

# International Center

17-Month OPT Extension  
Spring 2009

This information is provided based on NAFSA's  
Regulatory Information

Please note that this is the most accurate information  
we have to date.



# Eligibility Requirements

1. Your CIP code (Classification of Instructional Programs) which is the accepted federal government statistical standard on instructional program classifications\* will verify if your major qualifies for the 17 month OPT extension. [This code is displayed on the third page of your I-20 as of Spring 2008.](#)
2. Students currently on OPT who hold a STEM degree (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) are eligible to apply for a 17month OPT extension for a total of 29 months.
3. The student's employer MUST be registered in the government sponsored E-Verify program. Colleges and Universities are not part of the E-verify program. For more information on the E-verify program visit <http://www.dhs.gov/index.shtm>
4. Additional requirements:
  - ✓ The employer agrees to report to the Designated School Official (IC) any student's change of name or address and interruption of employment
  - ✓ The student must agree to periodically report to the IC
  - ✓ Student must be in the 12 month period of OPT
  - ✓ Employment must be directly related to the student's major area of study
  - ✓ Successful completion of a bachelor's master's or doctoral degree on the DHS STEM list
  - ✓ Has not received a 17 month OPT extension after earning a STEM degree



# What Degrees Qualify? STEM List

The following link will provide a list of STEM degrees that qualify for the 17 month extension

<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>



# OPT 17 Month Extension Application Checklist

**A complete application should be turned in to the IC 90 -120 days prior to the end date on the EAD card.**

The package must include the following:

- ✓ I-765 form completed in black ink
  - ✓ You are applying for a *“Renewal of my permission to accept employment”*
  - ✓ Section 16: Eligibility code is (c)(3)(c)
  - ✓ Section 17: List your degree and major as it appears on page 3 of your I-20, and your employer name and number as listed in the E-verify program
- ✓ 2 Passport photos. [http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/04\\_08\\_02Photo\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/04_08_02Photo_flyer.pdf) (for detailed information)
- ✓ Check or money order for \$340.00 made to DHS
- ✓ New I-20 requesting OPT extension (The IC will issue original and copy if eligibility is met)
- ✓ Copies of:
  - ✓ Passport
  - ✓ F-1 visa
  - ✓ I-94 (front and back)
  - ✓ Official transcripts and diploma
  - ✓ Copies of previous EAD card
  - ✓ Copies of your previous I-20 requesting 12 months OPT
- ✓ A second set of copies of the above documents (no exceptions)



# Unemployment Periods

- “ During post-completion OPT, F1 status is dependent upon employment. During any initial 12 month period of post-completion OPT, no student (including STEM students) may be unemployed for an aggregate of more than 90 days
- If a STEM student receives a 17 month extension, the limit of unemployment is raised to an aggregate to no more than 120 days, applied to an entire 29 month period

Source: NAFSA



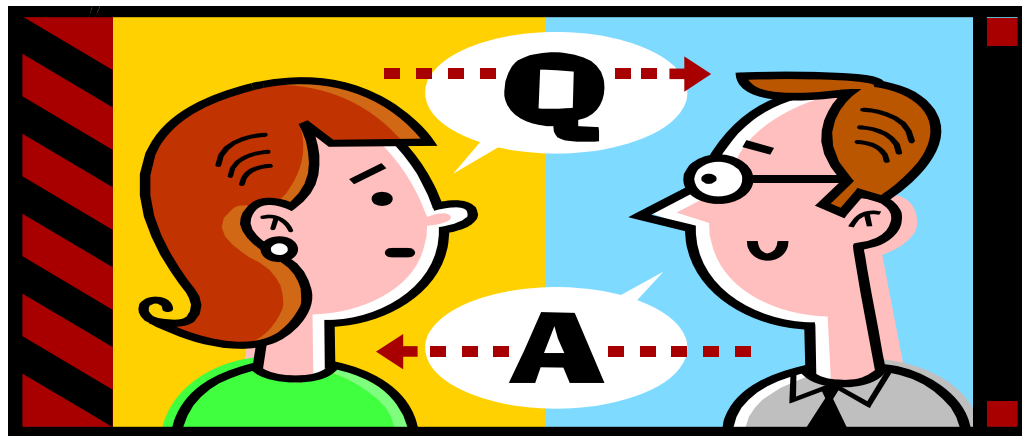
## Students with an approved 17 month extension

Must report to the DSO at the IC within 10 days any:

- Legal name change
- Residential or mailing address change
- Employer's name
- Employer's address
- Loss of employment



# Questions



Q. How long does it take to get the 17-month OPT authorization?

A. Approximately 60 to 90 days



Q. I am currently in pre-completion OPT, do I need to apply for OPT post completion and then for the 17-month extension?

Each OPT requires a new application. 1 for OPT pre-completion, a second for OPT post completion, and a third one for the 17-month extension. Each application requires the payment of \$340. You cannot turn in all applications at once. Each application must be turned in within the permissible time. OPT pre and post completion can be turned in prior to your graduation date. OPT post completion can be turned in 90 days prior to your graduation date. OPT 17-month application can be turned in as early as 120 days prior to the end date of your EAD card.



Q. What if my I-20 has a program listed as “Multidisciplinary Other” as the major but my official degree at UCI will list Masters on Computer and Information Sciences? Will my degree certificate prove that I am a STEM student?

A. This can be a problem. Prior to your graduation date, you should update the IC with your actual degree. Your I-20 should always reflect the degree you are getting.



Q. My minor is in the STEM list, can I still apply for the 17 month extension?

A. No, only conferred Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees qualify for the 17 month extension.



## Further Questions and Information?

- [intl@uci.edu](mailto:intl@uci.edu) For questions
- Additional resources
  - <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/cip2000/>
  - <http://www.nafsa.org/>
  - [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) (I-765 application)



THANK YOU

