

# Optional Practical Training (OPT) Extension for 17-Month STEM Field Degree Holders



**Office of International Students  
and Scholars MS/074**  
120 Fitzgerald Student Services Bldg.  
Reno, NV 89557-0144  
(775) 784-6874  
Fax: (775) 327-5845  
EMAIL: [oisss@unr.edu](mailto:oisss@unr.edu)  
<http://www.unr.edu/oisss>

F-1 students with degrees in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) may apply for a 17-month (for a 29 month OPT total) extension of their OPT status based on several requirements.

## Eligibility:

- ✓ Student must have a degree in a STEM field (see below)
- ✓ Student must currently be in a 12-month period of OPT
- ✓ Student must be working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to the student's major area of study (employment must be traditional paid employment)
- ✓ The **employer** must be registered with E-Verify

## STEM Fields:

- **Actuarial Science**
- **Computer Science** (except Data Entry/Microcomputer Applications)
- **Engineering**
- **Engineering Technologies**
- **Biological and Biomedical Sciences**
- **Mathematics and Statistics**
- **Military Technologies**
- **Physical Sciences**
- **Science Technologies**
- **Medical Scientist**

*To determine if you have a STEM field degree, check to see if the program on your I-20 matches our list of STEM fields:*

## When to Apply:

Students may apply for an OPT extension at any time prior to the expiration date of their EAD (OPT) card. Students who file in a timely manner will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the application or 180 days, whichever comes first.

## How to Apply:

*Note: E-filing is currently not an option*

## Mail-in Option

1. E-mail ([skibbey@unre.edu](mailto:skibbey@unre.edu)), fax (775-327-5845), mail (OISS-UNR MS074, Reno, NV 89557) the following items:
  - 17-Month STEM OPT Extension Request Form (see the attachment)
  - Copy of your completed I-765 ([www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) >> "immigration forms" >> "Application for Employment Authorization I-765")

- For "I am applying for:", select "Renewal of my permission to accept employment"
  - Item 16: (c) (3) (C)
  - Item 17: list the degree that is stated on your current OPT I-20, employer's name as listed in E-Verify, and Employer's E-Verify ID.
  - ❑ Copy of your current job offer/description with employment dates
2. An OISS advisor will review your request and recommend the extension in SEVIS. You will receive a new I-20 with the OPT extension recommendation on page 3.
  3. Where you currently live determines where you file, so read the "Where to File?" section of the "Form I-765 Instructions" ([www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) >> "immigration forms" >> "Application for Employment Authorization I-765") and send the following documents to the appropriate address:
    - ❑ Completed and signed I-765
    - ❑ Copy of your new OPT Extension I-20
    - ❑ Check for \$340 (personal check or money order) payable to USCIS
    - ❑ 2 passport style photos (write your name and I-94# on the back, put photos in an envelope)
    - ❑ Copy of your degree (transcripts/diploma)
    - ❑ A job description/statement from the employer regarding how the employment related to the STEM field
    - ❑ Copies of your bio page from your passport, visa, I-94 card (front & back)
    - ❑ Copies of your pre-SEVIS I-20(s) as well as any SEVIS I-20(s) you may have
    - ❑ If you changed status to F-1 within the U.S., also a copy of I-797 approval notice

**Other issues and requirements:**

- ✓ The 17-month extension is only possible one time per lifetime (regardless of change in degree levels)
- ✓ The 17-month extension period cannot be divided in more than one period
- ✓ The STEM degree must be the basis for the student's current period of OPT. (i.e. having a previous degree in a STEM field does not count if the current OPT is based on a degree outside of the STEM fields)
- ✓ Although it is possible to change employers and/or have multiple employers during the 17-month extension, all employers must be registered for E-Verify.
- ✓ Students and employers have additional reporting requirements (explained below)
- ✓ OPT students in the 17-month extension period have additional reporting requirements (other than change of student address, employer name and address, etc.):
  - Job title or position
  - Supervisor name and contact information
  - Employment start and end dates
- ✓ OPT students in the 17-month extension period must also report to the OISS every six months to confirm all the required reporting information (even if there have been no changes). The OISS will provide an online form to accommodate all OPT students.
- ✓ In addition to student reporting requirements, the employer must be responsible to report the termination or departure of the student to the OISS. Employers must consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left employment, or if the student has not reported to work for a period of 5 consecutive days without the employer's consent.
- ✓ All the reporting requirements continue throughout the 17-month extension and even the automatic cap-gap extension.

# 17-Month STEM OPT Extension Request Form



**Office of International Students and Scholars MS/074**  
120 Fitzgerald Student Services Bldg.  
Reno, NV 89557-0144  
(775) 784-6874  
Fax: (775) 327-5845  
EMAIL: [oiss@unr.edu](mailto:oiss@unr.edu)  
<http://www.unr.edu/oiss>

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
R#: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
SEVIS ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Student's Physical Address

Address Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

### Student's Mailing Address (leave blank if same as above)

Address Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Primary Employer's Name:

Address Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

### Supervisor's Name and Contact Information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Job Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Employment Start and End Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Please extend my current OPT end date of \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ an additional 17 months.

---

Signature

---

Date