17 Month STEM Extension for F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) Handout

Students who hold degrees in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields may be eligible to apply for an additional 17 months of OPT. This application should be completed online, printed and signed (with an original signature in **blue** ink). Handwritten I-765s **will not** be accepted. Save your I-765 on a USB drive or email a copy to yourself.

**UPDATE YOUR LOCAL ADDRESS AND INTERNATIONAL ADDRESS**

Failure to submit your current address where you reside to the Immigration Service could be a deportable offense. Please notify the ISSO by completing the Change of U.S. Address form located on the ISSO website within 10 days of your move. We will then notify the Immigration Service via SEVIS. If your address in your home country changes please notify the ISSO by completing the Change of International Address form on the ISSO website. The U.S. government will not forward any government mail, even if you have submitted a forwarding address to the U.S. Postal Service. You should use the c/o ISSO address for your application so that mail is not lost (see application procedures for the address).

**TRAVEL WHILE ON STEM OPT**

You will need the following to re-enter the US:

a) **Travel Signature on your I-20** that is less than six (6) months old (the I-20 must be your STEM extension I-20)
b) **Letter from your employer** to prove that you have a job when you return to the U.S. or an offer letter to show that you will begin a job upon your return to the U.S.
c) **Financial documentation**: If you have a low-paying job or unpaid internship, it is highly recommended to carry financial documentation with you to show you have sufficient finances to live in the U.S. Offer letters should contain salary information
d) **F-1 visa** in your passport that will be valid on the day you plan to return to the U.S. If your visa stamp will be expired, you will need to renew it at a US consulate or embassy while outside the U.S. (Canadian citizens, this does not apply to you)
e) **OPT Employment Authorization Document** (EAD, also known as “OPT Card”) and **STEM EAD**
f) **Valid Passport**
g. It is also highly recommended that you carry your diploma or transcript from Brandeis.

**HOW TO COMPLETE THE I-765 STEM EXTENSION APPLICATION**

**I am applying for**: check the box “Renewal of my permission to accept employment”

Line 1: Family name should be all CAPS. Do NOT type the rest of the application in CAPS.

Line 3: We strongly recommend that you use the ISSO address because USCIS will not leave government mail if your name is not on the mailbox, nor will they forward government mail if you move.

415 South Street, ISSO - MS 040
Waltham, MA 02453-9110

Line 10: This is your I-94 Number (electronic I-94 OR the white card in your passport). Be sure to include all 11 digits. Also include the A# listed on your current EAD (OPT) Card.

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Line 11: Check “Yes” because you have applied for OPT before. Include the Service Center where your application was filed (i.e. Vermont Service Center), the dates for which your work permission is currently authorized (you may not have enough room in this field so type the dates in the field directly below), and type “Granted” in the field labeled Results. Also include any previous periods of OPT. Do not include CPT or on-campus employment.

Lines 12 and 13: this information is found on your I-94.

Lines 14 and 15: Type “F-1 Student”

Line 16: Type (c) (3) (C) – this is the code for the 17 month STEM OPT extension. Enter your degree in the line below. Enter your employer’s information exactly how it appears on the ISSO Employer Verification Form

Certification Line: Sign, date and provide a valid telephone number

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS
After picking up your OPT application (or receiving it in the mail sent by ISSO), we recommend that you mail it to the appropriate USCIS Service Center lockbox (see below) using a mail service that will provide you with tracking info or confirmation of receipt. You can use your own mailing address for the post office. Your application must be received by USCIS no later than 30 days from the date your ISSO advisor issued your new STEM OPT I-20.

If mailing your application via the US Postal Service (USPS: certified mail, USPS Priority or Express mail) send your application to:

USCIS
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

If mailing your application via express delivery service or private courier (UPS, FedEx) send your application:

USCIS
Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121,
Business Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

If you wish to receive an email and/or text message notifying you that your application has been accepted, you may complete an E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance (Form G-1145), and attach it to the first page of your application.

In approximately 3 weeks, USCIS will send you a Form I-797 Notice of Action (receipt notice) indicating that they have received your application. Your application will be adjudicated within 90 days.

You may check the status of your application on the USCIS website. Enter the EAC# on your Receipt Notice. If you have not received a receipt notice within 4 weeks, please contact ISSO. If USCIS has a question regarding your application before approval, they will issue a “Request for Evidence”. ISSO will notify you if we receive such a request and will advise you on how to proceed.