Optional Practical Training

Part 5: After Your Initial 12 Months
After your initial 12 months

In this section, you will learn:

- Your options to remain in the U.S. beyond your first 12 months of OPT
- What a “17 Month STEM Extension” is and who qualifies
- What a “Cap Gap” is and who qualifies
Apply up to 90 days before completion date

OPT application period

90 days

Completion date

Any day during 60 day grace period

OPT BEGINS

OPT Authorization Period

12 months

OPT ENDS

60 days

extension, transfer, change of status, or leave U.S.

NO WORK unless authorized for extension or change of status

Apply for STEM extension (if eligible)

8 months

90 days

12 months

90 days

Apply for extension, transfer, change of status, or leave U.S.
1. Leave the U.S. before the end of the 60 day grace period

2. Start another degree and consult with an IC advisor about what to do with your immigration record

3. Apply for a change of status before your OPT expires

4. Apply for a “17 Month STEM Extension”, if eligible
17 Month STEM Extension

- Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics
- Not all UM degrees included!
  - [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm)
17 Month STEM Extension

Sample I-20

Primary Major: Molecular Biology

Employment Status: FULL TIME
Duration of Employment: 01/01/2010 - 12/31/2010
Type: OPT

CIP code

The Student has met the 1 full academic year requirement.

Comment: Recommending full 12-month POST Completion OPT beginning either from the start date or from the adjudication date, whichever is later. Directly related to the field of studies.
17 Month STEM Extension

General Information

Definition of STEM OPT
Practical work experience in your field of study, typically after completion of a degree for a maximum of 29 months (12 months of "regular" OPT with a 17-month extension possible).

Eligibility Criteria for the 17-month OPT extension
- Students who have already been approved for 12 months of post-completion OPT; and
- Who have earned a degree in a field included on the U.S. Government’s list of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields; and
- Who are employed in a job directly related to his/her field of study; and
- Who are working for an employer that is enrolled in the U.S. Government’s E-Verify program.

Please Note: All four of the above criteria must be met in order for a student to be eligible for the 17-month OPT extension.

List of degrees in STEM fields
If a student earned a degree in a field that appears on the U.S. government’s official list of STEM fields, he/she may be eligible for the 17-month OPT extension. In order to verify that your degree is on this list, look at the code listed under "Primary Major" on your Page 3 of your I-20 form, and then look for that code in the CIP code column of the Department of Homeland Security’s Designated Degree Programs.

http://internationalcenter.umich.edu/immig/fvisa/f_optextend.html
17 Month STEM Extension

- Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics
- Not all UM degrees included!
  - http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm
- May be approved for 17 more months of OPT
- To be eligible:
  1. be in F-1 status on OPT
  2. OPT based on STEM degree
  3. work in a job related to your degree
  4. work for an E-Verify employer
  5. no previous STEM extension
Cap Gap Extension

- A “Cap” of 65,000 H1Bs are available each year for industry jobs (not academic)
  - Additional 20,000 for master or PhDs earned in U.S.
- H1Bs for industry jobs (not academic) start only on October 1 of each year
- Application for H1B can be submitted to USCIS up to 6 months prior to start date (April 1)
- These date restrictions may cause a “Gap” in employment authorization for students on OPT
Eligibility:
  • Change of status to H1B must be filed by employer before expiration of OPT
  • OPT expiration is between April 1 and October 1

Those not eligible:
  • OPT end date between October 1 and March 31
  • Consular Processed H1B
  • H1B filed during grace period of initial OPT

ALL H1B questions must be asked to employer
After your initial 12 months

At this point, you should know:

- What options you have to stay in the U.S. after your initial 12 months of OPT expires
- 17 Month STEM Extension and eligibility
- Cap Gap Extension and eligibility