

How to Apply for an OPT 17 Month Extension

Are there fees associated with filing for extended OPT?

Yes. USCIS charges \$380 when an applicant files a Form I-765 for optional practical training.

When must a student apply for an OPT extension?

Students may apply for an OPT extension at any time prior to the expiration date of their current OPT period. The 17-month extension is only possible one time per lifetime; a student is NOT eligible to receive an extension more than once, regardless of degree level.

Is there additional OPT available to students working in the high-tech industry?

F-1 students who receive science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees included on the STEM Designated Degree Program List, are employed by employers enrolled in E-Verify, and who have received an initial grant of OPT related to such a degree, may apply for a 17-month extension. This extension of the OPT period for STEM degree holders gives U.S. employers two chances to recruit these highly desirable graduates through the H-1B process, as the extension is long enough to allow for H-1B petitions to be filed in two successive fiscal years.

What are the eligible STEM degrees?

To be eligible for the 17-month OPT extension, a student must have received a degree included in the STEM Designated Degree Program List. This list sets forth eligible courses of study according to Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes developed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The STEM Designated Degree Program List includes the following courses of study:

- Computer Science Applications
- Actuarial Science
- Engineering
- Engineering Technologies
 - **Environmental Safety and Health Management**
- Science Technologies
- Biological and Biomedical Sciences
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Military Technologies
- Physical Sciences
- Medical Scientist

- Note that to be eligible for an OPT extension the student must currently be in an approved OPT period based on a designated STEM degree. Thus, for example, a student with an undergraduate degree in a designated STEM field, but currently in OPT based on a subsequent MBA degree, would not be eligible for an OPT extension.
- **MBA is not an eligible program for the extension.**

What are the eligibility requirements for the 17-month extension of post-completion OPT?

All four requirements must be met to apply for an extension. 1) The student must have a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree included in the STEM Designated Degree Program List. 2) The student must currently be in an approved OPT period based on a designated STEM degree. 3) The student's employer must be enrolled in E-Verify. 4) The student must apply on time (i.e., before the current post-completion OPT expires).

What is the E-Verify program?

The E-Verify program is an Internet-based system operated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). The E-Verify program currently is the best means available for employers to determine employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security Numbers. E-Verify electronically compares information contained on the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 with records contained in SSA and DHS databases to help employers verify identity and employment eligibility of newly-hired employees. Information and registration for employers can be found at: <https://www.vis-dhs.com/EmployerRegistration>

Is there a cost associated with employers participating in the E-Verify program?

No. E-Verify is a free, easy-to-use web-based system available to employers and in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

What is the application process for the 17-month STEM extension?

The student files Form I-765 with USCIS, Form I-20 endorsed by the DSO, a copy of the STEM degree, and the required application fee. Form I-765 has been amended to require the student to indicate the degree and provide the employer's E-Verify information. If their OPT expires while the 17-month extension application is pending, students who timely filed their STEM extension applications with USCIS will receive an extension of employment authorization after their current employment authorization expires, but for no more than 180 days. Please contact the Asst. Director of Immigration at the Office of International Admissions and Services at UF for specific instructions on applying for an extension.

Notes in Applying:

- USCIS will determine whether a student's degree is eligible for the STEM extension by ensuring that the CIP code listed on the I-765 and/or the I-20 is one of the fields listed in the DHS STEM list. When asked to list the degree in item #17 of the Form I-765, the student should list the major as it appears in SEVIS and on the I-20 (i.e. the name associated with the eligible CIP code), not the name used by the institution.
- The student should file the I-765 with the USCIS Service Center with jurisdiction over the address where the student currently resides, not where the first I-765 for regular OPT was filed.
- A student may apply for the 17-month STEM OPT extension *anytime* during the regular period of post-completion OPT up to the expiration date of the student's current OPT employment authorization. Students are encouraged to file early so that they receive the new EAD before the end of the regular period of post-completion OPT.
- The new I-765 instructions state that a "copy of the degree" must be submitted for applications filed under (c)(3)(C). USCIS clarified that this could include:
 - Official transcripts
 - Unofficial transcripts
 - Copy of the diploma as long as it states the program of study

What must a student do after being granted the 17-month STEM extension?

The student must report to his or her DSO (within 10 days) any change in:

- Legal name;
 - Residential or mailing address;
 - E-mail address;
 - Employer name;
 - Employer address;
- The student must also report to his or her DSO every six months, confirming the information listed above; even if there have been no changes. The requirement to report continues if the student's 17-month STEM extension is extended further by the automatic cap-gap extension.

You can report online at the UF website. Go to "International Admissions and Services" > "F-1 Students" > "OPT Student and Employer Update Form" and fill out the form and submit.

All information is subject to change.

Instructions for Applying for the Extension

Applying for the extension can be done electronically. Simply download this packet, print it off, complete the necessary forms and documentation and send them back to the Assistant Director of Immigration at haines@findlay.edu in one single PDF file. To send the documents in PDF, simply scan the completed documentation into a computer, save them as one PDF file and send it via email. Be sure the documents are complete, clear and legible.

1. Download and print this packet.
2. Read all information completely.
3. Submit the following information to the Assistant Director of Immigration in a single PDF file:
 - a. A completed 17 Month Extension Request Form found in this packet
 - b. A signed Employer Letter found in this packet
 - c. A completed I-765 form. The link to download the I-765 form can be found on the same page you downloaded this packet on the UF website.
 - d. Obtain proof of your degree by submitting one of the following:
 - i. Official transcripts
 - ii. Unofficial transcripts
 - iii. Copy of the diploma showing the level and program of study
4. Once the Asst. Director of Immigration has received the above information, you will receive a new I-20 authorizing your extension.
5. Put into an envelope and mail only the following documentation to the USCIS service center:
 - completed I-765 form
 - original I-20 endorsed by a Designated School Official within the past 30 days.
 - a copy of your degree (official transcripts, unofficial transcripts, copy of diploma)
 - a copy of Form I-94 Departure Record (front and back).
 - a copy of visa and passport
 - copy of your last EAD (front and back).
 - two identical passport photo's
 - check or money order for \$380.00 made out to "The Department of Homeland Security"

You will mail the packet to the proper service center for your area. You can find the address in the I-765 instructions.

How to Fill Out Your I-765 Form

- Check the third box in “I am applying for:”
- Complete Numbers 1 – 17
- Sign, put current phone number and date the bottom
- Special Instructions are in Red

I am applying for:			<input type="checkbox"/> Permission to accept employment. I-765 EXAMPLE FORM COMPLETE ENTIRE FORM <input type="checkbox"/> Replacement (of lost employment authorization document) SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS IN RED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach previous employment authorization document).	
1. Name (Family Name in CAPS) (First)		(Middle)	Which USCIS Office?	
LAST NAME IN ALL CAPS First		Middle	Nebraska Use Original OPT App date	
2. Other Names Used (Include Maiden Name)			Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation) Granted Attach copy of EAD (front and back)	
3. Address in the United States (Number and Street)		(Apt. Number)	12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S. (mm/dd/yyyy) Use date stamp on I-94	
(Town or City)	(State/Country)	(ZIP Code)	13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S. Use city stamp on I-94	
4. Country of Citizenship/Nationality			14. Manner of Last Entry (Visitor, Student, etc.) F-1 Student	
5. Place of Birth (Town or City)		(State/Province)	(Country)	15. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.) F-1 Student
6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)		7. Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		
8. Marital Status		<input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced		
9. Social Security Number (Include all numbers you have ever used) (if any) If no SSN then leave blank				
10. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or I-94 Number (if any) 1-94 Number found at top of card				
11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (If yes, complete below) <input type="checkbox"/> No				
			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.). Eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (C) (3) (C)	
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. Degree: Last Degree you are using for OPT Employer's Name as listed in E-Verify: Employers Name Employer's E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number: Obtain from employer				

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

17 Month Extension Request Form

Student Name (please print)

First _____ Middle: _____

Last _____ UF ID: _____

SEVIS ID: N000 _____ Email Address: _____

Education Level (circle one): Bachelors Masters Doctorate

Student's Major: _____

OPT Dates as Printed on your EAD Card:

Beginning Date ____/____/____

Ending Date ____/____/____

Supervisors Name: _____

Supervisors Phone: _____ Job Title/Position: _____

Company Name: _____

Company Address:

Street: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

All information provided is true to the best of my knowledge, have read and understand the requirements of applying for my 17 month extension and agree to the terms of the extension.

I also agree to report to the Assistant Director of Immigration every six months my name and address and my employer information by using the electronic form found on the University of Findlay website under F1 Students.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

FINDLAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY

To the Employer,

According to Federal immigration regulations, any student applying for a 17 month extension while on OPT, must inform their employer to contact the designated school official within 48 hours of the termination of employment. Employment is considered terminated if the student leaves employment, is fired, discharged or laid off or if the student fails to report to work for five or more consecutive days without first notifying the employer.

A student applying for a 17 month extension must also be employed with an employer who is registered through the Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system. Registration for E-Verify is free and can be done at the following web link: <https://www.vis-dhs.com/EmployerRegistration>.

To report termination of employment, please email me at haines@findlay.edu with the following information: Company Name, Company Address, Your Name, Phone Number, Student's Name and Student's SEVIS ID Number (provided by student).

By signing this document, you are agreeing as the student's employer that you are registered in the E-Verify system and will report to the University of Findlay's designated school official any termination of employment within 48 hours.

Employer Signature _____ Date _____

You may contact me at haines@findlay.edu or by phone at 419-434-4112 if you have any questions. Thank you.

R. Craig Haines
Assistant Director of Immigration
The University of Findlay

8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f)
Federal Register Effective April 8, 2008

(3) The student's employer is registered in the E-Verify program, as evidenced by either a valid E-Verify company identification number or, if the employer is using a designated agent to perform the E-Verify queries, a valid E-Verify client company identification number, and the employer is a participant in good standing in the E-Verify program, as determined by USCIS.

(4) The employer agrees to report the termination or departure of an OPT employee to the DSO at the student's school or through any other means or process identified by DHS if the termination or departure is prior to end of the authorized period of OPT. Such reporting must be made within 48 hours of the event. An employer shall consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left the employment or if the student has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the consent of the employer, whichever occurs earlier.