17-Month Extension
Optional Practical Training
OPT

Version 01/23/2014
ISSO Contact Information

**International Students and Scholars Office**

- [ioso@iastate.edu](mailto:ioso@iastate.edu)
- 515-294-1120
- [www.isso.iastate.edu](http://www.isso.iastate.edu)
- Appointments (20 minutes)
Agenda

• 17-Month OPT Extension
  • Understanding this benefit
  • Planning for this benefit
  • Preparing the application
  • Processing of the application
  • Utilizing this benefit
Who is eligible for the 17-Month Extension?

Student Criteria

• In a period of approved OPT

• Have not accumulated over 90 days of unemployment

• Major is on the Department of Homeland Security’s STEM Designated Degree Program list
  – http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm

• Never used the 17-month extension
Who is eligible for the 17-Month Extension?

Employer Criteria

- Employer is enrolled in the E-Verify program
  - Complete an initial check from the E-Verify website
  - Ask the employer if they are enrolled in E-Verify
When To Submit?

Current EAD End Date

Earliest deadline that application can reach USCIS:
120 days prior to end date on current EAD

Absolute deadline by which USCIS must receive application:
Same day as end date on current EAD

By law, USCIS has 90 days from the date they receive your application to make a decision!
What if my EAD expires while my request is pending at USCIS?

• Continue to maintain valid, F-1 status

• Eligible to continue working for another 180 days

• Many states will not grant or renew a driver’s license without the new EAD
Resources for OPT Requests
Resources for OPT Requests
Resources for OPT Requests

- F-1 FAQs
- OPT PPP
- E-Forms Required
- I-765 Blank and Sample
- G-1145 Blank
- Cystart link
Submitting OPT Request to ISSO

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Welcome to the Cystart Services Login Page

Technology is key to our proactive approach. Our information services and experienced staff enable efficient management of student and scholar data, and our portal provides individualized, web-based services. The following are the types of online services available for international students, scholars, & staff.

Full Client Services for Students & Scholars
- Secure services requiring login with your institutional Network ID and password. These services include:
  1. View and update information on file
  2. Submit electronic form (e-form) requests for travel signatures, reduced course lead authorization, program extensions, etc.
  3. Access alerts and notes on file that require action in order to maintain legal status

Limited Services for Students & Scholars
- Limited services requiring login with your University ID number and date of birth. These services include:
  1. Limited student services like registration for orientation or SEVIS transfer-in.
  2. Limited initial intake forms for J-1 scholars or H-1B employees.

These services will NOT provide all the functionality of the full client services.

The following are additional services:
- International Student & Scholar Statistical Reports
- Anonymous Feedback (surveys, evaluations, etc)
- Administrative Services for University Departments

International Students & Scholars Office, 3248 Memorial Union, Ames, IA 50011-1130
Submitting OPT Request to ISSO

Same log-in as used for your ISU e-mail
Submitting OPT Request to ISSO

Be sure to click the link for the 17-Month Extension request!
What is included in my Cystart request?

- Submit *OPT: 17-Month Extension Request* e-form to ISSO
- Submit *OPT Mailing Authorization Form* to ISSO

Last step is only for individuals who will be working at Iowa State University during the 17-month extension:

- Send *ISU Employment Verification* e-form to the supervisor that will oversee your work or volunteer activities during the 17-month extension
  - ISU department must attach the following to the e-form when they complete the e-form:
    - Export Control Sheet
    - Letter of Intent (if you will be on the ISU payroll)
    - Volunteer Agreement (if the position is unpaid)
Submitting OPT Request to ISSO

• Processing Time
  – 10 days from date all boxes are checked ✓ in Cystart

• New I-20 issued for 17-month extension of OPT

---

End date is 17 months later

Start date is automatically the day after the current OPT end date.
My new I-20 is ready, now what?

• How do I know my new I-20 is ready?
  – ISSO sends you an e-mail to your ISU e-mail address

• What should I do once I receive the e-mail?
  – Review the instructions in the e-mail
  – Prepare all documents for your final OPT application
  – Follow-up with instructions in the e-mail
Required Application Materials for USCIS

• Check for $380 to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
• 2 passport photos *
• Completed Form I-765 *
• Completed G-1145
• Copy of new I-20 *
• Copy of diploma or transcript indicating major and degree
• Copy of all previous EAD card(s)
• Copy of all previous I-20 forms with OPT recommendations
• Legible copy of I-94 card, front and back of paper version, or print out of electronic version
• Copy of passport page(s) with biographical info & expiration date
• Copy of passport page with F-1 visa (or most recent visa)

* Must be taken or signed within 30 day period prior to date USCIS receives your application
Fee Payment

• Personal Check

Name
Current Address

U.S. Department of Homeland Security $380.00 ----
Three hundred and eighty dollars only ---------------------

October 1, 2013

Form I-765 for SEVIS #N000xxxxxxx

John Doe
Photos

- 2 color photos
  - Taken within 30 day period prior to date USCIS receives your application
- U.S.-quality-passport photos
- Complete specifications:

http://travel.state.gov/visa/visaphotoreq/visaphotoreq_5334.html
How to complete the I-765

• Reference I-765 sample posted on ISSO web site

• Use I-765 template on ISSO web site to prepare form
  – Type your responses on the .pdf form
  • Use your I-94 number for #10 (11 digits)
    – Form currently only allows you to type in 9 numbers, so write in final 2 numbers by hand
  • Do not change the information that has been pre-filled on lines #2, #3, #11, #15 or #16
  • Do change information that is different for you

• Save the .pdf file on a flash drive or your computer
  – Some browsers may not save your file, so check the I-765 after saving it to ensure it still contains your information
  – Do not print or sign the I-765 at this time
Signing the I-765

- Signature section:
  - You must sign between the lines. If your signature touches or exceeds one of the lines, you may have difficulty obtaining a new driver’s license.
How to complete G-1145
17-Month Extension OPT I-20

- Copy of pages 1 and 3
Electronic Form I-94

• Retrieve from [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94)
Passport copy

- Biographic information
  - Photo, date of birth, country of birth

- Passport expiration date
  - Sometimes on a different page than above information

- U.S. visa page – current or most recent visa
Pending OPT Application

• Notification from USCIS
  – USCIS will send an e-mail message to you
    • This commonly takes to 2-3 weeks
    • Check status of your case with this receipt number

– Sample e-mail message:

  Your case has been accepted and routed to the USCIS Nebraska Service Center for processing. Within 7-10 days by standard mail you will receive your official Receipt Notice (Form I-797) with your Receipt Number LINxxxxxxxxxx. With the official Receipt Notice (Form I-797) you may visit www.uscis.gov where you can check the status of your case using My Case Status. We suggest you wait until you have received your Form I-797 before checking My Case Status.

This confirmation provides notification of the date USCIS received your case. This notice does NOT grant any immigration status or benefit. You MAY NOT present this notice as evidence that you have been granted any immigration status or benefit. Further, this notice does NOT constitute evidence that your case remains pending with USCIS. The current status of your case must be verified with USCIS.

PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE
Pending OPT Application

• Checking the status of your case
  – https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do
  – Often only change will be from Initial Review to Card/Document Production
    • May stay on Initial Review for 2-3 months
    • Request for Evidence is not common
Pending OPT Application

• Notification from USCIS
  
  – USCIS will send paper notification (I-797) to ISSO
    
    • Assumes used ISSO address on lines 2-3 on I-765
    
    • This commonly takes to 2-4 weeks
    
    • Check that your name is listed correctly on I-797
Pending OPT Application

• Notification from USCIS

– 90 day processing starts from I-797 received date
Pending OPT Application

• When would I need to follow-up with ISSO?
  – If you don’t receive an e-mail or your check is not cashed within 4 weeks of submitting your OPT application to ISSO
  – Correcting an error such as a misspelled name or if first and last names are reversed on Form I-797 Receipt Notice
  – OPT application is still pending 75 days after receipt date on Form I-797
  – If you wish to withdraw your application
    • Timing is critical - must withdraw before approved!
Pending OPT Application

• Can the 17-month OPT request be expedited?
  – Not when the request is submitted
    • You must plan ahead to allow for the full 90 days of processing allowed by the F-1 regulations
  – If pending over 75 days, ISSO can notify USCIS and request expedited processing
    • USCIS is not required to honor this request
    • Expedite means giving top priority, not processing it that day or even that week
      – Processing time depends on many factors
Approved OPT Application

• How will I know if ISSO has received my EAD?
  – Please remember it can take up to 30 days for ISSO to receive your EAD from the date the USCIS Case Status system indicates it has been approved.
  – ISSO will send an e-mail to your ISU e-mail address
  – If more than 15 days has passed since you see your case has been approved, you may:
    • Send an e-mail to isso@iastate.edu
    • Phone 515-294-1120 and ask the ISSO receptionist if your EAD has arrived
EAD for 17-Month OPT

Differences from your previous EAD for the 12-month OPT:

- New picture
- New USCIS number
- New card (case) number
- Different category: (c)(3)(C)
- Notation that of 17-month extension
- New dates
Picking Up EAD

- **Pick up from ISSO during normal business hours**
  - Bring in a photo ID

- **Mail to you at your new address outside of Ames**
  - Respond directly to the e-mail notifying you that your EAD arrived
  - Provide your new address and mailing instructions

- **Someone else will pick up your EAD from ISSO**
  - Send request to ISSO in writing
    - Name and date of birth of person that can be checked against a photo ID they present
What employment qualifies?

• Paid or unpaid position
• Position with employer enrolled in the E-Verify program
• Directly related to major listed on DHS STEM list
• At least 20 hours per week
• Type of Employment
  – Multiple employers
    • All employers must be enrolled in E-Verify program
  – Work for hire (contractual relationship)
  – Employment through an agency or consulting firm
  – Self employed business owner

How do I document qualifying work?

• Job directly related to your degree program
  – Job title
  – Job description
    • See 7.2.4 of document below for additional advice
  – Contact information for supervisor or manager

• Proof of employment history
  – Job offer letter(s)
    • Confirms start date of employment
  – Paycheck information
    • Confirms duration of employment
  – Termination letter(s)

What if I don’t find a job?

- **Allowed an additional 30 days of unemployment**
  - Total of 120 days of unemployment over 29 months
  - Count only days between dates listed on Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
  - Count all days, including weekends and holidays
  - Count any week employed less than 20 hours
  - Count days outside the U.S. (when not part of job)

- **Considered a violation of status:**
  - Go over 120 days of unemployment
  - Work for any employer not enrolled in E-Verify program
  - Burden on student to report employment to ISSO
  - Only DHS determines if violation occurs
Travel Outside U.S. During OPT

http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq_f2.htm#_Toc81222042
Travel Outside U.S. During OPT

• What documents do I need to travel?
  – Passport valid 6 months from date of U.S. entry
  – Valid F-1 visa
  – Travel validation signature on page 3 of OPT I-20
    • Only valid for 6 months during OPT
  – EAD
    • If OPT is pending, take original I-797 Receipt Notice
  – Job letter
Student Responsibilities During OPT

• Within 10 days of the change, student must report:
  – Change of legal name
  – Change of residential or mailing address
  – Change of employer [name, address]
  – Loss of employment

• Make a validation report every six months from date extension begins

• Send copy of I-797 Approval Notice to ISSO
  – Approved for H-1B status
  – Approved for a change to other non-immigrant status

• Notify ISSO if plan to leave U.S. permanently in the middle of OPT period
Employer Responsibilities During OPT

• Report end of student’s employment, to include:
  – Student’s name
  – Student’s SEVIS number
  – Date on which employment ended
Nearing the OPT End Date

• 60 day grace period following end of OPT
  – Leave the U.S.
  – Apply for a change of status
  – Apply for change of level (new degree at ISU)
  – Apply for a transfer (new degree, new school)