OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

17-Month Extension

What is 17-Month Extension of OPT?

- 17-Month Extension is a temporary employment authorization available to eligible F-1 students following post-completion OPT.

- A student who is eligible for the STEM OPT Extension can apply for a 17-month extension, for a maximum of 29 months of OPT, if his/her degree is on the STEM Designated Degree Programs list, http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm. The degrees are listed using the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes.

- A student who has been granted a 17-Month extension cannot accrue more than 120 days of unemployment during the total 29-month OPT period.

Who is eligible to apply for a 17-Month OPT Extension?

- Applicants must have been granted post-completion OPT following completion of degree and be in legal status.

- Applicants have graduated with a bachelor, master or doctorate degree listed on the STEM Designated Degree list. See http://www.ice.gov/SEVIS/stemlist.htm.

- Applicants who have less than 90 days of accrued unemployment during the initial post-completion OPT period.

- The employment must be related to the student's major field of study and commensurate with the educational level and the employer must be enrolled in E-Verify. For more information on E-Verify, please visit the following webpage http://www.dhs.gov/how-do-i/verify-employment-eligibility-e-verify

- Applicants cannot have received a previous STEM OPT Extension.

Limitations on Unemployment:

Students approved for the 17-month OPT extension may not accrue more than 120 days of unemployment during the total 29-month period of OPT. Employment must be paid and must be related to the field of study in order to qualify. Self-employment and volunteer positions will not qualify as valid employment for OPT purposes during the special 17-month OPT extension.

17-Month Extension Available Once:

The special 17-month extension of OPT is only available to each student one time. A student who is approved for a 17-month OPT extension can never apply for it again. Please note that this rule is different from the application rules for the “regular” 12-month OPT, under which students could be approved for multiple OPT periods for each higher degree earned in the US (i.e. bachelor's, then master's, then doctoral).

Starting and Ending Dates:

The start date of the 17-month OPT extension will be automatically set to the day after the expiration of the current 12-month OPT authorization. The end date will be 17 months later. (It is not possible to request smaller increments of time for the OPT extension.)

Application Procedures

When should one apply for the 17-month OPT extension?

Students must apply for the special 17-month OPT extension prior to the expiration of the first 12 months of “regular” OPT. The application must be received by USCIS prior to the expiration date of the first OPT period in order to be properly (timely) filed. (USCIS recommends that you file within 90 to 120 days of the expiration date of the current OPT)
What happens while the application is pending?
If the application for the 17-month OPT extension is successfully received prior to the expiration of the first OPT period, students may continue employment until the application is processed or until 180 days have passed, whichever is sooner.

It is very important for you to contact OISS if you change employers while your application is being processed.

Step One—You must submit to OISS:
- *Optional Practical Training Extension Application.* You must complete the form and sign the acknowledgement statement (application located on page 4).
- Your employer must submit Letter Acknowledging Employer Requirements (template and instructions located on Page 5).

Step Two—An OISS staff member will:
- verify your eligibility to apply for the OPT extension;
- if eligible, will update the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and make the appropriate recommendation on the I-20;
- return to you form I-20 showing recommendation for OPT extension

Step Three—You must assemble the following documents:
1. Completed and signed form I-765 and G-1145 (Use blue ink when signing)(Note: you may download forms from [http://www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov))
2. Photocopy of the pages of your passport that have your photo and expiration date
3. Photocopy of the OPT Extension-endorsed I-20, pages 1 and 3 *(created by OISS)*
4. Photocopy of all previous I-20 forms
5. Photocopy of your UNO diploma or official UNO transcript showing your conferred degree.
6. Copy of your I-94 form
7. Two passport style photographs, with your name and SEVIS # written in *pencil* on the back:
   - *Photo is not drawn to scale. However, please ensure that it meets specified measurements*

8. A personal check or money order for **$380.00** made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security
9. Put the following materials into the following order for mailing:
   a. Original G-1145
   b. Original I-765
   c. Check or money order stapled halfway up the I-765
   d. Two photos placed back-to-back in plastic bag, stapled to bottom left of I-765
   e. Photocopy of the OPT-endorsed I-20, pages 1 and 3
   f. Photocopy of all previous I-20 forms
   g. Photocopies of any previous EAD cards front and back
   h. Copy of your I-94 form
   i. Photocopy of the pages of your passport that have your photo and expiration date
   j. Photocopy of your UNO diploma, official UNO transcript, or unofficial UNO transcript showing your conferred degree

Step Four—You should mail the application to the **USCIS Lockbox** having jurisdiction over your place of residence. There are four USCIS Lockbox Centers in the United States that process I-765 (OPT) applications. The address you use on the I-765 will determine where you should send your application. See I-765 Instructions. *(Please note that U.S. Postal Service deliveries and express mail and courier service deliveries have different addresses)*
It is suggested that you keep a copy of these materials for yourself.

You may send the application 1) via certified & return receipt mail, 2) via overnight U.S. Post express mail or 3) via express mail or courier service. You should maintain proof that the application was sent and proof that it was received by USCIS.

**Your Obligations During Optional Practical Training Extension**

- You are required to **immediately** report any change of name or address, or disruption of employment to the OISS for the duration of the authorized training. You may do so by emailing the information to oiss@uno.edu.

- You must make a validation report to the DSO every **six months** starting from the date the 17-month extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status ends, the student changes educational levels at the same school, the student transfers to another school, or the 17-month OPT extension ends, whichever is first. The validation is a confirmation that the student's name and address, employer name and address, and/or loss of employment is current and accurate. The report is due within **10 business days** of each reporting date and must be made even if all information is still correct. The information may be sent to oiss@uno.edu.

- If your employment ends, your employer should send a report to OISS including your name, SEVIS ID number (if available), and the date that your employment ended. This information may be sent to oiss@uno.edu.

**OISS Obligations During Optional Practical Training Extension**

OISS is responsible for updating your records in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to reflect changes in your name, address, or disruption of employment for the length of time practical training is authorized.

**Travel Outside of and Re-entry to the U.S.**

While you are engaged in OPT extension, you are still in F-1 status and you must have your form I-20 endorsed for re-entry to the United States. At the port of entry, you will be required to present your form I-20, your EAD card, a valid passport and visa and proof of employment in the U.S. **You will not be permitted entry unless you are entering to begin or continue OPT employment.** Also, while engaged in employment on the OPT extension, the re-entry signature is only valid for 6 months.

If the student whose approved period of OPT has begun travel outside of the U.S. while unemployed, the time spent outside the U.S. will count as unemployment against the 90/120-day limits.

If a student travels while employed either during a period of leave authorized by an employer or as part of their employment, the time spent outside the U.S. will not count as unemployment.

You cannot travel outside of the U.S. if your employment authorization document expires and the 17-month extension request is still pending. For travel outside of the U.S., you must wait to receive the new employment authorization document.
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EXTENSION APPLICATION
Please Type or Print

Last Name: ___________________________  First Name: ___________________________

Student #: ___________________________  SEVIS #: ___________________________

Current Physical Address: _______________________________________________________

Telephone: ___________________________  E-mail: _______________________________

The start date of the 17-month OPT extension will be automatically set to the day after the expiration of the current 12-month OPT authorization. The end date will be 17 months later.

Employer’s Name:

__________________________________________

Employer’s Address: ___________________________________________________________

Supervisor’s Name: ___________________________  Supervisor’s Phone #:

__________________________________________  ___________________________

Employer’s E-Verify Number:

__________________________________________

University of New Orleans is required by federal regulation to continue to maintain your SEVIS record for the full period of OPT, including any extension.

By signing this form below, I certify that the above information is true and correct, and that I understand and will comply with the following SEVIS requirements:

- I have reported my current name, US address and e-mail address on the front of this application form.
- I will report any change to my current name or address to the Office of International Student and Scholars within ten days of the change at oiss@uno.edu.
- I will report any changes in employment information (including periods of unemployment) to OISS at oiss@uno.edu within ten days of the change.
- I understand that I cannot be unemployed for more than a total of 120 days in the aggregate while on OPT.
- I understand that I must submit a validation report to OISS every six months from the date my extension period of OPT begins to verify the above information, even if the information has not changed.

Signature: ___________________________  Date __/__/____

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Employer Requirements for 17-month OPT STEM Extension

Please submit the following information from the employer on company letterhead. We must have the original document with original signature. A fax, scan, or copy of the letter may be sent to start the processing of the OPT Extension I-20, however, original letter must then be sent to OISS at: 2000 Lakeshore Dr. IC 125
New Orleans, LA 70148

Dear UNO Office of International Students and Scholars:

(Company name) would like (employee’s name) to apply for a 17-month extension of his/her OPT.

Below is the information you requested about the student and our company:

Employee’s name (as it appears on I-20 document):

Employee’s SEVIS number:

Employee’s degree level and major for which he/she is currently on OPT:

Employee’s employment start date:

Employee’s job title:

Location of position:

Name, title, and contact information of employee’s immediate supervisor:

We are registered and in good standing with the E-Verify database. Our E-Verify employer number is:

*I understand that as an employer of an F-1 student applying for a 17-month STEM extension, I am responsible for reporting to the Designated School Official within 10 days of the action, if the employee is terminated or loses his/her position for any reason. I will report this information to oiss@uno.edu*

Company representative signature and name

Company representative position