

**The 17-Month Extension of Optional Practical Training (OPT)** is a “17-month extension of post-completion OPT for students with a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree. [...] a qualified student may apply for an extension of OPT while in a valid period of post-completion OPT. The extension will be for an additional 17 months, for a maximum of 29 months of OPT, if all of the following requirements are met.” **8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C)**

It is available for students who are currently: doing post-completion OPT, have secured employment with an E-Verify employer in their major field of study, **and** have completed a degree in a STEM field. To verify that your degree qualifies as an approved STEM program, please contact an OISS advisor.

## Steps to Apply for 17-Month OPT Extension

1

**Make an appointment to discuss your plans with an OISS advisor, and/or review the OPT STEM Extension PowerPoint online.**

- Contact OISS at 713-348-6095 or [oiss@rice.edu](mailto:oiss@rice.edu) or stop by the office in Lovett Hall

2

**Complete these two forms and return them to OISS:**

- OISS Statement of Understanding (attached)
- Form I-765: On <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>, click “Download Form I-765”, fill in the PDF, and print a hard copy. Please refer to the attached sample I-765 with notes how to fill in properly.

*Note: DO NOT click “File My Application Online (E-Filing)”. Filing your application and paying online may result in an unnecessary delay in your application.*

3

**An OISS advisor will create your new STEM OPT I-20 and email you when it is ready (usually 1-2 business day(s) later).**

4

**Work with an OISS advisor to assemble your STEM application packet. If you are no longer in Houston, an OISS advisor will work with you by email and phone to complete your STEM OPT application. Please prepare the following documents, in the following order:**

- Recommended [G-1145 E-notification](#) form
  - A check or money order for \$380.00 to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”
  - Two (2) passport-style photographs (<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/photos.html>)
  - Photocopies of your passport, most recent F-1 visa, and most recent I-94 card or printout <http://www.cbp.gov/>
  - Photocopy of current (and any previous) EAD card(s)
  - Official Rice transcript
  - Photocopy of diploma showing degree received and field of study
- Recommended letter from employer with E-Verify number*

# 17-Month OPT Extension FAQ

## ● WHEN TO APPLY

You may apply as early as 120 days before the end of your 12-month OPT period, and your application *must* be received by USCIS before your 12-month OPT end date. *8CFR 214.2(f)(11)(i)(C)*

## ● WHAT IF MY EAD CARD DOES NOT ARRIVE IN TIME

Even if your new EAD card has not arrived by the start of your 17-month extension period, you may continue working for an E-Verify employer for 180 days according to the Code of Federation Regulations (*8CFR 213.2(f)(11)(i)(C)* and *8CFR 274a.12(b)(6)(iv)*). Once your new EAD card arrives, you should provide a copy to your employer and OISS.

## ● WHAT SHOULD THE PHOTOS LOOK LIKE

Standard U.S. passport photos: Square 2" x 2" (5cm x 5 cm), front view, full face, white or off-white background. For full specifications, see <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/photos.html>. Many FedEx, CVS, and Walgreens branches offer reasonably priced passport photo services near Rice.

## ● WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOUR OPT APPLICATION IS MAILED

1. USCIS sends a Notice of Action form once your application is received, usually in about two weeks. This notice will contain a receipt number to check application status at <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp>.
2. USCIS mails your EAD card. Processing time varies but can be up to three months.

## ● UNEMPLOYMENT DURING STEM OPT EXTENSION PERIOD

Students are required to work full time (defined as over 20 hours per week) for an E-Verify employer during OPT. Students are permitted 120 total days of unemployment in the combined 29-month period of OPT (12-months of regular OPT plus 17-month OPT extension). Unemployment days accumulated during the regular 12-month OPT carry over to the 17-month extension period. *8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(E)*

## ● TRAVEL DURING STEM OPT PERIOD

Re-entry to the U.S. will be denied after the 12-month OPT end date if the 17-month OPT extension application is still pending. Once the 17-month extension is approved, students may travel outside the U.S. and re-enter provided they have all of the following documents: 1) Passport valid at least 6 months; 2) unexpired F-1 visa stamp in passport; 3) I-20 signed for travel by OISS advisor within preceding six months; 4) 17-month extension EAD card; 5) employment letter from E-Verify employer. Application for F-1 visa renewal during OPT can be risky. Please meet with an OISS advisor and refer to [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq\\_f2.htm#\\_Toc81222042](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq_f2.htm#_Toc81222042) for further discussion of travel during OPT (or travel while OPT application is pending). *8 CFR 214.2(f)(13)*

## ● REQUIRED FOLLOW-UP ONCE STEM OPT PERIOD STARTS *8 CFR 214.2(f)(12)*

1. Bring or send OISS a copy of your new STEM EAD card.
2. Complete F-1 OPT status updates online (<http://oiss.rice.edu/gateway.aspx?id=204>) whenever you start a new job, move, or change status. OISS uses this information to accurately maintain your F-1 SEVIS record.
3. Verify your employment and personal information after 6 months (even if nothing has changed!).

## ● CHANGING JOBS WHILE STEM APPLICATION IS PENDING

If you change employers while your application is pending, you may need to report the change to USCIS by filing a new I-765 (without the fee) using the new employer's E-Verify number, along with a copy of the USCIS receipt, and a brief letter explaining the reason for the new I-765 submission. ([http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt\\_policy\\_guidance\\_042010.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt_policy_guidance_042010.pdf))

## ● CHANGING JOBS DURING APPROVED STEM OPT

Students may change to another E-Verify employer during the 17-month OPT extension. Please update your information with OISS to report new employer's E-Verify information accordingly.



# Statement of Understanding for 17-month Extension of Optional Practical Training

Office of International Students & Scholars

Revised July 9, 2015

I \_\_\_\_\_ am currently participating in a period of Post-Completion OPT, (Name) working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to my major area of study. I have successfully completed a bachelor's/masters/ or doctoral degree with a degree code in a field on the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List, from a SEVIS-certified college or university.

For additional updates on DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List please visit: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>. Information on STEM regulations can be found in 8CFR214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C).

**In order to meet the criteria of the 17-month extension, please initial that you understand and agree to each of the following points below:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. My employer is registered with the E-Verify employment verification system, and will be responsible for providing the E-Verify information on line #17 of USCIS Form I-765. 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C)(3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I understand that I only have a one-time eligibility when applying for the 17- month extension of OPT and must use USCIS Form I-765 with a fee, which must be filed before my current EAD expires. 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C)(1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I understand that if my 17- month extension of OPT is approved, my new OPT end date will be 17 months after my 12 month OPT regardless of my actual filing date. 8 CFR 214.2(f)(11)(iii)(A)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I have not accrued an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during my post-completion OPT. If granted a 17- month extension of OPT, I understand I may not accrue an aggregate of more than 120 days of unemployment during the total 29-month OPT period. While waiting for approval of my 17- month extension of OPT, I can work up to a maximum of 180 days. 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(E)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. If denied a 17- month extension of OPT, then I understand my employment end date will be the date on my current EAD card or the date on my notice of denial, whichever is later. ([http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt\\_policy\\_guidance\\_042010.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt_policy_guidance_042010.pdf))
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I will continue to report any changes (name, residential or mailing address, employer's name or employer's address) regarding my OPT employment as required by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(12) to Rice OISS within 10 business days at: <https://my.rice.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1236118148215>.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I will send OISS a photocopy of my new EAD card by either email or fax ([oiss@rice.edu](mailto:oiss@rice.edu) or 713-348-6058)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I will submit a validation report every six months; even if there are no changes to my employment or status at: <https://my.rice.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1236118148215>. 8 CFR 214.2(f)(12)(ii)(B)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I will acquaint myself and my role in the process via the SEVP Policy Guidance published on April 23, 2010 at: [http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt\\_policy\\_guidance\\_042010.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt_policy_guidance_042010.pdf)

**By signing below I understand and have read the statement of understanding form regarding the 17- month extension of OPT and I agree to comply with DHS and USCIS immigration regulation 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C) throughout my Post Completion OPT and 17- month extension of OPT.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

For OISS Use Only

OISS Authorization:  Yes  No

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Updated to F-1 STEM OPT in ISSM:  Yes  No

Department of Homeland Security  
 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

For USCIS Use Only	Fee Stamp	Action Block:	Initial Receipt	Resubmitted
			Relocated	
			Received	Sent
			Completed	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Application Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid From _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Authorization/Extension Valid To _____ Subject to the following conditions: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Application Denied - Failed to establish: <input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (a) or (c) <input type="checkbox"/> Economic necessity under 8 CFR 274a.12(g)(4) (16) and 8 CFR 214.2(f)	Approved	Denied
			A# _____	

Mark "Renewal of my permission to accept employment"

I am applying for:  Permission to accept employment.  Replacement (of lost employment authorization document).  
 Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document).

Address must be valid for the next four months—do not use a friend's address!  
 You may use the OISS address:  
 6100 Main St. MS-365  
 Houston, TX 77005

- Full Name**  
 (Family Name) (First Name) (Middle Name)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Other Names Used** (include Maiden Name)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- U.S. Mailing Address**  
 (Street Number and Name) (Apt. Number)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Town or City) (State) (ZIP Code)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Country of Citizenship or Nationality**  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Place of Birth**  
 (Town or City) (State/Province) (Country)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of Birth** (mm/dd/yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_
- Gender**  Male  Female
- Marital Status**  
 Married  Single  Divorced  Widowed
- Social Security Number** (Include all numbers you have ever used, if any)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or Form I-94 Number** (if any)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?**  
 Yes (Complete the following questions.)  
 Which USCIS Office? \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
 Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation) \_\_\_\_\_  
 No (Proceed to Question 12.)
- Date of Last Entry into the U.S., on or about** (mm/dd/yyyy)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Place of Last Entry into the U.S.**  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Status at Last Entry** (E-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Mark "Yes" and put in information from your OPT

- Current Immigration Status** (Visitor, Student, etc.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Eligibility Category.** Go to the "Who May File Form I-765?" section of the instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- (c)(3)(C) Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(3)(C) in Question 16 above, list your degree, your employer's name as listed in E-Verify, and your employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in the space below.  
 Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Employer's Name as listed in E-Verify \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_
- (c)(2)(6) Eligibility Category.** If you entered the eligibility category (c)(2)(6) in Question 16 above, please provide the receipt number of your H-1B principal spouse's most recent Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-129.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Signature**  
 I certify, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the "Who May File Form I-765?" section of the instructions and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in Question 16.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Applicant**  
 I declare that this document was prepared by me at the request of the applicant and is based on all information of which I have any knowledge.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_

STEM OPT: (c)(3)(c)

This must be completed with your employer's E-Verify information

Leave blank!

Make sure to sign in blue ink