17-MONTH OPT EXTENSION FOR F-1 STEM STUDENTS

On April 8, 2008 the Department of Homeland Security published an interim final rule which allows certain F-1 students to apply for a 17-month extension of their Optional Practical Training (OPT). To apply for this extension, you must have:

- Maintained valid F-1 status and completed a bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral degree in a designated Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) field
- Applied for and currently be engaged in post-completion OPT
- Received a job offer from an employer who is currently enrolled in the federal government’s E-Verify system
- Received a job offer which is directly related to your field of study

Eligible Fields of Study

You may only apply for a STEM extension if you completed a degree program in a STEM field of study. STEM fields have been identified in the federal regulation authorizing this benefit, and are based on the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes that corresponds to your major. To determine if you are eligible for a STEM extension, visit the website at http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm and review the list of eligible majors (as listed in section 5 of your I-20). If your major is not in this list, you are not eligible to apply for a STEM extension.

E-Verify

You may only apply for a STEM extension if you are currently employed by or if you receive a job offer from an employer that is currently enrolled in E-Verify. E-Verify is an Internet-based electronic employment eligibility verification system operated by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). To determine if your employer is registered for E-Verify, contact your employer’s Human Resources department. For more information about E-Verify, please refer to http://www.uscis.gov/everify.

When to Apply

If you meet the above requirements for the STEM extension, please make an appointment with an international student advisor to discuss the application process. You may file an OPT STEM extension application up to 120 days before the expiration of your current OPT authorization. A USCIS Service Center must receive your complete extension application before your current OPT authorization expires.

If your application is filed timely and properly, your employment authorization will be automatically extended for up to 180 days while your application is pending. If your application is approved, your extension period will begin the day after the expiration of your original OPT period. You should not travel outside the United States while your OPT extension request is pending, so make travel plans accordingly.

Employment Requirements

Students who are granted an OPT STEM extension may not accrue an aggregate of more than 120 days of unemployment during the total period of OPT, which includes the initial post-completion period and the subsequent 17-month extension period. While you are authorized for a STEM extension, you must work at least 20 hours per week in a paid or unpaid position for an employer that is registered for E-Verify. Your employment must be directly related to your field of study.

Reporting Requirements

International Student Advisors at OSU are required to maintain your SEVIS record throughout your entire period of OPT, including the STEM extension. While you are on OPT or a STEM extension, you must continue to provide our office your new residential address within 10 days of moving. You must also report certain additional information to our office within 10 days. This information is outlined in the next section. Failure to report this information may constitute a violation of your status and lead to termination of your SEVIS record.
**Information to Report**

Below is the information you are required to report to our office as part of maintaining your F1 immigration status. You may fax or mail the information and documents below to our office using the fax number or mailing address in our letterhead. You may also email your updated information and scanned copies of documents to an advisor at ISAS.Advisor@oregonstate.edu. You may report address and employment updates online at our website: [http://oregonstate.edu/international/atosu/OPTreporting](http://oregonstate.edu/international/atosu/OPTreporting).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information to Report</th>
<th>Information to Send</th>
<th>Supporting Documents to Send</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of Employment Authorization Document (EAD)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Copy of EAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of address</td>
<td>New residential address</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of immigration status</td>
<td>New immigration status</td>
<td>USCIS approval notice and/or I-94 card showing new status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of employment</td>
<td>Employer name and address Employment start date</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of employment</td>
<td>Previous employer name and address New employer name and address New employment start date</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of employment</td>
<td>Employer name Employment end date</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent departure from U.S. prior to end of OPT authorization period</td>
<td>Departure date</td>
<td>Departure Form (available on ISAS website)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Validation Reports**

After being authorized for a STEM extension, you are required to send a “validation report” to ISAS every six months until the end of your F-1 status or your STEM extension period, whichever is sooner. The first validation report will be due six months from the start of your STEM extension period. The report must include:

- Your full legal name (as listed on your passport)
- Your SEVIS ID number
- Your current residential address (P.O. boxes are not acceptable)
- Name and address of your current employer
- The date you began working for your current employer
APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR STEM EXTENSION OPT

Step 1: Schedule an appointment with an international student advisor to discuss your eligibility for the STEM extension and to request an extension recommendation. If you live outside the Corvallis area, you may schedule a telephone appointment by contacting the International Program receptionist at 541-737-6310.

Step 2: Request a recommendation for optional practical training from ISAS. You will need to bring or send a completed OPT STEM Extension request form (included in this packet) to ISAS. If you meet the eligibility requirements for a STEM extension, ISAS will recommend you for the OPT extension in the Student Exchange Visitor and Information System (SEVIS) and issue a new I-20. ISAS will only recommend you for the OPT extension. Actual approval must come from the USCIS, which takes approximately 2-4 months. After 5 working days, return to A110 Kerr Administration to pick up your new I-20 containing your OPT recommendation. If you would like us to mail your I-20 to you, please request shipping by following the instructions at http://oregonstate.edu/international/atosu/shipping. ISAS will provide you with an original I-20 and a photocopy. You will need to sign both the original and the photocopy. Keep all your former I-20 for your records and the original I-20 containing your OPT endorsement for your use. ISAS recommends that you mail your application to USCIS within one week of receiving the OPT endorsement.

Step 3: Prepare the following documents:

- **Form I-765**: This form is available on the USCIS website at [http://www.uscis.gov/i-765](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765). Type the form online, and then print and sign it. This helps with accuracy when the Lockbox scans your application.
  - For item #16, use the codes (c) (3) (C) for the 17-month extension for STEM students.
  - For item #17, you will need to list the name of your degree as it is shown on your Form I-20, your employer’s name as listed in E-Verify, and the E-Verify Company or Client ID Number.
  - Enter “N/A” for any questions or fields that do not apply to you. Enter all dates in the format MM/DD/YYYY. Be sure to sign the form before submitting it.
  - **Use caution when filling out the address portion of this form.** The USCIS lockbox you will send your application to is determined by the state of the address you use in item #3. If you do not plan to remain at your current address for the next 3-4 months, list an alternative address. **The post office will not forward government documents.**

- **Copy of your diploma showing the level and program of study or official or unofficial transcripts verifying your STEM degree and I-94 number on the back of each photo and put them in a small, clear bag.**

- **$380 check or money order made payable to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**

- **Photocopy of SEVIS Form I-20 containing the STEM extension recommendation from ISAS (pages 1 and 3).** ISAS will provide you with an original and a photocopy of your new I-20. You will need to sign both the original and the photocopy. Send the photocopy of the new I-20 with your OPT application and keep the original.

- **Photocopy of all previously issued I-20’s (both sides)**

- **Photocopy of Form I-94 (both sides)**

- **Photocopy of the visa page from your passport (note: if the visa in your passport does not match the status you currently hold, include a copy of the approval notice from your change of status).**

- **Photocopy of the identification page from your passport: (include copies of your passport validity dates and any renewal dates.)** You must have a valid passport to be eligible for OPT.

- **Photocopy of previously issued Employment Authorization Document(s)**

Step 4: Mail all of the necessary documents to the USCIS Phoenix Lockbox at: USCIS, P.O. Box 21281, Phoenix, AZ 85036

Keep copies of all documents sent and track your application by using certified mail and return receipt through the US Post Office, and/or the E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance (Form G-1145 at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) which you attach to the first page of your I-765 application for email or text notification). If you no longer live in Oregon, or if you plan to use Express mail/courier service delivery, please refer to the appropriate address as listed in the I-765 instructions (p. 10) at [http://www.uscis.gov/i-765](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765). The USCIS Lockbox Facility will then forward your application to the correct USCIS Service Center for processing. Allow 2-4 months processing time. To check the status of your application, visit the USCIS Case Status Service at [https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do](https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do).

Step 5: Comply with all reporting requirements as listed in the “Reporting Requirements” section above.
You are required to submit 2 passport-style photos with the I-765 form (application for employment authorization). Specifications for these photos are listed in the I-765 form. The photos should be in color with a white background and taken no earlier than 30 days before submission to USCIS. Lightly print your name and your admission number (found on your I-94 Arrival/Departure Form) on the back of each photo with a pencil.

7 Steps to Successful Photos (http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/composition/composition_874.html)

- Frame subject with full face, front view, eyes open
- Make sure photo presents full head from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1-3/8 inches (25 mm to 35 mm)
- Center head within frame (see Figure 2 below)
- Make sure eye height is between 1-1/8 inches to 1-3/8 inches (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
- Photograph subject against a plain white or off-white background
- Position subject and lighting so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- Encourage subject to have a natural expression

Figure 2. Head Position & Placement

Well-Composed Photos
### OPT STEM Extension Request Form

After you have spoken with an international student advisor to determine your eligibility for the OPT STEM extension, please complete the following information and submit this form to International Student Advising and Services.

#### PART I: Personal Information

Last name (family) ____________________________ First name (given) ____________________________

Student ID ____________________ Phone __________________________ Email ________________________

Current U.S. address __________________________________________________________

Street City State Zip Code

Future address (if known) __________________________________________________________

Street City State Zip Code

Effective date of future address (if applicable) ____/____/____ (month/day/year)

#### PART II: Degree Information

Please provide the following information for the degree on which your current OPT is based:

- Degree level (circle) Bachelor’s Master’s PhD
- Major ____________________________
- Date of degree completion ____/____/____ (month/year)
- Final term of registration at OSU ______________________

If you worked on more than one degree at OSU, indicate level, major and completion date: ______________________

#### PART III: Current Employment Information

Please provide the following information regarding your current employment:

- Name of employer ____________________________________________________________
- Address of employer __________________________________________________________
  Street City State Zip Code
- Start date of employment ____/____/____ (month/day/year)
- End date of employment (if applicable) ____/____/____ (month/day/year)
- Start date of current employment authorization document (EAD) ____/____/____ (month/day/year)
- End date of current employment authorization document (EAD) ____/____/____ (month/day/year)

#### PART IV: STEM Employment Information

Please provide the following information regarding your STEM employment:

- Name of employer ____________________________________________________________
- Address of employer __________________________________________________________
  Street City State Zip Code
- Start date of employment ____/____/____ (month/day/year)
- Employer’s E-Verify Company or Client ID Number ____________________________

(Please complete the reserve side of this form)
AFFIDAVIT OF UNDERSTANDING

International Student Advising and Services will not process incomplete applications. Students who have not completed a degree program in an approved STEM field, or whose employer is not registered for E-Verify, are not eligible for a STEM extension.

To be completed by the student

I verify that I have read and understand the information contained in this STEM extension packet and I confirm each of the following (check each item to indicate your understanding):

- I have completed the degree listed on my current I-20 and have verified that my field of study is included in the list of STEM majors.
- I am currently engaged in post-completion OPT and I am within 120 days of the expiration of my employment authorization document (EAD).
- I have a job offer for a paid or unpaid position (at least 20 hours per week) from an employer who is currently enrolled in the E-Verify system.
- I have a job offer which is directly related to my field of study as listed on my current I-20.
- I understand the reporting requirements for which I am responsible while I am on the OPT STEM extension.
- I agree to report any loss of employment or permanent departure from the United States and any changes in my name, residential or mailing address, employer and employer’s address, and immigration status to ISAS within 10 days of the change.
- I agree to submit a validation report as outlined in this STEM extension packet to ISAS every six months, beginning from the start date of the STEM extension and ending when my F-1 status ends or the STEM extension ends, whichever is sooner.
- I authorize ISAS employees to report my private e-mail address and job title, and my supervisor’s name, job title, telephone number and e-mail address in SEVIS in order to issue a STEM extension I-20.

Student Printed Name ______________________________________________________________

Student Signature __________________________________________________________________

Date ____/____/____ (month/day/year)

International Student Advising and Services use only
OPT Recommendation: Approved   Denied   ISAS initials ______________________   Date entered into SEVIS _______________