

OPT STEM EXTENSION

In April 2008, USCIS published a regulation allowing F-1 students engaged in post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) who are in certain STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields to apply for an additional 17 months of OPT authorization beyond their initial 12 months of OPT (for a total of 29 months). You must be already engaged in authorized OPT based on graduation from a program in an acceptable STEM field to be eligible.

F-1 students in a STEM field who have been approved for OPT must have their EAD and be engaged in OPT in their field of study to be eligible to extend. Not all STEM disciplines qualify – some majors (based on CIP code) are not eligible. See the list of acceptable CIP codes at: www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm Please note that curricula that have CIP codes that end in .xx99 are **NOT** currently eligible (we cannot change them – and the exclusion of these codes is a decision of Homeland Security).

Students must also be working for - or get a job offer from - an employer that has enrolled in the E-Verify system. E-Verify is an Internet-based system operated by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). E-Verify is currently free to employers and is available in all 50 states. E-Verify provides an automated link to federal databases to help employers determine employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security numbers. See the following e-Verify FAQ on the USCIS website (copy & paste carefully): www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=4ee4e0cbcf90110VgnVCM1000000ecd190aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=2411c9ee2f82b010VgnVCM1000005f3d6a1RCRD

You must not have previously applied for and been approved for the 17 month OPT STEM extension.