Optional Practical Training
17 month extension application

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OPT Extension for F-1 Students

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security released an interim final rule on April 4, 2008, extending the period of OPT from 12 to 29 months for qualified F-1 students.

Eligibility
✓ The student must be a recipient of U.S. bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree in specific majors in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM.) (For a list of STEM degrees at the University of Oregon, click here.) A degree minor in a STEM field does not qualify for the extension.
✓ The extension must be based on the same degree as the post-completion OPT, not on a previous degree.
✓ The student must be authorized for OPT at the time of the extension application and have a job or job offer related to his or her field of study.
✓ At the time of application for the OPT extension, the student’s employer must be registered with and participating in the USCIS E-Verify employment verification program.
✓ The student must not have exceeded 90 days of unemployment in the initial 12-month period of OPT.

Application Process

Step 1: Request OPT Extension I-20
Please submit the following documents to International Affairs to receive a new SEVIS I-20:

- OPT Extension Request Form
- Photocopy of STEM degree diploma
- I-765
- Current OPT I-20
- Photocopy of EAD

Step 2: Mail the following documents to:
USCIS Phoenix Lockbox, PO Box 21281, Phoenix, AZ 85036
(Express : USCIS, Attn: AOS, 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100, Phoenix, AZ 85034)

- Photocopy of new OPT Extension I-20
- Form I-765
- Photocopy of passport identification page
- Photocopy of F1 visa page (even if expired)
- Photocopy of I-94 card (both sides)
- 2 passport-sized photos (taken within last 30 days)
- Photocopy of current 12-month EAD
- Photocopy of STEM degree diploma
- Check or money order for $340, payable to Department of Homeland Security

(Effective November 23, 2010, the I-765 fee will be increased to $380.)

Note: Your OPT extension application must be sent to USCIS no later than 30 days after the date of I-20 issuance. If your I-20 is more than 30 days old by the time you plan to mail it to USCIS, see an International Student Advisor in International Affairs.
E-Notification
You may choose to receive an email and/or text message notifying you that your application has been accepted. You must complete Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance, and clip it to the first page of your application. To download a copy of Form G-1145, click on the link www.uscis.gov "FORMS."

If you choose not to use the E-Notification system, you will receive a Notice of Action Receipt from USCIS by mail within 2-4 weeks.

Instructions for Completing Form I-765

✓ Download I-765
Link: http://international.uoregon.edu/index.php/students/employment/305-optional-practical-training-opt

Check box “Renewal of my permission to accept employment.”

#3 Return Address: You can either use your home address, or if you plan to move after you mail your application, use a reliable friend of family member’s address to receive your new EAD. In this case, you will need to use the notation “C/O” which means “in care of.” For example, C/O My Friend, Street Address, City, OR.

#10 Alien Registration Number of I-94 Number: You should write your I-94 number found on the I-94 card that you received when you last entered the U.S. (white card stapled into your passport.) As an F-1, you will not have an Alien Registration Number.

#11 Previous employment authorization: Because you are applying for a 17-month extension, please answer “yes” and complete the related information for your current 12-month OPT period. A photocopy of your 12-month OPT EAD must be included with your application.

#12 Date of last entry: you can find this date stamped on your I-94 card.

#13 Place of last entry: you can find the last port of entry stamped on your I-94 card.

#14 Manner of last entry: this refers to your visa status the last time you entered the U.S. For example, “F-1 student.”

#15 Current immigration status: you should write F-1 student. If you believe your visa status is other than F-1, please talk to an international student advisor in International Affairs.

#16 Eligibility categories: for the 17-month extension, write (c) (3) (C).

#17 Degree/E-Verify: fill in all blanks in this section.
- Degree: indicate here the SEVIS degree name as it appears on your I-20. Also include the “CIP” code found next to your degree name on page 3 of your I-20.
- Employer’s Name as listed in E-Verify: Your employer should be able to provide you with this information.
- Employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number: Your employer should be able to provide you with this information.

Certification: remember to sign, date and list a home or cell phone number.
Regulations to Maintain F-1 Status

General
✓ You must work in a paid position for an E-Verify employer at least 20 hours per week.
Link: E-Verify (http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis)

✓ You must work in a position related to your STEM degree.

✓ You must submit periodic updates to International Affairs.

✓ International travel during your OPT period is allowed only if you have proof of employment or practical training related to your STEM degree. You must have a valid F-1 visa to enter the U.S. each time your travel outside the U.S.

Unemployment Allowance
Students who receive a 17-month OPT extension are given an additional 30 days of unemployment for a total of 120 days over their entire post-completion OPT period.

Student Reporting Requirements
You must report any changes to the information listed below within 10 working days to International Affairs using the OPT Update Form, which is online (see link below.)

- Your legal name and UO ID number
- SEVIS identification number (in top right-hand corner of I-20)
- Your residential address
- Your non-UO email address
- Employer name and address
- Employment start date for the current employer
- Employment end date for last employer (if more than 10 days of unemployment)
- Date of leaving the U.S. (if prior to the end date of your OPT)

6-Month Validation Report
You must submit a validation report to International Affairs, using the OPT Update Form, every six (6) months starting from the date the extension starts and ending when your F-1 status ends or the OPT extension ends, whichever is first. Failure to submit the validation report will result in the termination of your F-1 status.

Employer’s Reporting Requirement
When your employment is terminated for any reason, the employer is required to provide the following information to International Affairs. You must inform your employer of the reporting requirement at the end of your employment. Ask your employer to email International Affairs at sevis@uoregon.edu with the following text in the subject line: “OPT Employment Termination.” The information below must be included in the email message:

- Student employee’s name
- SEVIS ID number (provided by the student)
- The start and end dates of employment

OPT Update Form: http://international.uoregon.edu/index.php/students/opt-current-students
Frequently Asked Questions

When should I apply for the 17-month OPT extension?
Your I-765 OPT extension application must reach USCIS before your current OPT ends. The earliest you may apply for your OPT extension I-20 is within 3 months of the end date of your 12-month OPT period. The start date on your OPT extension will be automatically set to occur on the day after the expiration of your current 12-month OPT EAD. The end date of your extension will be 17 months later. These dates will appear on your new EAD; you do not need to indicate them on the OPT Extension Request Form.

What types of employment are allowed during an OPT extension?
You must work at least 20 hours per week for an E-Verify employer in a position directly related to your STEM degree. This employment may include:

Paid Employment.
- Multiple employers. Students may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to the student’s degree program and all employers must be enrolled in E-Verify.
  - Short-term multiple employers (performing artists). Students, such as musicians and other performing artists may work for multiple short-term employers (gigs.) The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing a list of all gigs.
  - Work for hire. This is also commonly referred to as 1099 independent contractors where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than an employment relationship. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods and the name and address of the contracting company.
  - Self-employed business owner. Students may start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, the student must work full-time. The student must be able to prove that he or she has the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to the student’s degree program.
  - Employment through an agency. Students must be able to provide evidence showing they worked an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.

Does volunteer experience count as employment during an OPT extension?
Volunteer work is allowed, incidental to your status, but does not count as employment for the purpose of maintaining F-1 status.

What are the STEM fields?
Actuarial Science, Computer Science Applications, Engineering, Engineering Technologies, Biological and Biomedical Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics, Military Technologies, Physical Sciences, Science Technologies, Medical Scientist (MS, PhD). The complete STEM degree list is posted at [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm)

What is E-Verify and how do employers enroll?
E-Verify is an internet-based system operated by USCIS in partnership with the Social Security Administration. E-Verify is free to employers and is available in all 50 states. E-Verify provides an automated link to federal databases to help employers determine employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their social security numbers. Employers must enroll in E-Verify and provide you with an E-Verify company identification number for the I-765. Enrollment procedures are available at [http://www.uscis.gov/everify](http://www.uscis.gov/everify).
Frequently Asked Questions continued

When does the OPT extension start?
If the student has properly filed the I-765 application for employment, the OPT extension period starts the day after the expiration of the student’s current 12-month period of OPT.

Can I work with an expired EAD while my OPT extension is pending?
Yes. Your work authorization is automatically extended for up to 180 days while your OPT extension application is pending.

Can I travel outside the U.S. if my current EAD has expired and my OPT extension is pending?
No. You must wait to receive the new extension EAD.

How many hours must I work while on OPT extension?
Students granted an OPT extension must work at least 20 hours per week for an E-Verify-enrolled employer in a position directly related to the student’s STEM degree. STEM students may work multiple jobs related to their STEM degree, but all the employers must be enrolled in E-Verify.

How do I show that my employment is directly related to my degree program?
Students should maintain evidence – for each job – of the position held, proof of the duration of that position, the job title, contact information for the student’s supervisor or manager, and a description of the work. If it is not clear from the job description how the work is related to the student’s degree, the student should obtain a signed letter from the employer’s hiring official, supervisor, or manager stating how the student’s degree is related to the work performed.

What are the limits on periods of unemployment?
Students who receive a 17-month OPT extension are given an additional 30 days of unemployment for a total of 120 days over their entire post-completion OPT period.

What counts as time unemployed?
Each day a student is not working during the OPT authorization period counts as a day of unemployment. The only exception is that periods of up to 10 days between the end of one job and the beginning of the next job will not be included in the calculation for time spent unemployed.

• Students on post-completion OPT may have up to 90 days unemployment.
• Students who receive a 17-month extension are given an additional 30 days of unemployment for a total of 120 days over their entire post-completion OPT period.
• If the student, whose approved period of OPT has started, travels outside of the U.S. while unemployed, the time spent outside the U.S. will count as unemployment against the 90/120 day limits.

What is the effect on a student’s status if the student exceeds the period of unemployment or non-activity?
A student who has exceeded the period of unemployment while on OPT has violated his or her status unless he or she has taken one of the following actions:

• Applied to continue his or her education by a change of level or transferring to another school.
• Departed the U.S.
• Taken action to otherwise maintain legal status, i.e. change of visa status.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

I-20 OPT Extension Request

Include with this completed form:
1. Your Current OPT I-20
2. Photocopy of STEM degree diploma
3. Completed I-765 form
4. Photocopy of EAD

Personal information

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<tr>
<th>Family Name,</th>
<th>First Name,</th>
<th>Middle Name</th>
<th>UO Student ID</th>
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Additional Questions:
1. Do you have a spouse or children with you in the U.S.?
   - Yes
   - No
   (Check “Yes” only if they are your dependent)

Employer information

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<th>Name of Company</th>
<th>E-Verify Number</th>
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Verify financial support for you and any dependents

- Yes, I am able to meet my financial obligations during my OPT period.
- No, I am unable to meet my financial obligations during my OPT period.
If no, please explain: ___________________________________________

Signature

I certify that the above information is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Student________________________________________________________ Date _____________________

Pick up Date: ___________