



**Silicon Valley University**  
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### **17-month F-1 OPT extension for students with STEM degrees**

During the initial period of 12 months of Optional Practical Training (OPT), certain government-designated STEM degree-holders (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) in the following fields may be eligible for an additional 17 months of OPT for a total of 29 months.

- Actuarial Science
- Computer Science Applications
- Engineering.
- Engineering Technologies.
- Biological and Biomedical Sciences.
- Mathematics and Statistics.
- Physical Sciences.
- Science Technologies.
- Medical Scientist (MS, PhD).

The degree programs that qualify for a OPT 17 months extension are listed at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>.

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR 17-month OPT extension:**

- Student must be currently participating in a 12-month period of Silicon Valley University administered OPT and
- Working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to the student's major area of study.
- Student must have successfully completed a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in a field on the DHS
- Student must have a job or job offer from an employer registered with the E-Verify employment verification system. (E-Verify information at <http://www.uscis.gov/E-Verify>)
- Student has not previously received a 17-month OPT extension
- Silicon Valley University must recommend the 17-month OPT extension in SEVIS, after verifying a student's eligibility, certifying that the student's degree is on the STEM Designated Degree Program List, and ensuring that the student is aware of his or her responsibilities for maintaining status while on OPT.
- Student must apply for the 17-month extension on Form I-765 with fee. Students who timely file an application for the 17-month OPT extension will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.
- Employer must agree to report the termination or departure of the student to Silicon Valley University by email to [studentoffice@svuca.edu](mailto:studentoffice@svuca.edu). An employer must consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student

has left employment, or if the student has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the employer's consent.

### **Validation and reporting requirements during STEM extension:**

The validation report must include:

1. student's full name
2. current residence address and mailing address if different from residence address
3. name and address of the current employer
4. date student began working for the current employer
5. copy of your EAD card
6. copy of your most current offer letter

In addition to the validation reports, students on a STEM extension must notify the student office within 10 days of:

1. any change of name or residence or mailing address
2. any change of employer, giving the name and address of the new employer
3. any change to the name and address of this employer
4. any interruption of this employment

STEM extension information is found under section 8.

[http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt\\_policy\\_guidance\\_04062009.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt_policy_guidance_04062009.pdf)

### **Application Process**

The following items are required to apply for a STEM extension:

- completed 17 months OPT extension application on (Go to: [http://www.svuca.edu/home/update/17\\_Month\\_Extensionnew.pdf](http://www.svuca.edu/home/update/17_Month_Extensionnew.pdf) )
- your current offer letter
- your EAD card

The student office will issue a new I-20 recommending the OPT extension starting on the day following the expiration of your current EAD and ending 17 months later.

### **Application Period:**

The I-765 and supporting documents must be sent to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regional office having jurisdiction over your address of residence. The earliest USCIS may receive the application is 120 days before the end date of your initial period of OPT and the latest is the date your EAD expires.

### **Extension of Work Authorization:**

Students who timely file an application for the 17-month OPT extension will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.

## **Travel:**

Although you may continue to work while the OPT extension application is pending, you will not be able to return to the US after a trip abroad after the first EAD has expired and before you receive the month extension. As always, you will need to have an unexpired passport valid for 6 months into the future and an unexpired F-1 visa in your passport to return from a trip abroad in F-1 status.

## **Checklist for the application to USCIS**

1. I-765 Application for Employment Eligibility  
Question 16: Eligibility code is (c) (3) (C)  
Question 17: List your degree and major as it appears on page 3 of your I-20, and your employer name and number as listed in the government's E-verify program.
2. Required I-765 fee of \$340, payable to US Department of Homeland Security by bank check, money order (Please note that a money order is more difficult to track than a check.) or personal check (Please write "USCIS I-765" in the memo line of the check.)
3. Photocopy of I-94 card, front and back.
4. Photocopy of your current EAD card (both sides) and any previous EAD cards (if applicable)
5. Photocopy of your most recent diploma that shows the degree name and the date awarded.
6. Official or unofficial transcript as evidence of your program of study being in a government-designated STEM field
7. Two U.S passport-style photos ([http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/guide\\_2081.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/guide_2081.html)) meeting specifications of the link and taken within 30 days of filing the application.
8. Photocopy of page OPT 17 months Extension I-20 endorsed by the DSO on page 3 no more than 30 days before mailing the application.
9. Photocopy of the identification page(s) of your passport, including photo and expiration date
10. Mail you application to the USCIS Service Center having jurisdiction over the place of residence you had written in Item 3 of the I-765.

The USCIS will send the EAD card to the address indicated on the I-765 form. The address must be within the jurisdiction of USCIS Regional Service Center to which the application is submitted or it will not be processed.