please input that information in "Additional Information"

You can leave the travel document question blank, since we gave our passport information in the previous question.

What is your current immigration status or category?

F-1 Student, Academic, or Language Program

What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)?

Use the "Additional Information" section to include all previously used SEVIS numbers.

Your SEVIS ID number can be found on your I-20

Step 17:  
Enter your immigration status  
and SEVIS number

I do not have or know my A-Number.

A-

## What is your USCIS Online Account Number?

Providing your unique USCIS Online Account Number (OAN) helps us manage your account. You may already have an OAN if you previously filed [certain paper forms](#) and received an Account Access Notice in the mail. You can find the OAN at the top of the notice; it is not the same as an A-Number.

I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number.

# Step 18: A-Number and USCIS Account Number

Your A number is your USCIS # listed on your 12 month OPT EAD Card

Most of our students do not have an USCIS Online Account Number, but if you do, it should auto populate

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

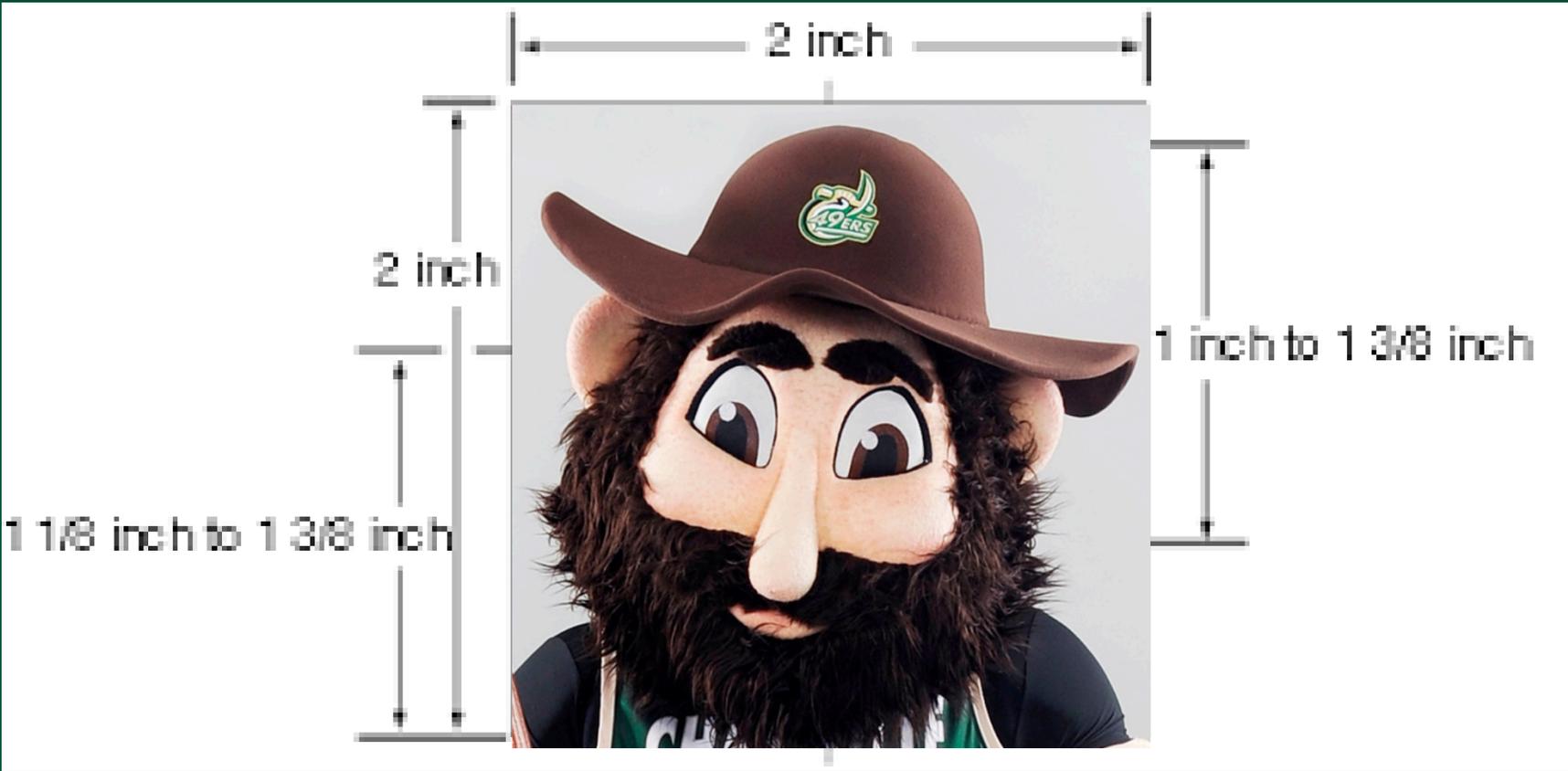
- Yes
- No

---

Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?

- Yes
- No

## Step 19: Social Security Card Questions



## Step 20:

# Upload 2x2 Color Passport Sized Photo

Passport photos can be taken at USPS, or other drug stores

USCIS requires you either scan them in or take a picture with your phone and upload for the online application

## I-94, Arrival And Departure Record

Upload a copy of one of the following:

- Your Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record (front and back);
- A printout of your electronic Form I-94 ; or
- Your passport or other travel document.

If you were admitted to the United States by CBP at an airport or seaport after April 30, 2013, CBP may have issued you an electronic Form I-94 instead of a paper Form I-94. You may visit the [CBP website](#) to obtain a paper version of an electronic Form I-94. CBP does not charge a fee for this service. Some travelers admitted to the United States at a land border, airport, or seaport, after April 30, 2013, with a passport or travel document, who were issued a paper Form I-94 by CBP, may also be able to obtain a replacement Form I-94 from the CBP website without charge.

If your Form I-94 cannot be obtained from the CBP website, it may be obtained by filing [Form I-102, Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Record](#), with USCIS. USCIS does charge a fee for this service.

### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- 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.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

**Choose** or drop files here to upload

# Step 21: Upload I-94 record OR passport biographical page

## \*IMPORTANT\*

Access Your I-94 & Travel History Online  
To retrieve your I-94 and travel history  
information, [click here](#).

If you have trouble accessing your I-94  
information, try your prior passport  
number(s), if possible. If you continue to  
have issues accessing your I-94  
information, email your ISSO advisor.

## Employment Authorization Document Or Government ID

Upload a copy of your last Employment Authorization document (EAD) (front and back). If you were not previously issued an EAD, you must upload a copy of a government-issued identity document (such as a passport) showing your picture, name, and date of birth; a birth certificate with photo ID; a visa issued by a foreign consulate; or a national ID document with photo and/or fingerprint. The identity document photocopy must clearly show your facial features and contain your biographical information.

### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- 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.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

**Choose** or drop files here to upload

Step 22:  
Upload Your Prior EAD Card  
Issued By USCIS for 12 month  
OPT

## I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status

Upload a copy of the Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status endorsed by the Designated School Official (DSO). For the (c)(3)(B) eligibility category, your DSO must have entered the recommendation for OPT into your SEVIS record within 30 days of you submitting Form I-765. If you fail to do so, we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765.

### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- 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.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

**Choose** or drop files here to upload

## Step 23: Upload STEM OPT-Requested I-20 given to you by ISSO

An ISSO advisor must have entered the recommendation for STEM OPT into your SEVIS record within 60 days of you submitting Form I-765 for OPT STEM Extension

Don't forget to sign your I-20...  
**IN BLUE PEN INK!!!!**

## College Degree

Upload evidence the degree that is the basis for the STEM OPT extension is in one of the degree programs currently listed on the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#) or a copy of your prior STEM degree.

### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- 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.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

**Choose** or drop files here to upload

## Step 24:

Upload a copy of your STEM degree diploma OR an official transcript from UNC Charlotte Registrar Office

## Institution Accreditation

Upload evidence that the institution that granted your STEM degree is currently accredited by the U.S. Department of Education and certified by the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP), if this STEM OPT extension is based on a previously earned STEM degree.

### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- 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.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

**Choose** or drop files here to upload

## Step 25: Upload evidence of institution accreditation

\*Only applicable for students applying for STEM OPT Extension based on a prior degree. Most students apply for STEM OPT Extension based on their most recently obtained degree from UNC Charlotte. This upload does not apply to most UNC Charlotte graduates. If it does, please contact an ISSO advisor.



## 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](#)

## Step 26: Additional Information

See next slide for relevant information to include for this section

Section

About You

Page

Your immigration information

Question

What is the passport number of your most recentl...

Additional information

I most recently entered the U.S. on MM-DD-YYYY with passport ##### and was issued I-94 #####. Since this date, I have renewed my passport. The number of my new passport is #####.

If you renewed your passport since the last time you entered the US, please put that information here.



### Review the I-765 form information



Here is a summary of all the information you provided in your application.

Make sure you have provided responses for everything that applies to you before you submit your application. You can edit your responses by going to each application section using the site navigation.

We also prepared a draft case snapshot with your responses, which you can download below.

 [View draft snapshot](#)

## Step 27: Review Application

Please triple check and review your application. The online I-765 form will indicate if there is any missing information.



## Applicant's statement

You must read and agree to the statement below.

- I can read and understand English, and have read and understand every question and instruction on this application, as well as my answer to every question.

**Step 28:**  
Read and agree to the  
applicant's statement



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.

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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.

---

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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.

---

I have read and agree to the applicant's statement

**Step 29:**  
Read, and agree to the applicant's statement and then digitally sign

# USCIS I-765

## Payment Information

Payment Amount **\$470**

### I want to pay with my

- Bank account (ACH)
- Debit or credit card

[Continue](#)

[Cancel](#)

### Step 30:

Pay the \$470 filing fee with either a bank account (account and routing number needed) or with a debit/credit card

Payment is taken the next business day, and must be within the 60 days of I-20 issue date

Once submitted, you will receive an email confirmation with a receipt number

## Step 31: Biometrics

On December 12, 2025, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a photo and biometrics update outlining new requirements for how photographs may be submitted and reused for immigration benefit applications. USCIS no longer accepts self-submitted photographs and is limiting when previously taken photos may be reused. USCIS now accepts only photographs taken at an Application Support Center (ASC) during a Biometrics Services Appointment (BSA), or by other USCIS-authorized entities. This guidance is effective immediately and applies to all benefit requests filed on or after December 12, 2025.



# Step 31: Biometrics

How the process works:

1. You will be notified via your USCIS Account that you have received a request for a Biometrics Appointment.
2. Within a few days, you should receive the actual appointment information: time, date, location. The day of your appointment, do not enter the building more than 15 minutes before your appointment time.
3. What to bring to your appointment: passport, ASC Appointment Notice (appointment information), and completed Applicant's Information Worksheet (AIW, second page of your ASC Appointment Notice).
4. During the appointment, they will verify your identity by taking your photo, collecting your signature and possibly taking your fingerprints. Once you complete these steps, you are DONE! There is nothing to be uploaded after this.
5. You should receive a USCIS case decision in the next few weeks.

Students have reported that these appointments take less than an hour to be completed. This will now be the new normal for OPT and STEM OPT applications that are pending with USCIS so please be mindful to check your USCIS online account periodically.

<b>ASC Appointment Notice</b>		CASE TYPE 1765 - APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION	NOTICE DATE 02/07/2026
APPLICATION/PETITION/REQUEST NUMBER IOE9048520287		USCIS A#	CODE 2
ACCOUNT NUMBER 074901813768	TCR	SERVICE CENTER YSC	PAGE 1 of 2
Norm Niner 9201 University City Blvd Charlotte, NC 28223			
<b>READ THIS ENTIRE NOTICE CAREFULLY.</b> To process your application, petition, or request, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) must collect your biometrics. Please appear at the Application Support Center (ASC) at the date and time specified. <b>TO REQUEST THAT USCIS RESCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT, SEE THE INSTRUCTIONS AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS NOTICE. IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR AS SCHEDULED, USCIS WILL CONSIDER YOUR BENEFIT REQUEST ABANDONED AND IT MAY BE DENIED.</b>			
<b>APPLICATION SUPPORT CENTER</b> USCIS CHARLOTTE 910 E Arrowood Rd Charlotte NC 28217		<b>DATE AND TIME OF APPOINTMENT</b> 02/24/2026 03:00PM	

# USCIS processing times as of 03/02/2026

How to check the status of  
your case:  
(click picture)



CASE STATUS  
ONLINE

Use this tool to track the status of an  
immigration application, petition, or  
request.

Enter a Receipt Number [?](#)

CHECK STATUS

[PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT](#)

This is a screenshot of the USCIS Case Status Online tool. It has a white background. At the top, the text 'CASE STATUS ONLINE' is displayed in blue. Below this is a paragraph of text: 'Use this tool to track the status of an immigration application, petition, or request.' Underneath the text is a label 'Enter a Receipt Number' followed by a small blue circle containing a white question mark. Below the label is a white rectangular input field with a thin grey border. At the bottom of the form is a grey button with rounded corners and the text 'CHECK STATUS' in blue. Below the button is a link for 'PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT' in blue.

ISSO sends you positive energy  
and best wishes on your  
**STEM OPT Extension!**

