

Optional Practical Training (OPT) STEM Extension Form

OPT EXTENSION: This applies to students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields only! If you are applying for OPT and are in a STEM field, you must apply for the standard 12 months of OPT and then apply for an extension if needed. If you are **not** in a STEM field, OPT remains standard 12 months with no extensions.

WHAT IS THE 17-MONTH OPT EXTENSION? Students already on OPT who have graduated in the STEM fields are eligible for a 17-month extension of their OPT. PLEASE SEE THE STEM FIELDS BELOW. IF YOU ARE NOT IN ONE OF THESE FIELDS, YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR AN OPT EXTENSION. Also, you must have completed a degree in a STEM field and be working in that area of expertise. You must have a job offer or be employed at the time you apply for the extension.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA: If you would like to apply for an extension, your employer must be participating in the E-Verify system (employment verification system). Please ask the human resources department where you work to find out if they are participating in E-Verify. For more information about E-Verify, go to: http://www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/programs/gc_1185221678150.shtm

TO APPLY FOR AN EXTENSION (MUST BE DONE BEFORE 12-Month REGULAR OPT EXPIRES):

- 1) Download and fill out the OPT packet entitled "OPT STEM Extension Form" from the UGA ISSIS web site, complete it and bring or send it to ISSIS!
- 2) You must obtain a letter from your employer that confirms their participation in E-Verify and indicates their E-Verify number. Turn in the letter and the completed OPT STEM Extension Form into ISSIS.
- 3) ISSIS will review the application and make an OPT recommendation in SEVIS. We issue a new I-20 and mail your application to you. You are responsible for mailing your completed application to the appropriate USCIS service center that has jurisdiction over where you are currently living.

Your extension should be sent in 90 days prior to the expiration of your current OPT card.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) 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)

WHAT HAPPENS WHILE THE APPLICATION IS PENDING?

If the application for the 17-month OPT extension is successfully received prior to the expiration of the first OPT period, *students may continue employment* until the application is processed *or* until 180 days have passed, whichever is sooner.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS DURING THE 17-MONTH EXTENSION:

KEEP: STUDENT COPY

Students approved for the 17-month OPT extension have additional reporting requirements in order to maintain their status and work authorization.

- Students must report to the UGA ISSIS within 10 days if there is any change of:
 - Legal name
 - Residential or mailing address
 - Employer name
 - Employer address, and/or
 - Loss of employment
- Students must make a validation report to the UGA ISSIS **every six months** to confirm name and address, employer name and address, and continuation of employment. The report is due within 10 days of the six-month reporting date. You can email OPT@uga.edu with this information.

17-MONTH EXTENSION AVAILABLE ONCE:

The special 17-month extension of OPT is only available to each student one time. A student who is approved for a 17-month OPT extension can never apply for it again. Please note that this rule is different from the application rules for the “regular” 12-month OPT, under which students could be approved for multiple OPT periods for each higher degree earned in the US (i.e. bachelor’s, then master’s, then doctoral).

STARTING AND ENDING DATES:

The start date of the 17-month OPT extension will be automatically set to the day after the expiration of the current 12-month OPT authorization. The end date will be 17 months later. (It is not possible to request smaller increments of time for the OPT extension.)

BRIDGE OF THE H-1B CAP-GAP:

When a student’s OPT ends before September 30th, they usually experience a gap of time between when they can legally work on OPT and when they can start the H-1B. Under the new STEM extension rule, a STEM student currently on OPT and is the beneficiary of a timely-filed H-1B petition (of an October 1 employment start date) will have his or her duration of status and OPT employment authorization extended to that date.

OPT CHECKLIST OF MATERIALS

- Complete form I-765 . The answer for #17 under “Degree” should be the major description as it appears on your I-20. Please obtain E-Verify information from your employer.
- Provide a photocopy of the front and back of I-94 card
- Provide a photocopy of the current EAD card
- Photocopy of your **UGA diploma or official UGA transcript showing your conferred degree.**
- Two photographs (*see back of this form* for photograph specification sheet.)
- Check for \$340.00 made payable to “USCIS”
- Letter from employer that confirms their participation in E-Verify and indicates their E-Verify number

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

1. ISSIS will prepare a new I-20 for you. In most cases your I-20 will be ready in 3-5 business days. We will notify you via email once it is ready. If you are located close to UGA, you may come to the office to pick up your new I-20. If you are located far away from UGA, you may authorize a friend to pick up your I-20 or we can send it to you either via FedEx shipping if you provide us with your address, telephone number, and credit card information to pay for shipping charges.
2. Within approximately two weeks of sending your application you will receive a Notice of Action. This is proof that you have an application pending with USCIS. The Notice of Action will contain your Receipt Number (“LIN number”). You can use this number to check your case status online at www.uscis.gov (in the lower right corner).
3. If you successfully file the application for your 17-month OPT extension prior to the expiration of your current 12-month OPT period, you may continue employment *even if your previous EAD card is expired* until your OPT extension is processed or until 180 days has passed, whichever is sooner.
4. If your OPT extension is approved, you must send a photocopy of your new EAD card to ISSIS.

SENDING YOUR APPLICATION:

We recommend that you send your OPT application via U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Certified Mail or through a courier service (examples: FedEx, DHL, UPS). There are four USCIS Service Centers in the United States that process I-765 (OPT) applications. The address you use on the I-765 determines where you should send your application. See next page:

If your I-765 mailing address is located in...	... you should send your application to:
Connecticut Delaware District of Columbia Maine Maryland Massachusetts New Hampshire New Jersey New York Puerto Rico West Virginia Pennsylvania Rhode Island U.S. Virgin Islands Vermont Virginia	USCIS Vermont Service Center ATTN: I-765 75 Lower Weldon Street St. Albans, VT 05479-0001
Arizona Guam Nevada California Hawaii	For USPS Certified Mail: USCIS California Service Center P.O. Box 10765 Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1076 For couriers: USCIS California Service Center 24000 Avila Road 2 nd Floor, Room 2312 Laguna Niguel, CA 92677
Alabama Arkansas Florida Georgia Kentucky Louisiana Mississippi New Mexico North Carolina Oklahoma South Carolina Tennessee Texas	For USPS Certified Mail: USCIS Texas Service Center P.O. Box 851041 Mesquite, TX 75185-1041 For couriers: USCIS Texas Service Center 4141 N. St. Augustine Rd Mesquite, TX 75227
Alaska Colorado Idaho Illinois Indiana Iowa Kansas Michigan Minnesota Missouri Montana Nebraska North Dakota Ohio Oregon South Dakota Utah Washington Wisconsin Wyoming	For USPS Certified Mail: USCIS Nebraska Service Center P.O. Box 87765 Lincoln, NE 68501-7765 For couriers: USCIS Nebraska Service Center 850 S. Street Lincoln, NE 68508-1225

DURING THE 17-MONTH OPT EXTENSION

How to maintain your F-1 status:

Information reporting requirements are more strict during the special 17-month OPT extension.

Take special care to comply with these obligations. Failure to do so can jeopardize the validity of your OPT and your legal visa status in the US.

1. You must report any change of address to UGA via OASIS (<https://oasisweb.uga.edu/>) within 10 days of moving to your new residence. Your address must describe where you live. It cannot be a P.O. Box or an office address.
2. You must report any change in your legal name to ISSIS within 10 days of the change. If your name changes, please send a photocopy of your new or updated passport to: ISSIS: 110 E. Clayton St., 4th Floor, Bank of America Building, Athens, GA 30602
3. If the name or address of your employer changes, you must report this information to ISSIS within 10 days of the change. You can report via email to OPT@uga.edu.
4. If you experience an interruption in employment, you must report it to the ISSIS. You can report via email to: OPT@uga.edu
5. **You are required to make a validation report to the OISS every six months** starting from the date your 17-month OPT extension is approved. The report is due within 10 days of the required reporting date. The validation report must be sent via email to OPT@uga.edu and must contain the following information:
 - a. Legal name
 - b. Residential / mailing address
 - c. Employer name
 - d. Employer address
 - e. Confirmation that you are currently employed by the employer named

Ending Your OPT

Your F-1 status remains valid until 60 days after the expiration of your EAD card. During this 60-day grace period, you are no longer authorized to work, however you may legally stay in the US. If you depart the US during the 60-day grace period, you are no longer eligible to re-enter under your previous F-1 visa status.

- If you plan to return home after the end of your OPT, please make sure that you depart the US before the end of your 60-day grace period.
- If you plan to change your visa status, we recommend you begin this process before your OPT is expired.
- If you plan to start a new degree program at another college or university, please make sure to contact ISSIS regarding the transfer of your SEVIS record. Transfers must be done before the end of the 60-day grace period.

REMINDERS

- **TRAVEL:**
 - You must have a valid, unexpired EAD card to travel!
 - You will need the following original documents to travel: 1) Valid passport; 2) Valid F-1 visa stamp; 3) I-20 endorsed for OPT with a travel signature less than 6 months old; 4) Unexpired EAD card; 5) Job offer/ confirmation letter from a US employer.
- You **MUST** report any address changes via OASIS. Your address must be a physical address and **cannot** be a P.O. Box or an office address.

F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT)

SECTION A: FOR STUDENTS

A student who files the application timely may continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision is made, or for 180 days, whichever comes first

The student must agree to report the following information to ISSIS:

- Change of name
- Change of residential or mailing address
- Name and address of employer
- Change in the name or address of employer
- When employment changes or terminates

The student must also agree to provide a report **every 6 months** to ISSIS to verify the above information.

Name _____

Student ID # _____ Social Security # _____

Email _____ Personal Email _____

Phone _____

Major (Field of Study) _____

Requested OPT Extension

Start Date MM/DD/YY _____ Ending Date MM/DD/YY _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

SECTION B: FOR EMPLOYERS

The employer must agree to report the termination or departure of the student to ISSIS or through any other process chosen by the USCIS.

Name of Company _____

E-Verification Number: _____

Employer Address _____

Student Job Title _____

EMPLOYER SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Print Name of Employer _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

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

I-765, Application For
Employment Authorization

Do not write in this block.

Remarks, Action Block, Fee Stamp
A#
Applicant is filing under §274a.12
Application Approved. Employment Authorized / Extended (Circle One) until (Date).
Subject to the following conditions:
Application Denied.
Failed to establish eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (a) or (c).
Failed to establish economic necessity as required in 8 CFR 274a.12(c)(14), (18) and 8 CFR 214.2(f)

I am applying for:
Permission to accept employment.
Replacement (of lost employment authorization document)
[X] Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach previous employment authorization document).

1. Name (Family Name in CAPS) (First) (Middle) Which USCIS Office? Date(s)

2. Other Names Used (Include Maiden Name) Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)

3. Address in the United States (Number and Street) (Apt. Number) 12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S. (mm/dd/yyyy)

OIE 110 East Clayton St., 4th Floor
(Town or City) (State/Country) (ZIP Code)
Athens GA 30602

13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S.

4. Country of Citizenship/Nationality 14. Manner of Last Entry (Visitor, Student, etc.)

5. Place of Birth (Town or City) (State/Province) (Country) 15. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.)

6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) 7. Gender
Male Female

16. Go to Part 2 of the Instructions, Eligibility Categories. In the space below, place the letter and number of the category you selected from the instructions (For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.).

8. Marital Status
Married Single
Widowed Divorced

Eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (C) (3) (C)

9. Social Security Number (Include all numbers you have ever used) (if any)

17. If you entered the Eligibility Category, (c)(3)(C), in item 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.

10. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or I-94 Number (if any)

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

11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?

Yes (If yes, complete below) No

Certification

Your Certification: I certify, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America, 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 Instructions in Part 2 and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in Block 16.

Signature Telephone Number Date

Signature of person preparing form, if other than above: 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.

Print Name Address Signature Date

Table with 6 columns: Remarks, Initial Receipt, Resubmitted, Relocated (Rec'd, Sent, Approved), Completed (Denied, Returned)

