



# F-1 17-Month Extension of OPT

International Student Services – Texas A&M University

## What is the 17-Month Extension of OPT?

- Temporary employment authorization available to eligible F-1 students whose degree is on the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Designated Degree Programs list following Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). Refer to the F-1 Post-Completion OPT Handout for more information.
- Eligible students will receive a 17-month extension of OPT for a maximum of 29 total months of OPT authorization.
- A student who has been granted a 17-month extension of OPT cannot accrue more than 120 days of unemployment.
- 17-month extension of OPT employment can only be with an E-Verified employer.
- Volunteering can no longer be counted as fulfilling employment requirements during the 17-month extension of OPT.

## Who is eligible to apply for the 17-Month Extension of OPT?

- Applicants whose degree is on the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Designated Degree Programs list, available for review at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>. The degrees are listed using Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes developed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. ISS has no role in determining which CIP code corresponds to each major or which majors are eligible for the 17-month extension of OPT. For the list of Texas A&M University STEM majors, please visit the *OPT Application Instructions and Forms* webpage (<http://international.tamu.edu/iss/employment/optapplication.asp>).
- Applicants must have been granted Post-Completion OPT and must be in legal immigration status.
- Applicants who have accrued less than 90 days of unemployment during the initial Post-Completion OPT.
- Applicants who will be employed in a position directly related to their field of study and commensurate with their educational level.
- Applicants who will be working for an employer that is enrolled in E-Verify. For more information on E-Verify, please visit <http://www.uscis.gov>.
- Applicants who have not received a previous 17-month extension of OPT.

## When to apply for 17-Month Extension of OPT?

- The applicant must apply before the current period of Post-Completion OPT authorization expires.
- USCIS advises that the applicant submit their 17-month extension of OPT application within 90 to 120 days before the expiration date of their current Post-Completion OPT authorization.

**More information about the 17-month extension of OPT Extension is included on the reserve side of this handout.**

## How do I apply for the 17-Month Extension of OPT?

### 1. Obtain ISS Recommendation

- ISS must have a copy of your OPT EAD card (front and back) on file.
- You must have kept your OPT employment information updated through the ISS OPT Data System (<https://international.tamu.edu/iss/employment/optds/default.asp>).
- You must have updated your local address through the Howdy Portal, “MyRecord” tab (<https://howdy.tamu.edu/>).
- No appointment is necessary, but you must submit the required documents listed in the next section to ISS.
- Required documents may be scanned and e-mailed to [iss@tamu.edu](mailto:iss@tamu.edu) (“17-month extension of OPT” in the subject line), they can be faxed to 979-862-4633, or they can be mailed to International Student Services, Texas A&M University, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Bizzell Hall East, 1226 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-1226.

### 2. List of Required Documents:

- F-1 17-Month Extension of OPT Form: (<https://international.tamu.edu/iss/employment/optapplication.asp>)
- Letter from the employer stating the dates of employment with supervisor’s name and contact phone number.
- Copies of any I-20 and I-94 card for the F-1 or F-2 dependents ONLY IF the F-1 or F-2 has traveled outside the U.S. since the OPT was recommended by ISS
- A legible copy of the applicant’s current EAD card (front and back), clearly depicting the OPT start and end dates

### 3. Mail the 17-Month Extension of OPT Application

- Once the ISS recommendation is on the I-20, the student should mail a complete application to the appropriate U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Service Center.
- For details about what to mail and how to mail this application, please visit the *OPT Application Instructions and Forms* webpage (<http://international.tamu.edu/iss/employment/optapplication.asp>).
- USCIS will review the 17-month extension of OPT application (this can take several months).
- If the application is approved, USCIS will issue a new Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

#### Advice:

- Make sure that under Question 17 of the I-765 form, you indicate the **EMPLOYER’S** E-Verify number, (not your employee E-Verify number!). Requests with invalid employer E-Verify information will be denied, and you will have to reapply with the correct Employer E-Verify information.
- Retain copies of all information that you send to USCIS.
- It is good practice to use a mailing method that provides delivery confirmation.

### 4. Maintain Responsibilities While on OPT

Understand your responsibilities while on OPT as listed on the F-1 17-month extension of OPT, available on the *OPT Application Instructions and Forms* webpage (<http://international.tamu.edu/iss/employment/optapplication.asp>).

### Additional Information

- Refer to [http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt\\_policy\\_guidance\\_042010.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/opt_policy_guidance_042010.pdf) for more information about the 17-month extension of OPT.
- ISS strongly encourages you to maintain health insurance for you and your dependents throughout the duration of your OPT authorization period, including the 17-month extension of OPT.