



*The University of Pittsburgh*  
*Office of International Services*

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## OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) STEM EXTENSION PACKET

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**Step 1:** Print out this OPT packet and mail it with, all supporting materials (see page 2 for List of Application Materials), to OIS:

Office of International Services  
University of Pittsburgh  
708 William Pitt Union  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260  
ATTN: OPT EXTENSION REQUEST

**Step 2:** An Immigration Specialist will email you upon receipt and contact you if further information is required.

**Step 3:** Your new I-20 with an OPT Extension recommendation will be ready within 5 business days. You will receive an email from your Immigration Specialist when your application packet is mailed back to you.

**Step 4:** **Mail entire packet to U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services.** (See page 3 for Mailing Instructions.)

**Important Note: Plan on requesting an OPT Extension at least 90 days prior to the expiration date of your current EAD card in order to prevent gaps in employment!**



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## LIST OF APPLICATION MATERIALS

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Please prepare the following materials and mail them to OIS:

1. The attached **OPT Extension Employer Recommendation Form**, with the top portion completed by you and the bottom portion completed by your Employer.
2. Signed and dated **Mailing Instructions Form**, included in this packet.
3. Completed **Form I-765**: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765.pdf>
  - a. Please put (c)(3)(C) in item #16
  - b. Complete item #17 with your employer's EVerify Company Identification Number/ EVerify Client Company Identification Number with whom you are seeking the 17-month extension.
4. A photocopy of previously issued EAD card for OPT.
5. Photocopies of all previous I-20s (including those from former schools).
6. A photocopy of your passport identification page
7. A photocopy of your F-1 visa
8. A photocopy of the front and back of your I-94 card.
9. A photocopy of your diploma or transcript confirming the date and degree awarded.
10. 2 US passport-style photographs. USCIS specifications for these photographs can be found at [www.travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotos/index.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotos/index.html). **Lightly print your name and I-94 Number on the back of each photo with a pencil.** The photos should be placed in an envelope or plastic bag and stapled to the application so they are not lost. Be careful not to staple through the photographs themselves.
11. A check or money order for **\$340** payable to the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**.
12. A complete set of photocopies of items 2-11 for your OIS file
13. A pre-paid return envelope so that your application materials can be returned to you.

Upon receipt of the above materials, an Immigration Specialist will review your application to ensure it is completed correctly. If everything is in order and the Immigration Specialist determines that you meet all eligibility requirements for the 17 month OPT Extension, he/she will issue you an updated SEVIS Form I-20 with an endorsement on page 3 recommending that USCIS approve your application.



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## MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

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Once your OPT extension materials are returned to you from OIS, you must submit your OPT application to US Citizenship & Immigration Services at the following address:

**United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)**  
**Vermont Service Center**  
**75 Lower Welden Street**  
**St. Albans, VT 05479-0001**  
Phone: 800-375-5283

Tip #1: **Do not** mail any original I-20s to USCIS. Only mail **photocopies** of your original I-20s.

Tip #2: It is very strongly recommended that you mail your application materials via UPS, FedEx or some other express mail to ensure accurate and timely delivery. Be sure to obtain a tracking number for your mailing.

\* \* \*

**IMPORTANT!** During your period of OPT work authorization, you are required to keep OIS informed of the following changes:

- Travel outside the United States (OIS must still provide your travel signature)
- Change of address
- Employer's address
- Change of Employer or employment status
- Change of phone number and/or e-mail
- Change of status (i.e. H-1B, F-2, Lawful Permanent Resident)

Please submit any change notifications to OIS by emailing them to [optinfo@pitt.edu](mailto:optinfo@pitt.edu).

*I understand that it is my responsibility to mail all appropriate OPT application materials directly to U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service at the above address.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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## GENERAL INFORMATION

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**Optional Practical Training is defined as “temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major area of study.”** An F-1 student in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields who has maintained lawful F-1 visa and is currently pursuing their 12 months of Optional Practical Training (OPT), may apply for a 17-month extension of OPT provided that their employer is enrolled in the E-Verify system.

**The maximum amount of time for which OPT may be granted is 29 months full-time.**

**Students applying for the OPT Extension should apply 90 days prior to the expiration date of their current EAD.** However, as long as a student makes a timely filed application for the OPT Extension, the student may continue to work for 180 days beyond the expiration date of the current EAD card

**During your period of your OPT Extension, you are still considered to be in F-1 student status.**

Therefore, you must keep OIS informed of any of the following:

- changes in your name
- changes in residential and mailing addresses
- employer's name and address
- employment status

**Employer reporting requirements.** Employers of students on OPT who are requesting the 17-month extension must report to OIS within 48 hours after the student leaves employment with that employer.

**Report to OIS every six (6) months:** Students who request the 17-month OPT Extension must agree to report to OIS every six months from the date the OPT extension starts to verify this information. This information should be emailed to [optinfo@pitt.edu](mailto:optinfo@pitt.edu).

**You will have a 60 grace period after the expiration date on your EAD.** You may leave the U.S., change your status, or transfer to a new degree program during that time, but you may not continue to work under OPT after your 29 months has been exhausted.

**If you choose to begin a new degree program full-time, whether at Pitt or at another institution, during your authorized period of OPT, you will lose any OPT time remaining on your EAD.** You will be required to cease employment upon release of your SEVIS record from Pitt to the new institution or upon issuance of a new Form I-20 for a different program.

Please note that there is no option to further extend the OPT. When the 29 months have been completed, the student must seek another visa status if he/she wishes to remain in the United States to continue employment. **Also, once OPT has been granted you cannot cancel it. You must use it or lose it.**



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## OPT EXTENSION EMPLOYER RECOMMENDATION FORM

### TOP SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
(first) (middle) (last)

I am requesting a 17-month extension to my OPT and agree to report to OIS and changes in my name, mailing or residential address, employer address or employment status. I also agree to verify this information with OIS every 6 months while on OPT.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### TO: Employers of students on OPT eligible for a 17-month extension.

The student referenced above is applying for a 17-month extension of Optional Practical Training (OPT), an employment authorization provided by the regulations of the United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). OPT is employment in a job related to the student's major field of study and is intended to enhance and supplement the formal classroom education. Such employment must be officially recommended by a Designated School Official, duly recognized by USCIS, in the Office of International Services (OIS).

Before this authorization can be granted, OIS must confirm that the employer is enrolled in the US Citizenship and Immigration Services' E-Verify system. The Employer must also agree to report to OIS within 48 hours if the student leaves employment.

Please complete the form below and return it to OIS so that we may process this student's request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact an OIS Immigration Specialist at 412.624.7120.

### THE INFORMATION BELOW MUST BE COMPLETED IN ITS ENTIRITY BY THE EMPLOYER.

I attest that the student referenced above is employed by (Name of Employer) \_\_\_\_\_. I further agree to report to OIS within 48 hours when this student leaves employment with my company.

Employer Representative Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Representative's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Name as listed in E-Verify: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer E-Verify Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Address (Street, City, State, ZIP): \_\_\_\_\_



## COMPLETING FORM I-765

Form I-765 is the USCIS application form that you will use to apply for OPT. You can find this form on the USCIS web site at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-765.pdf>

**Warning:** Do not use any I-765 other than the one on the USCIS web site. There are many older versions available on the web, and using an old version may cause a significant delay in your OPT application.

### Some tips for completing in the I-765

- Be sure to check on of the boxes at the top of the form that says “I am applying for”
- *Item #3:* Please be aware that mail from the USCIS will not be forwarded. If you may be moving in the months after you submit the OPT application, consider using OIS’ address:

c/o OIS, 708 William Pitt Union  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

We will notify you if we receive any mail related to your OPT application.

- *Item #10:* Your I-94 number appears on the upper left-hand corner of the front of your I-94 card.
- *Item #11:* Say “Yes” **only** if you have used Form I-765 to receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the USCIS in the past. Reasons that you would have an EAD include previous authorization for OPT or J-2 work authorization. Other work authorization that doesn’t require an EAD, such as H-1B status or CPT, do not count for this question.

ment (attach previous employment authorization document).

Which USCIS Office?	Date(s)
Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)	

Also, the questions at the top of the second column of this form (pictured to the left) are a continuation of question 11. If you checked “No,” you can leave these blank.

- *Items #12, 13, and 14:* Your date, place, and manner of last entry should all match your current I-94 card.
- *Item #15:* Your current visa status is either “F-1” or “Student” (either of these is fine)
- *Item #16:* Fill in (C)(3)(A) for pre-completion OPT, (C)(3)(B) for post-completion OPT, and (C)(3)(C) for a STEM extension of OPT
- *Item #17:* Leave this blank unless you are applying for a STEM extension of OPT
- Don’t forget to sign the form!