

# OPT STEM EXTENSION FORM

*For office use only:*

6-month report is due \_\_\_\_\_  Completed.

12-month report is due \_\_\_\_\_  Completed.

Read the following for understanding, then sign the “Student OPT STEM Acknowledgement.”

1. F-1 students approved for standard post-completion optional practical training in an approved STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) field can apply to USCIS for a one-time 17-month extension of post-completion OPT (for a total eligibility of up to 29 months).
2. Eligibility:
  - a. The student is in “active” status within SEVIS
  - b. The student has not previously received a 17-month OPT STEM extension
  - c. The employment engaged in during the STEM extension must be directly related to the student's major area of study
  - d. A minor field of study cannot serve as the basis for a 17-month OPT STEM extension, though it is possible for some secondary majors to serve as a basis for a 17-month OPT STEM extension
  - e. The student's employer must be registered in E-Verify
  - f. The student’s employer must agree to report to the DSO when the student is terminated or leaves employment before the OPT STEM EAD expiration date
  - g. The student must apply for the OPT STEM extension before their standard period of post-completion OPT expires (up to 120 days prior to the OPT EAD expiration date)
  - h. The student must agree to report to the Buckman Center on demand, at regular 6-month intervals, and at any time there is any change related to the OPT STEM employment status or address
3. The employment authorization period for the 17-month OPT extension begins on the day after the expiration of the initial post-completion OPT employment authorization and ends 17 months thereafter, regardless of the date the actual extension is approved.
4. Employment must be held with an E-Verify employer, only.
  - a. Students should confirm with their employers that they are participants in the USCIS E-Verify Program and obtain the employer’s E-Verify Number for the OPT STEM Extension
  - b. A student may change employers during the 17-month period, but all employers that a student will work for during the STEM extension period must be registered in the E-Verify Program, and the student must report the change in employment to the Buckman Center
  - c. A student authorized for a 17-month extension must work at least 20 hours per week for an E-Verify employer in a position directly related to his or her approved STEM field
5. All employment during the STEM extension must be paid employment. Volunteer experience does not count as employment for the purpose of maintaining F-1 status during the STEM extension.
6. Travel outside the United States must be deferred until after the new Employment Authorization Document EAD is received. Once a STEM OPT EAD is received, the student should be able to travel and reenter the United States under the same rules as for travel under standard OPT.

# REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Students must report to the Buckman Center on demand, at regular 6-month intervals, and immediately upon any changes in the following items:

- a) Legal name
- b) Residential or mailing address
- c) Employer name
- d) Employer address
- e) Beginning and end dates of employment
- f) Loss of employment
- g) Student transfers to a new degree level
- h) Any change in immigration status

Additionally, employers must report early termination or departure of a student (i.e., prior to the EAD expiration date) within 48 hours to the Buckman Center.

# STUDENT OPT STEM ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Having read and understand these legal requirements, and believing that I am eligible for this F-1 student benefit, I hereby request an OPT STEM extension and provide the following information:

- 1. Student's legal name: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Student's email address: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Student's mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Employer name: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Employer address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Employment Start/End dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

*I understand and agree to the reporting requirements in this document. I understand that my OPT status is dependent upon employment; if granted OPT STEM extension, I understand that I may not accrue more than 120 days of unemployment during the entire post-completion OPT period. I understand that the Duration of Stay will be the authorized period of OPT STEM plus 60 days after the EAD expiration date (allowing me to prepare for departure or to transfer to a new school) unless my employment is terminated, I leave employment, or I accrue more than 120 days of unemployment.*

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# HOW TO APPLY FOR OPT STEM EXTENSION

1. Student contacts the Buckman Center to request STEM Extension and sends the Buckman Center:
  - a. Signed "Student OPT STEM Acknowledgment"
  - b. Copy of current EAD (Employment Authorization Document)
2. The DSO recommends the extension in SEVIS, prints an OPT STEM Recommended I-20, and sends it to the student
3. The student completes Form I-765
  - a. Item #16: Indicate code (c)(3)(C)
  - b. Item #17: must contain the requested information on the student's degree and the employer's E-Verify Company or Client Identification Number
  - c. Student's signature on Form I-765 must STAY IN BETWEEN THE LINES. If the signature crosses the lines, the signature can be rejected by USCIS
4. The student mails the following items to the USCIS Lockbox Facility with jurisdiction over the student's place of residence (the addresses are below, they are subject to change and it is the student's responsibility to verify the mailing address on the DHS I-765 website):
  - a. Complete I-765
  - b. A check/money order for \$380 made payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (do not write, "DHS")
  - c. Academic transcripts or copies of diplomas that indicate the educational level and the field of study for the degree granting the initial OPT I-20
  - d. A COPY of the new OPT STEM I-20 endorsed by a Designated School Official within the past 30 days (Do NOT send original I-20)

## If you live in:

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands,

## Mail your application to: USCIS Phoenix Lockbox

### (RECOMMENDED)

For Express mail and courier deliveries:

USCIS

Attn: AOS

1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S

Suite 100

Phoenix, AZ 85034

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries:

USCIS

PO Box 21281

Phoenix, AZ 85036

## If you live in:

Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia,

## Mail your application to: USCIS Dallas Lockbox

### (RECOMMENDED)

For Express mail and courier deliveries:

USCIS

Attn: AOS

2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business

Suite 400

Lewisville, TX 75067

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries:

USCIS

PO Box 660867

Dallas, TX 75266

## EMPLOYER LETTER

Once you receive your new EAD, complete this form and give it to your Employer:



TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: Erin Hillis, PDSO, Rhodes College

TO: Manager/Employer of \_\_\_\_\_ (student name):

As you know from the E-Verify Program under USCIS, there are reporting requirements you undertake at the hiring of the F-1 student above.

The authorized employment end date for the student above appears on the student's OPT STEM EAD (Employment Authorization Document). Please inform me within 48 hours of the early departure or termination of this student. Please include the date that the student's employment ended.

The USCIS regulation defines "departure" as follows: "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 comes earlier."

The preferred method for notification is via email [hillise@rhodes.edu](mailto:hillise@rhodes.edu). Alternatively, you may notify us by mailing documentation to:

Erin Hillis  
Rhodes College  
2000 North Parkway  
Memphis, TN 38112  
(901) 843-3403

Best regards,  
Erin Hillis, PDSO  
Associate Director of International Programs  
Rhodes College